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FOR DECEMBER 2020 EDITION

Viral States: Pandemics, Politics, and Policy in West Africa

Call for Contributions to a Thematic Issue of Democracy and Development: Journal of West African Affairs

Pandemics are the archetypal necessary evil, utterly destructive of life on the one hand, yet, oddly clarifying of the terms and conditions of social life on the other. While, throughout history, pandemics have left unspeakable human calamities in their wake, they have, even if only in retrospect, helped sociologists, historians, philosophers and epidemiologists understand more fully the fundamental character of social relations of the affected societies. Covid-19, regarding which socio-medical knowledge remains admittedly tentative, has been no different, exposing the limits of scientific prediction, the contingency of religious prophecy, the weakness of political leadership, and the sheer precarity of life in an increasingly globalized world.

For its December 2020 issue, *Democracy and Development* seeks contributions- from academics, public policy analysts, and journalists- that address, against a West African regional backdrop, some of the issues and themes provoked by the outbreak of Covid-19 and the quality of response to it. To the extent that Covid-19 has upset the socio-political applecart in the region, nay the entire world, what vital sociological, historical, medical and philosophical questions are triggered by the pandemic? What has the pandemic taught us about state capacity- or lack of it- in the region? How have civic organizations responded to the pandemic, and how does its mobilization instruct us about the strengths and weaknesses of civil society? What do emergent tensions between religious groups and the state on how to contain the pandemic tell us about political power and its distribution? In what ways is Covid-19 reminiscent of (or different from) previous pandemic outbreaks in the region, and how does a historical perspective inform our understanding?

We welcome contributions that speak directly to the foregoing and other ancillary questions thrown up by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Democracy and Development is a peer-reviewed journal. Articles/essays submitted for publication must not exceed 5,000 words. The ideal contribution is an essay; provocative, yet lucid; ambitious, yet synoptic, shorn of academic jargonizing, and ready for deployment without a battalion of footnotes. The deadline for submission of articles for the December 2020 edition is October 15, 2020. Papers submitted for review in *Democracy and Development* should not be under review in another journal at the time of submission. Submissions and all other queries should be addressed to: editor@cddwestafrica.org

Published bi-annually, *Democracy and Development* focuses on the following interrelated themes: 1. Conceptualizing democracy and development in West Africa; 2. Practical problems that have inhibited democratic reform in the region; 3. Civic organisations and the new and innovative programmes, activities, and agents driving the democracy and development agenda in the region; 4. Conflict and peace-building; and 5. Public policy research (empirical and theoretical) on the democracy, security, and development nexus. *Democracy & Development* is the only publication of its kind entirely devoted to reporting and explaining democratic developments in the sub-region. It is avidly read by researchers, journalists, opinion moulders, and policy makers.

Democracy and Development: Journal of West African Affairs is a publication of *Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) West Africa,* 16, A7 Street, Mount Pleasant Estate (CITEC), Jabi Airport Road, Abuja, FCT, Nigeria.

Editor's Note

With this issue of the journal, *Democracy & Development* recommences publication after a yearslong hiatus that was forced by circumstances beyond the control of *Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD).* For this re-commencement issue, we invited critical reflections on the theme of "Corruption and Democracy in Africa: Conjoined Histories." Among other important dilemmas, we wanted to understand why corruption, understood simply as the diversion of public goods towards parochial ends, has persisted, and by certain measures worsened, across African countries; and why, crucially, transition to democracy has not coincided with the kind of drastic reduction in corruption that many had hoped for on the eve of the military's departure from power. The papers in this issue, written by scholars as well as public policy practitioners, betray both the passion that any conversation on the subject tends to excite, and the diversity of perspectives, the latter invariably a function of real differences in disciplinary approach and intellectual temper.

For years, *Democracy & Development* was the leading outlet for the most informed opinion on democracy and public policy in Africa. The journal is happy to resume its place at the head of the intellectual table.

Ebenezer Obadare, Editor.

From Grievance to Greed: How Political Elites Escalated the Niger Delta Crisis in Nigeria

By Victor Agboga*

Abstract

The Niger Delta oil crisis in Nigeria has caught the attention of both local and international conflict analysts. While certain analysts and scholars observe that the crisis is precipitated by Nigeria's high dependence on rents from crude oil and the resultant weak governance and looting opportunities for rebels, others argue that it is as a result of the economic and political marginalisation of the Niger Delta people whose oil-rich land is the "goose that lays the golden eggs". However, little attention has been paid to how grievance in the Niger Delta as a result of this marginalisation, and greed, evident in the high rate of criminality in the region, interact with each other. Reducing this case simply into one out of greed or grievance would be reductionistic and ignoring a plethora of evidence to the contrary. This paper takes up the task of tracing how greed and grievance interact, by demonstrating how poor government response, corruption and political co-optation of rebels lead to the transformation of the Niger Delta crisis from a justice-seeking to a loot-seeking rebellion.

Keywords: Niger Delta, Conflicts, Corruptiopn, Nigeria and resource curse

Introduction

Greed and grievance are arguably among the most frequently employed concepts in framing the causes and drivers of violent conflicts, especially conflicts involving natural resources, even if they tend to be pitted against each other as opposing explanations for violent conflicts. While scholars such as Collier and Hoeffler (2004, 2005) argue that violent conflicts are mostly caused by high dependence on natural resources and the ensuing weak governance and looting opportunities, Langer and Stewart (2013) counter that violent conflicts are caused by aggrieved identity groups protesting inequitable distribution of economic and political resources. A third school has emerged which argues for a combination of both factors for a wholistic examination of conflict; in other words, both elements of greed and grievance could be present in the same conflict. As Ballentine and Nitzschke (2005) have observed, the motivation to take up arms against the state could change as the conflict progresses, thus "justice-seeking" rebels could become "loot-seeking" along the way, or both. Both scholars also highlight the rebel-centric blind spot of both the greed and grievance approaches.

It is against this backdrop that I wish to evaluate the Niger Delta crisis as explicable by both greed and grievance and more. While there are genuine concerns about environmental degradation caused by oil exploration in the region, and skewed revenue allocation by the Nigerian government (Koos 2017); oil theft and bunkering, kidnapping for ransom and massive corruption have also besieged the Niger Delta (Watts 2009; Obenade and Amangabara

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2014). Reducing this complex scenario simply to greed or grievance would be reductionistic and ignoring a plethora of evidence to the contrary. Instead, I seek to show how civil grievance against inequality and environmental pollution has been adulterated and largely hijacked by greedy politicians and rebel leaders who are profiting from the crisis. The Niger Delta crisis has attracted considerable scholarly interest, with many scholars succumbing to the temptation to choose sides between greed and grievance, instead of looking at the issue through both lenses and how they interact with each other. This paper shows how greed and grievance interact, and particularly, how government corruption and the co-opting of rebel leaders lead to the transformation from grievance to greed.

Greed, Grievance and Corrupt Political Elites

Conflicts related to natural resources have arguably been discussed predominantly with reference to greed and grievance. However, both concepts have often been presented as competing explanations for conflicts. Scholars such as Collier and Hoeffler (2004, 2005) argue that violent conflicts are mostly caused by excessive dependence on natural resources and the ensuing weak governance, slow economic growth and looting opportunities for rebel groups. They argue that rents from natural resources are vulnerable to fluctuating commodity prices in the global market, leading to irregular growth patterns in resource dependent countries. In other words, "the global prices of primary commodities are much more volatile than other prices, and this is compounded by quantity shocks due to climate, discoveries, and exhaustion" (Collier and Hoeffler 2005, p. 627). Collier, who highlights greed as a major cause of conflicts, denounces rebels as loot seekers who take advantage of the weak state institutions and slow economic growth to recruit fighters and plunder natural resources. "Young men, who are the recruits for rebel armies, come pretty cheap," Collier argues (2007, p. 42). "...Life is cheap and joining a rebel movement gives these young men a small chance of riches". Collier and Hoeffler (2004, 2005) further claim that economic gains from looted natural resources such as diamond and crude oil do not only serve as inducements for rebels, but could also serve as viable sources of income for them to sustain their assault on the state.

On the other hand, Stewart et al. (2008) contend that violent conflicts are caused by aggrieved identity groups. This implies that rebels are often justice-seeking marginalised groups protesting against skewed distribution of political and economic opportunities. Stewart, et al have introduced the concept of horizontal inequalities (HI) which refers to inequalities that coincide with identity cleavages such as race, ethnicity, religion, etc. They argue

that identity groups become important and serve as mobilizing factors in violent conflict when there is an intersection between ethnic, cultural, racial or religious identity and the distributional of economic or political opportunities (Stewart et al. 2008). “A central premise of the HI hypothesis, Langer and Frances observe (2013, 2), is that over and above individual motivations, inequalities between culturally-defined or 'ethnic' groups can play an essential role in inducing and facilitating mobilisation”. They likewise point out that a rebellion can occur in a resource-rich region wanting to have more control over its resources as against redistribution to other regions.

Nonetheless, there is a third group of scholars who argue for the combination of both greed and grievance in the evaluation of conflicts, since a number of them, i.e. conflicts, do not fit neatly into both categories. Keen (2012) admits that greed is a significant factor in certain violent conflicts but so is grievance, stating that both factors are often intricately related and interact with each other in complex ways. He criticises Collier for claiming the primacy of greed over grievance in violent conflicts, and attacks the position as politically convenient for governments and international donors who are quick to point accusing fingers to alleged criminal rebels. Keen argues that labelling rebels as criminals who threaten the state has provided justification for the deployment of foreign military and financial support to curtail the rebels, a position which is convenient for the World Bank and other foreign institutions who sponsored Collier's research. He argues:

> The work represents a pretty far-reaching delegitimization of political violence that might threaten existing power structures; it provides an important alibi for a range of abusive states; and it chimes nicely with a neo-imperial zeitgeist that attributes various kinds of beneficial and healing powers to western military intervention and occupation.

Furthermore, Ballentine and Nitzschke (2005) observe that the motivation to take up arms against the state could change as the conflict progresses, so “justice-seeking” rebels could become “loot-seeking” along the way, or both. Similarly, Watts (2009) emphasises that it might be greed for some and grievance for others. Ballentine and Nitzschke insist that the greed approach is rebel-centric and ignores corrupt and opportunistic governments and their contribution to the escalation of conflicts. They challenge this pro-state bias present both in the greed and grievance approaches, arguing that “neglecting an analysis of state behaviour may in fact legitimise repressive and corrupt state elites who may also profit from war at the expense of the population”

(Ballentine and Nitzschke 2005, p. 4).

From a resource curse perspective, Ross (2001, 2013) shows that over-reliance on rents from natural resources often correlates with repressive governments, rampant corruption, patronage and vulnerability to conflict. He suggests that easy rents from natural resources de-sensitises governments from strengthening their taxation system, thereby becoming less accountable to the masses. In his words, "governments funded by external rents were freed from the need to raise taxes; this made them less accountable to their citizens, and hence less likely to deploy these rents in ways that promoted economic development" (Ross 2013, p. 4). These underscore the role of corruption, repression, rent-seeking and flawed redistribution mechanism of governments largely overlooked in the greed and grievance debate, making governments culpable in the causation and escalation of violent conflict.

Analytical Framework

From the foregoing, we can extrapolate a model of the interaction between greed and grievance to analyse the Niger Delta crisis, especially how rebel motivations can change over time, and the role of governments in this transformation. A grievance-driven rebellion which began with peaceful protests could be radicalised by poor response on the part of the government. Also, corrupt politicians could infiltrate such movements, co-opt rebel leaders and spin the conflict to their (politicians) benefit. I use this model to examine how the Niger Delta insurgency metamorphosed from justice-seeking to loot-seeking.

The Niger Delta Crisis: An Overview

The crisis in the Nigerian Delta traces back to the discovery of crude oil in 1956 in Oloibiri and other villages in Southern Nigeria, and the subsequent commencement of oil production. Other non-British petroleum companies such as Chevron and Total soon obtained licences to join Shell-BP in the region now known as the Niger Delta (Obi 2010).

After independence from Britain in 1960, the Nigerian government was mainly interested in collecting oil rents and barely monitored the activities of multinational oil companies (Obi 2010; Osaghae 2015). The oil in the Niger Delta also played a significant role in the Biafran War (1967-1970) where rebels from Eastern Nigeria rushed to secure the oil-rich Niger Delta until they were pushed back by the Nigerian armed forces (Abegunrin 2009; Osaghae 2015). While revenue from oil exploration was not the primary cause of the war, it factored into calculations by both the Biafra

insurgents and the Nigerian government.

After the civil war, the military government promulgated decrees which gave the Nigerian federal government exclusive ownership of every land and natural resources within the territory. The decrees also gave the federal government exclusive authority to issue mining licenses to companies in the extractive industry. The implication was that regions including the Niger Delta had little control of the revenue generated from the natural resources (oil and gas) in their land. According to Obi (2010, p. 223), "the decree which expropriated all the oil in the Niger Delta in the name of the Nigerian federal military government, was made by the ruling military council and did not involve the people of the Niger Delta".

The activities of multinational oil corporations coupled with the highhandedness of the military dictatorship in Nigeria led to immense environmental pollution in the Niger Delta and inadequate revenue allocation to the region. Rampant oil spillage destroyed waterbodies and farmlands, while the military government paid no heed to the outcries of the indigenes. This led to the formation of several civil society groups which tried to pressure the government and oil corporations to respond to the plight of the people. Many of the activists were labelled anti-government protesters and suppressed by the military government (Obi 2010; Watts 2009; Koos 2017; Osaghae 2015).

With the return to democracy in 1999, new avenues were open for dialogue. While the new democratic federal government increased revenue allocation to the Niger Delta, it still deployed soldiers to invade communities where oil exploration was disrupted by protesting locals, leading to the killing of several indigenes, including women and children (Watts 2009). This contributed to the emergence of militant groups in the region that began to vandalise oil installations and harass oil workers in the Niger Delta. Similarly, the increased revenue allocations to the region failed to trickle down to the people because of massive corruption among their regional elites. These elites also co-opted some of the militants as their personal thugs and used them to intimidate their political opponents (Watts 2009; Koos 2017; Obenade and Amangabara 2014). The region was eventually besieged by kidnapping, oil bunkering, electoral violence and elite corruption.

In order to guarantee continuous access to crude oil, the major export of the country, the Nigerian government and oil corporations have brokered several deals with the militants through the Niger Delta Amnesty Programme (Osaghae 2015). Many militants were "employed" by the government and

oil companies to protect oil installations while others were paid off to buy their cooperation (Watts 2009; Obenade and Amangabara 2014). This has however failed to ensure lasting peace in the region as different militant groups continue to show up intermittently, threatening to disrupt oil extraction if not given their own deal. All in all, the state of physical infrastructure in the Niger Delta has not improved and the clean-up of oil spillage has been slow-paced. Greedy militants and local elites have hijacked the Niger Delta agitation to their own benefit. Grievance has metamorphosed to greed.

Grievance & Governmental Response

Stewart et al. (2008) argue that agitation over unequal distribution of economic/political opportunities is a major cause of violent conflict. They also point out that conflict could occur in resource rich regions "fearing a loss of resources or power and not only poor ones mobilising against the richer ones" (Langer and Stewart 2013, p. 3). This seems to be the case in Niger Delta where the locals are aggrieved by the centralised control of rents from their oil-rich land, and lack of commensurate development in their region.

Obi (2010) and Osaghae (2015) agree that the Niger Delta crisis began as a nonviolent movement of locals protesting environmental pollution, inadequate social amenities and skewed revenue distribution. In the Niger Delta, Osaghae (2015) observes that the period between 1956 – 1999 was relatively nonviolent apart from the civil war, of which oil was a remote cause. This period was characterised by nonviolent protests by environmentalists and human rights groups against the draconian military dictatorship and the abysmal conditions in the Niger Delta. Oil spillage from the activities of multinational corporations destroyed livelihoods of locals in the region while the military government did little to alleviate the situation.

In addition, the Petroleum Act of 1969 and the Land Use Act of 1978 enacted by the military government, vested all powers of revenue and resource control on the central government, thereby stripping regions of control over their resources (Osaghae 2015; Obi 2010). The implication for the Niger Delta was that oil rents were paid directly to the federal government and the latter decided how to distribute the revenue among the different regions. Oil revenue was shared among regions according to even development, population and landmass, which was disadvantageous for the Niger Delta because of its small size (Osaghae 2015; Obenade and Amangabara 2014; Watts 2009). In other words, other non-oil producing regions with larger population and landmass received more allocation than the Niger Delta.

The situation was compounded by the fact that Niger Delta was sandwiched between different powerful tribes who dominated national politics and determined how the "national cake" was going to be shared.

After several protest, the military government came up with a 3% derivation formula which gave the region an additional meagre fraction of the revenue derived from it. Predictably, Niger Delta protesters rejected the offer and demanded a 50:50 formula, which would allow the region to keep half of all its oil rent (Watts 2009; Obi 2010). The lack of heed by the military government heightened protests in the region, accompanied by severe military crackdown and the execution of prominent environmentalist and human rights advocate Ken Saro-Wiwa and his colleagues (Osaghae 2015). This provoked the formation of pressure groups such as the Movement for Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) and Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), that defiled the military government and reinforced their agitations with support from foreign NGOs.

Koos (2017) focuses on the economic and infrastructural deprivations of the locals in the region as drivers of agitation. He observes that most villages in the Niger Delta lack basic amenities such as electricity, pipe-borne water, healthcare centres and motorable roads. The environmental pollution caused by oil exploration further compounds the difficulties of the people. In a survey he conducted in the region, he concludes that "both collective (unjust distribution of oil revenues) and individual oil-related grievances (destruction of livelihoods through oil production) are associated with support for violence against the state" (Koos 2017, p. 3).

In addition, scholars such as Obi (2010) and Watts (2009) agree with Koos that the militarisation of the grievance in the Niger Delta was engendered by inadequate response from the government; or as Koos (2017, p. 7) aptly puts it, "the level of aggression towards the Nigerian state increased steadily and youth flocked to insurgent groups – since nonviolent resistance turned out to be ineffective in getting grievances addressed". As a result, militant groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and the Niger Delta Vigilantes (NDV) were formed and began vandalising oil installations and threatening multinational oil corporations in the region (Osaghae 2015).

However, when democratic rule was restored in 1999, fresh avenues were created by the government to address the crisis. Although the new democratic government did not cease military operation in the region, it set up several committees to find lasting solutions to the conflict (Osaghae 2015). Among

them was the Niger Delta Development Commission and the Ministry for Niger Delta Affairs. These and other bodies were entrusted with the task of reaching compromise with the militant groups in the region, drafting out development plans and addressing the problem of environmental pollution in the region. The contentious derivation formula was also increased from 3% to 13%, thereby allocating more revenue to the region (Obi 2010; Osaghae 2015; Koos 2017).

Paradoxically, the establishment of several administrative bodies and the increase in the derivation formula did not curtail violence in the region, it actually increased (Watts 2009; Osaghae 2015). From 2000 to date, the region has witnessed increased levels of criminal activities such as kidnapping, oil theft, and electoral violence. In fact, most Niger Delta militant groups were formed after the military dictatorship, under the new democratic dispensation. The Niger Delta has become a breeding ground for several militant groups engaged in different acts of criminality. All these have unfortunately undermined the initial grievance over skewed revenue allocation and environmental pollution. Greed is overshadowing grievance.

Greed and Criminality

While grievance explains to a large extent the agitations in the Niger Delta, it does not explain the high rate of criminality among the so-called "justice-seeking rebels." In fact, many narratives on the Niger Delta describe the region as a criminal and dangerous zone, warning people especially foreigners to keep off the area or risk being harassed or kidnapped (Punch Newspaper Nigeria 2019). In spite of increased revenue allocation to the region under the new democratic dispensation, militancy and criminality continues to thrive. This raises questions about the true intentions of the rebels, on why they continue their destructive activities in spite of increased revenue allocation.

On criminal activities in the region, there have been dozens of kidnapping of foreigners and oil workers. Watts (2009) notes that kidnapping for ransom, which is often targeted at foreign expats, is one of the most lucrative sources of income for the rebels. The Times of London (2009) reports that as at 2006, over 200 foreigners were kidnapped for ransom, a few dying in captivity. More recently, the British government warned its citizens to stay clear of the Niger Delta due to increased incidences of kidnapping. Furthermore, the rate of oil theft and bunkering in the Niger Delta increased in the 2000s, with rebels shipping oil worth millions through the bordering Atlantic ocean to their international clients (Osaghae 2015; Obi 2010; Ross 2013; Watts 2009; Obenade and Amangabara 2014). Watts (2009) claims that no less than

10% of crude oil imported to the US is stolen. “At its peak in 2004–05, some 350,000 barrels per day were stolen”, Watts (2009, p. 113) further discloses, “perhaps inserting $4–5 billion per year into the financial system”. In 2013 alone, “an estimated 55,210 barrels of oil per day or monthly average of 1,656,281 barrels was stolen by oil thieves…” (Anyio 2015, p. 53).

Meanwhile, the Niger Delta has seen an uptick in the economic status of most of its rebel leaders, most of whom now own choice real estate both domestically and internationally. Osaghae (2015) reveals that Tompolo, one of the major rebel leaders in the region, has properties worth over $153 million. Watts (2009) and Anyio (2015) described Asari Dokubo, a prominent Niger Delta rebel leader, as a “self-acclaimed oil thief” who claims to be using revenue from oil theft to fund the struggle of the aggrieved locals

Similarly, the New York-based Wall Street Journal reports that in order to pacify and buy peace, the Nigerian government and oil multinationals pay millions of dollars to rebel leaders in the Niger Delta. The newspaper accused the rebel leaders of exploiting the grievances in the region to enrich themselves, and recounts an encounter with Asari Dokubo: Last year, Nigeria's state oil company began paying him $9 million a year, by Mr. Dokubo-Asari's account, to pay his 4,000 former foot soldiers to protect the pipelines they once attacked.

He shrugs off the unusual turn of events. “I don't see anything wrong with it,” said the thickly built former gunman, lounging in a house gown at his home here in Nigeria's capital… Nigeria is shelling out hundreds of millions of dollars a year to maintain an uneasy calm in the oil-rich delta, where attacks ranging from theft to bombings to kidnappings pummelled oil production three years ago, to as low as 500,000 barrels on some days.

Multinational oil corporations often grumble about the high rate of extortion in the region coupled with additional security cost to protect their staff working in the area. Larry Johnson, a former US soldier who was employed to provide protection to workers of Eni Petroleum, recounted in 2007 that the security situation in the Niger Delta was worse than during the civil war in Angola (The New York Times 2007).

In summary, the so-called justice-seeking rebels are profiting from the grievance of the locals by exploiting the government and oil companies to enrich themselves.

Corruption and Co-optation: How Grievance Transformed into Greed

Both the grievance and greed positions on the Niger Delta crisis have compelling arguments and evidence. However, it has been

established that the crisis started as a nonviolent and justice-seeking movement before it was transformed to largely loot-seeking. Nonetheless, the conditions that facilitated this transformation have not been extensively explored. How did justice-seeking rebels mutate into engaging in selfish acts of criminality?

One of the possible explanations is the inadequate response of the Nigerian government to the Niger Delta crisis. As Obi (2010), Watts (2009) and Koos (2017) have observed, the highhanded repression of the rebels by the military dictatorship in Nigeria contributed to the radicalization of the militants. However, this does not sufficiently explain the increase in criminal activities among the rebels, especially after the federal allocation to the Niger Delta was increased.

Corruption among local political elites in the Niger Delta offers a more convincing explanation. Osaghae (2015) observes that the oil boom between 1998 – 2013 which coincided with the new democratic dispensation, facilitated increased revenue allocation to the Niger Delta. He further notes that the region began to receive more allocation than other regions in the country. However, Osaghae accuses local elites in the Niger Delta of mismanaging the allocation. While the federal government and oil corporation are making efforts to address the grievances, local elites in the region are diverting the funds meant to alleviate the situation.

The Niger Delta, which comprises nine state (Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Delta, Bayelsa, Cross River, Ondo, Abia, Imo and Edo States), has over the years become a nest of corrupt governors. Former governors of Delta, Bayelsa, Edo, Akwa Ibom, Abia and Rivers states have either been convicted or are under criminal investigation for embezzlement of public funds (Osaghae 2015; Watts 2009).

Former governor of Delta State (1999 -2007) James Ibori, made local and international headlines after he was tried and convicted for embezzling public funds worth over £25 million in a court in the United Kingdom (Watts 2009; Obi 2010; Osaghae 2015). His counterpart in Bayelsa State, Diepreye Alamieyeseigha (governor from 29 May 1999 to 9 December 2005), was also tried in the United Kingdom but jumped bail and secretly returned to Nigeria disguised as a woman. He was accused of laundering £1.8 million and eventually impeached in 2005 (Watts 2009). Another former governor from the Niger Delta region, Lucky Igbinedion (governor of Edo State from 1999 to 2007), was charged with embezzling $21.33 million, and pleaded guilty. He was fined N3.5 million, ordered to return N500 million with the forfeiture of three of his properties(Reuter 2008).

With the flow of petrodollars into the Niger Delta as a result of the oil boom and increased allocation, competition for political offices in the

region became more attractive and rancorous. Politicians employed the services of the restive youths to intimidate their opponents. It was at this juncture that the co-optation of the militants occurred. Elites sponsored militant groups and equipped them to harass, kidnap or even assassinate their political enemies. Enticed by money and elite support, several militants were bought over (Osaghae 2015; Watts 2009).

Watts (2009, p. 108) particularly points out how charismatic rebel leaders such as Asari Dokubo and Ateke Tom were "each driven and partly funded by oil monies and actively deployed (and paid) by high-ranking politicians as political thugs during elections". While the rebel leader still claimed to be fighting against inequality, it is interesting to note that they often channel their anger not to their corrupt local elites, but to the federal government and oil corporations. This lack of criticism against their corrupt local politicians hints on a network of cooperation between both groups (militants and elites).

Watts (2009) equally indicts local elites in Niger Delta on the issue of oil theft and bunkering. He argues that the militants cannot on their own charter oil vessels and ship stolen oil abroad. Rather, Watts suggests a complex criminal network of business and political elites who facilitate and connect the militants to their international buyers. "If there is organized crime", he argues, "it seems to operate across the entire panoply of institutions and organizations involved in the oil business" (Watts 2009, p. 113).

Osaghae (2015) also blames the federal government for not supervising how allocated funds were utilised in the Niger Delta. The federal government and oil corporations seem more interested in oil extraction and nothing else. The amnesty programme which enriched rebel leaders and did little for the average masses proves this point. In other words, they strive to keep the militants pacified than improving the lives of the common people. "In a situation where the government only looks for issues that relate to the flow of oil in the Niger Delta without thinking of addressing poverty", Bariara Kpalap, a chief in the region reveals to the BBC, "then peace in the Niger Delta will be elusive" (BBC 2012). Also, the prevalence of poverty in the region would always give the militants and local elites the opportunity to hide their dubious activities under grievances.

Nonetheless, genuine activists still exist in the region, who have managed to resist the political and economic enticements to abandon their course. Environmentalists and human rights groups continue to put pressure on the government -local and federal- and oil companies to alleviate the living standard of the people in the Niger Delta. However, as Collier and Hoeffler (2005, p. 626) point out in agreement with Weinstein (2005), "where resources permit, opportunistic rebel leaders crowd out ideological leaders".

Conclusion

While greed and grievance are frequently mobilized in explaining violent conflicts, they have their blind spots. Both concepts focus on the activities of the rebels and overlook or minimise the role governments play in the escalation of violent conflict. Also, both concepts are often presented as mutually exclusive. However, a new school of thought has argued for the combination of both lenses in the evaluation of conflicts. It is against this backdrop that this paper evaluates the Niger Delta crisis. While there is ample evidence of grievance in form of inequitable distribution of oil crude and political marginalisation, there is also credible evidence of criminality and greed.

This paper explains how the crisis metamorphosed from grievance to greed, and the role played by corrupt local elites in this transformation. As Watts (2009, p. 116) notes, the Niger Delta case "confounds the simplistic generalizations that governments and rebels and greed and grievance are easily separable. In practice, they are indissoluble".

The co-optation of rebel leaders as political thugs of local politicians played a key role in the transformation from grievance to greed. As Ballentine and Nitzschke (2005) has earlier observed, the motivation of rebels can change along the way. With the massive and unsupervised inflow of petrodollars into the Niger Delta, politics became rancorous. To maintain their political and economic power by all means, local elites co-opted restive Niger Delta militants to intimidate opponents. A complex criminal network between local elites and the militant groups in the theft and plundering of oil resources subsists in the region.

The Federal Government has been accused of not adequately supervising how allocations to the Niger Delta are spent. It is also blamed for focusing on pacifying the rebels to ensure continuous extraction of crude oil, instead of alleviating the living conditions of the Niger Delta indigenes. Furthermore, local elites and militants have continued to exploit this poor living standard of the people as a façade to perpetuate their own interests.

Overall, the Niger Delta crisis is better understood not through the prism of greed or grievance alone, but a more nuanced combination of changing motives and actors. The implication of this is that policy interventions in the region need to take into account the complexity of the matter and how to cut through the noise to reach out to the average indigenes in Niger Delta, who have been most disadvantaged by this debacle.

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Making Defence Budgets Count: The Imperative for an Intellectual Collective on Transparency and Accountability in Nigeria

By Gbemisola Animasawun*

Abstract

A cardinal objective in the manifesto of the All People's Congress (APC) which endeared it to many voters in 2015 was its argument that corruption was at the root of insecurity, especially the protraction of the war against the insurgent group, Boko Haram. Subsequently, upon coming to power, the party declared two wars; one on corruption, and the other on insecurity, specifically Boko-Haram. Rather than abating, insecurity in post-2015 Nigeria has mutated, with the Boko Haram insurgency becoming more localized and fractured. This article argues that opacity in defence budgeting is implicated in the prolongation of Nigeria's war against Boko Haram insofar as it diminishes the will and morale of the troops. As a trend that can be reversed through increased transparency and accountability in defence budgeting and spending, this article proposes an intellectual collective comprising the media, academics and the civil society as an organized and sustainable means of ensuring transparency in defence budgeting and spending.

Keywords: All People's Congress (APC) , Boko Haram, Nigeria, Insecurity, Accountability

Background

Between ex-President Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari, there has been an embarrassing sustenance of terrorists' menace to an extent that this has greatly taken away Nigeria's military manhood (Adedayo 2020).

. . . there is empirical evidence of soldiers' mutiny, desertion from war fronts and low morale. . . Despite the rise in security sector budget from about US$1.44 billion in 2009 to US2.81 billion in 2018 (Onuoha et al 2020: 1)

Violent non-state groups or armed non-state actors constitute an existential threat to the Nigerian state and her peoples across the six geo-political zones of the country. Their aspirations and actions place an asterisk on the survival of the Nigerian project and the state's capacity to impose and maintain order in the Weberian sense.

As a reality that has defined the Nigerian Fourth Republic (1999-), it has received plenty of attention from scholars, policy makers and even civil society actors whose analyses have privileged the historical, transnational, environmental, political, religious, ethnic structural and agential factors responsible for their emergence and protraction. While some analysts have focused on the phenomenon of ethnic militias in the early days of the Obasanjo administration (Adebanwi 2004 & 2005; Ikelegbe 2005 and Agbaje

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2003), others have dwelled on the Niger-Delta militancy (Okonta 2008; Obi and Rustard 2011).

The Boko-Haram insurgency that has troubled Nigeria for over a decade and which has become Buhari's Vietnam as described by The Economist, has also led to Boko-Haramology (Mustapha & Meagher 2020; Hentz and Solomon 2017). Also, widespread intermittent killings between farming and herding communities have turned many rural communities into deathscapes where "everyday life is prone to death" (Sithole 2014). One response to this grim situation is the deployment of troops compelled by the need to restore order with an attendant increase in defence budgeting and expenditure.

The protraction and proliferation of insurgencies in Nigeria stand in contra-distinction to the argument in some quarters that democracies are better counter-terrorists (Abrahms 2007); an argument based on the assumption that the transparency and accountability that are assumed to be integral to democratic societies will enable a democracy combating terrorism to provide for the troops in a way that ensures the sustenance of their will and morale which are crucial for victory.

However, Merom (2003:11) contends that without the prioritization of balance of will, large armies and sophisticated weapons alone cannot win small wars. This is becoming true by the day going by reports of desertions by military personnel owing to poor welfare and logistics in Nigeria's theater of insurgency (Nwabufo 2020), as Nigeria's contention with Boko Haram enters its second decade. Furthermore, and demonstrating that democracies may not necessarily make better counter-terrorists, Adedayo (2020) draws attention to how corruption can undermine a democracy's counter-insurgency's operations:

> The fact must be stated that fighting this insurgency seems to be, for the military Generals in the war theatre, a mercantile activity that must be prolonged for the sake of the belly. Billions of dollars are voted for hardware, software and military welfare yearly, which allegedly slip into the bottomless pockets of the Generals and their collaborators in government.

Adedayo's submission becomes plausible in light of serious allegations of corruption leveled against many military top brass, politicians and civil servants (securocrats) who served in the Jonathan administration, known in the media as the "Dasuki Gate." That the struggle for transparency and accountability in defence budgeting continues five years into the Buhari administration brings to mind the argument in some quarters that even after Jonathan, "spending on defence lacks transparency, and some generals may have a vested interest in not killing the jihadist goose that lays the golden eggs" (De

Montclos 2019:4). This underscores the need to explore how transparency and accountability in defence budgeting can be made more potent and perhaps weaponized (Anderson and Page 2017) in order to give stronger impetus to not only Nigeria's war against terror, but the country's national security. This in turn can tilt the balance of force and will in favour of the country's armed forces towards eradicating insurgency not only in the northeast but also in other parts of the country.

The reflections in this article are aimed at finding a new way of demanding and achieving transparency and accountability in defence budgeting. Named The Intellectual Collective, it is proposed to comprise academics described by Sowel (2009:5) as the "solid core producers of ideas", journalists as the users and disseminators of ideas, and civil society as the third in a tripod of intellectual collective because an active civil society can serve as a public watchdog, checking that security sector actors are performing their tasks within the assigned remits (Hiscock 2004). This is crucial for the effective management and performance of the military and security agencies because of their inherent capacities listed by Cottey (2001) [quoted in Miller (2016: 25)] such as:

> . . . a free media that is interested and able to investigate defense issues. The second dimension consists of think-tanks and academic expertise that can contribute to informed debate on defense policy. The freedom for citizens to organize nongovernmental activity and protest in relation to the armed forces is the third dimension.

Within this imagined collective, academics, civil society and the media periodically set the agenda for instance, an evaluation of the level of transparency and accountability on defence expenditure on internal security operations or the purchase of arms and even contributing troops to peace support operations. This can be initiated through pilot projects whose findings become the basis of advocacy by civil society.

This becomes imperative in Nigeria because defence budgeting in Nigeria since 1999 cannot be seen to have lived up to the assumption that the involvement of legislatures and the MOD ensures transparency, accountability and institutional control of the military in a democracy (Giraldo 2006).

The rest of the article is divided into three sections. The next section analyses how irregular warfare (Gregor 2014) like Boko Haram and the militancy in the Niger Delta and of late; the farmers-herders conflicts, protests by IPOB and kidnapping in the southeast, have provided justification for continuous deployment of the military on the streets and in communities across the country in establishing the fact that "All violence is ultimately local"

(Obadare 2014), and that threats to national security are now largely internal and rarely external. This is followed by an examination of the impact of budgetary and extra-budgetary allocations on Boko Haram being the main threat to Nigeria's security.

The final section focuses, first, on the gap between the huge (extra) budgetary allocations and the morale and will of the troops and the overall conduct of the counter-insurgency operations in Nigeria; and second, on the complementary roles that academics, the media and civil society can play in ensuring transparency and accountability in defence budgeting.

Theatre of 'Operations'

One symbol of the state of fear and insecurity in contemporary Nigeria, both in rural and urban settings, is the presence of military check points across the country in addition to the police checkpoints that many have been used to. In the epicenter of Boko Haram, that is the north-east, there is Operation Lafiya Dole, as the main platform for overall Counter-Terrorism and Counter-Insurgency Operations. The scope, scale and depth encompass three divisions and more than five states (Iroegbu 2016). Other operations have sprung from it and they include Operation Crackdown for bringing closure to the war against the insurgents especially the remnants of Boko Haram sect in Sambisa Forest. There is also, Operation Gama Aiki, manning the northern part of Borno state (Iroegbu 2016). Others brought into existence by the Boko Haram are Operation Restore Order, Operation Boyona, Operation Zaman Lafiya and Operation Last Hold; and Operation Safe Corridor, meant for the de-radicalization and rehabilitation of repentant Boko Haram terrorists.

In the north-central, there is Operation Safe Haven standing in Plateau State with a spatial mandate that includes Benue, Kogi, Nasarawa and Kwara States owing to interment violence in the context of indigene-settler clashes, farmers-herders clashes, boundary and chieftaincy disputes as well as banditry and other criminal occurrences.

In the north-west, Operation Sara Daji and Operation Harbin Kunama deployed in response to local and transnational banditry, cattle rustling, and armed robbery especially in robbers operating particularly in Zamfara, Kaduna and boundaries of Sokoto, Kebbi, Katsina and Kano states. Despite these, many state governors in the northwest have been striking deals with the criminals which has not yielded the much-desired cessation of attacks and raids thereby making the withdrawal of the military inconceivable.

In the South-south, Operation Delta Safe has emerged from what was formerly called Operation Pulo Shield. In addition to this, there is Operation Crocodile Smile led by the

Nigerian Army while the Navy is on Operation Tsera Teku.

The main issues of concern here are resurgent Niger Delta militancy and other acts of criminality like oil theft, vandalism, and bunkering in the region (Iroegbu 2016). In order to protect critical state installations like the pipelines from the vandals, there is Operation Awase in the South west, with the express mandate of quelling the criminal operations around Ogun-Lagos axis, especially in Arepo, where illegal oil bunkering and pipeline vandalism are frequent occurrences. South East has Operation Iron Fence to combat armed robbers, hooligans and kidnappers.

Also, in the south-east, Operation Egwu Eke, meaning Operation Pyhton Dance, was initiated mainly to respond to the now outlawed Indigenous People of Biafra, (IPOB), although it was later modified as Operation Atilogwu, meaning Operation Dance for Peace in October 2019 (Erunke 2019). Finally, there is Operation Mesa, which is a Joint Task Force (JTF) operation against all forms of criminal activities in all the states of the federation.

These are attestations to the existence of zones of contested governance where state control gets violently contested. They are also predation zones as prescribed by MacEachern (2018:95) because they are "difficult and dangerous to access areas where state control can only be imposed via military force ..." Given the actors, sites, weaponry and aspirations of the protracted insurgency, as well as the militancy and clashes that have warranted the deployment of the military across Nigeria, they qualify as irregular wars as defined by Gregor (2014) because they are violent struggles among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over relevant populations. (See also, Rogers 2016 and Hooker and Collins 2015).

These irregular wars occur in two broad contexts of communal violence and state-directed violence as described by (Williams 2017). Typically, communal violence erupts as indigene-settler clashes over land, chieftaincy/kingship stools and sometimes over socio-economic and political exclusion (Adebanwi 2005b).

The epicenters of such irregular wars are communities in the north-central and north-west geo-political zones where such conflicts have generated community or stationary militias, warlords and armouries. The vectors of state-directed violence are often insurgents whose targets are mostly critical state infrastructures, state actors and security personnel. Two of such have been monstrous in the Fourth-Republic.

These are the Niger Delta militants largely borne out of environmental injustice and aspiring for increased allocation of resources and those

propelled by politico-religious aspirations like the Boko Haram and its variant; the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP). Therefore, the existence of militias and insurgents across the country makes deployment of the military inevitable with an attendant impact on defence budgeting.

Prescribed as "under-resourced and sapped by corruption" (Campbell and Page 2018:123), a more transparent and accountable use of budgetary allocations and resources will no doubt help in improving the capability of Nigeria's military. Furthermore, since some of these operations have gone on for more than a decade, an enquiry into patterns of spending on them is useful because of its implications for the performance, health and well-being of the troops.

For instance, what are the safeguards against fatigue in the light of susceptibility to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as seen recently in Borno when an unnamed soldier shot himself and four other colleagues (Haruna 2020)?

As a force whose deployment and withdrawal are dependent on the restoration of order to the zones of predation and contested governance across the country; there has been an increase in the budgets for the military through the ministry of defence as presented below. Has this increase enhanced the morale and will of the troops in the northeast and other sites where the military has been deployed? This is best measured using the performance of the military against the Boko Haram as will be attempted below.

Defence Budgets and Military Performance from 2009-2018: Fuel or Water on Fire?

A budget reveals the areas of priority of any government. It is also expected that increased budgetary allocations should bring about improvement in performance by extinguishing the insurgency. However, this has not been the case in Nigeria, bringing to mind the argument of Omitogun and Oduntan (2006) that there is a huge difference between theory and reality in defence budgeting as a way of comprehending why defence budget have had sub-optimal impacts in Nigeria. For them, the factors undermining the effectiveness of military budgeting in Nigeria are:

> the lack of a defence policy; weak control by the MOD; inefficient disbursement of funds; the lack of transparency; weak parliamentary control; extra-budgetary revenue and expenditure; and the limited involvement of civil society. Individual corruption remains an all-pervading problem (Omitogun and Oduntan 2006:169)

A testimony to the breakdown above is the on-going trial of those alleged to have been involved the defence-spending scandal known as the "Dasuki Gate." Considering the enumerated underminers of budget performance in the defence sector and the "Dasuki Gate" scandal leads one to ask if there are existing structures for ensuring transparency and accountability? As presented below, the escalation of the Boko Haram insurgency instigated an increase in budgetary allocation to defence.

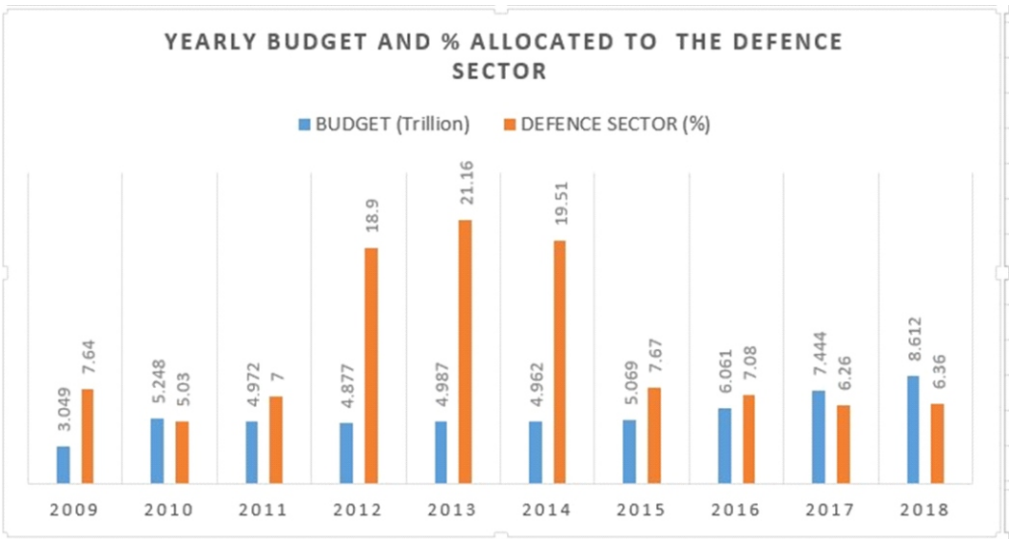

Fig. 1: Bar chart showing yearly budget and percentage allocated to the Defence sector 2009-2018.

In 2009, the defence sector was allocated #233bn (7.64%) of the #3.048trn budget. In 2010, #264bn (5.03%) was allocated out of the #5.248trn. In 2011, the allocation was increased to #348bn (7%) of the #4.972trn. In 2012, the allocation to defence further skyrocketed to #921.91bn (18.90%) of the #4.877trn budget. In 2013, the allocation again increased to #1.055trn (21.16%) of the #4.987trn budget. In 2014, it dropped to #968.127bn (19.51%) of the #4.92trn budget. The figure again came down to #388.459bn (7.67%) of the #5.068trn budget in 2015 and #429.128bn (7.08%) of #6.06trn budget in 2016. In 2017, #465.87bn (6.26%) out of the #7.44trn budget was allocated while in 2018, the allocation to defence increased to #580.145bn (6.36%) of the 8.612trn budget.

Furthermore, there were extra-budgetary allocations and releases justified on the basis of the escalation of the war on terror. In a government

committee report released in late 2015, it was discovered that extra-budgetary 'intervention' amounted to $6.6 billons over the period 2007-2015, which implies that Nigeria's actual military expenditure was 30% higher than reported (Sam et al 2016). However, in 2019, there was a drop in the defence budget of Nigeria by 8.2% (Iroegbu 2020). It should be noted that only fractions of the actual amounts get released; in most cases, never more than 50%-60%

.

As shown in the above chart, the escalation of Boko Haram attacks meant increased budgetary and extra-budgetary allocations to the military. However, the increased allocations and spending have produced neither the claimed "technical" defeat of the insurgents by the Buhari administration nor the capture of Abubakar Shekau who consistently releases videos of himself ridiculing the government, which are followed by attacks on both hard and soft targets to show his invincibility and superiority of his forces.

For instance, 2013-2015 were years when budgetary allocations rose geometrically, but rather than emboldening the government forces, they were years the military made a tactical retreat a euphemism for fleeing in the face of the superior firepower of the insurgents. And in 2015, Boko Haram hoisted its flag in over 20 Local Government Areas across Yobe, Borno and Adamawa States, officially making it the deadliest terrorist organization in the world. Although the military made significant gains especially from late 2015 to 2017, Omeni (2018) argues that such gains should be ascribed to questionable decision-making, inaccurate war calculus, and poor comprehension of the difference between capturing and holding strategic territory by the Boko Haram and not taken as evidences of improvement in will and morale of the Nigerian troops.

Indeed, from 2015 to 2020, the promise of defeating Boko Haram has not been kept, nor has there been an improvement in the will and morale of the fighting forces as often revealed in war experiences of soldiers on their social media accounts. Out of 353 Nigerians killed by terrorists and bandits in March 2020, 161 were military personnel (Iroegbu 2020). These discouraging reports and stories are indicative of the weakening morale and will of the military.

The inability of extra-budgetary allocations to strengthen the will and morale of the government troops can be understood in the light of some specific factors, include obsolete technology, insufficient funding, poor inter-agency cooperation, weak institutional control and oversight especially by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the legislature, and entrenched or institutionalized corruption (Adebanwi 2012). Failure in these areas causes psychological and operational imbalance for the

troops because they lead to hiccups in supplies, logistics, troop movement, inability to retain captured territories and reinforcements. Apart from making the troops vulnerable, they make them impotent in defending civilians whose fear becomes heightened. This fear pushes many in these communities into negotiating their freedom and safety of doing business with the terrorists (Salkida 2020) with attendant blow on the morale and will of the government troops. This in turn boosts the morale of the insurgents for whom instilling fear in the civilian population is a major goal. This makes an evaluation of the conduct of the counter-insurgency imperative, and in the opinion of Adedayo (2020):

> The fact must be stated that fighting this insurgency seems to be, for the military Generals in the war theatre, a mercantile activity that must be prolonged for the sake of the belly. Billions of dollars are voted for hardware, software and military welfare yearly, which allegedly slip into the bottomless pockets of the Generals and their collaborators in government.

Indeed, the realities and feedbacks from the theater of operations are not reinforcing public confidence in the ability of the Nigerian forces to extinguish Boko Haram and in a seeming assessment of the war against insurgency in the last decade, De Montclos (2019: 1) submits that:

> President Muhammadu Buhari. . . Democratically elected in 2015, and again in 2019, . . . has failed to implement his promised political and economic reforms of fighting corruption and protecting Nigeria . . . Keen to protect the army's reputation, he has covered up its excesses against Boko Haram and asked parliament to approve plans to borrow $1bn to fund the war on terror.

As a verdict that is hard to contravene with facts, it is evident that opacity has been prevalent in defence budgeting and spending as Nigeria now contends with irregular warfare in the north-east and other parts of the country. Entrenched and individual corruption or a culture of corruption in the military has been identified as an enemy that the military must first of all defeat (Bappah 2016) because it undermines the optimal performance of both the institution and the individual. So, what can be done differently in reversing the trend and restoring the will and morale of the Nigerian troops? The final next section makes the case for an intellectual collective aimed at transparency and accountability in defence budgeting.

The Intellectual Collective for Transparency and Accountability in Nigeria's Defence Budgeting

It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carryout, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things. (Machiavelli, The Prince and the Discourses quoted in Mampilly 2011:1) The intellectual cannot be measured by his mental powers, insight and creativity alone. It is rather the social milieu of which he is a part of, and the nature of his relationship to this that determines his role and status as an intellectual (Molner 1961 quoted in Adebanwi 2014: 1).

The existence of entrenched corruption in the military (Bappah 2016) and the weakness of institutions responsible for oversights such as the MoD and the legislature make it exigent to explore novel ways of demanding accountability and transparency in defence budgeting. One factor sustaining this anomaly is the opacity that characterizes budgeting and spending. Therefore, if the trend must be reversed, there must be a new way of ensuring transparency and accountability.

This brings to mind the role of the intellectual as defined by Jean Paul Sartre that "a critical intellectual's task is to bear witness, analyse, expose and criticize a wide range of social evil" (Jean Paul Sartre quoted in Adebanwi 2014:1). Any meaningful response to the threat posed by corruption to national security in Nigeria's Fourth-Republic would benefit from a well-constituted intellectual collective.

Conceived in different contexts as traditional, organic, total, universal and specific by leading thinkers like Mannheim, Karl Max and Antonio Gramsci, intellectuals eventually came to be seen as "knowledge-producers who were essential to the functioning of contemporary society" (Adebanwi 2014: 5). Included in this context are media intellectuals whose agency in demanding accountability and transparency in the conduct of state affairs dates back to the colonial days.

Finally, I include civil society in its deepest sense because of its capacity to ensure that the ideas generated from the collective can be the basis of advocacy for improved transparency and accountability in defence budgeting.

Using Diamond's (2004) trifurcation of accountability into horizontal, vertical and external aspects, situating a role for the intellectual collective is not hard. Horizontal accountability is ensured by the judiciary and anti-corruption agencies, audit agencies, electoral commissions, the parliament, government constituted panels of inquiry. Vertical accountability is demanded by citizens often through credible elections, a pluralistic civil society, think-tanks and the mass media.

External accountability comes from the international community through the exertion of their influence. Out of these three, the location of the civil society in the vertical accountability category underscores its importance and the complementary role it can play within a formation comprising academics and the media.

Individually, each of the actors in this collective has been active in its quest for more transparency and accountability in defence budgeting in Nigeria by working within respective mandates as researchers, reporters conducting investigative journalism, editorials and blowing whistles on sleaze in the defence sector. Also, civil society has been active in providing technical support to the legislature especially in the areas of training and facilitating public engagements as well as lobbying and advocacies. As much as it is discernible that they all have a common goal; that is transparency and accountability, their activities have not been sustained largely because they are constrained by limited resources. For instance, while the academic carries out a structured study, the media conduct investigative journalism and the outcomes of the two ventures can be the basis of informed advocacy for civil society.

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Corruption, Illicit Enrichment, and Underdevelopment in Equatorial Guinea

By Christophe Dongmo*

Abstract

Using evidence from contemporary Equatorial Guinea, this essay illustrates how corruption hurts the poor disproportionately by diverting funds intended for development and undermining the country's ability to provide basic services. Illicit enrichment is also a key element in economic underperformance and a major obstacle to poverty alleviation, growth and development. The paper argues that, by exacerbating inequality and desecrating the rule of law, corruption fosters bad governance, slows down the administrative process, and makes the implementation of government reform policies ineffective. Ultimately, corruption undermines the legitimacy and stability of democratic regimes, making them prone to authoritarianism.

Keywords: Equatorial Guinea, Corruption, Illicit Enrichment, Patrimonialism, Natural Resources

Equatorial Guinea is a small oil-rich Central African patrimonial state led by President Theodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo since August 1979, making him the world's longest serving head of state. During this time, Mbasogo and members of his close family have reportedly hoarded enormous public resources. The head of state dominates all branches of government in collaboration with members of his Esanguii clan and political party, the Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea (PDGE), which was established in 1991.

Following the discovery of large oil reserves in the 1990, Equatorial Guinea experienced rapid economic growth. According to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Factbook, crude oil production amounted to 172 000 barrels per day in 2018, standing 38 in the world behind African countries such as Nigeria (1,989,000), Angola (1,593,000), Algeria (1,259,000), Libya (1,039,000), Egypt (639,000), Congo (340,000), Gabon (196,000), and Ghana (173,000). However, oil production peaked in late 2004 and has slowly declined since, although an aggressive search for new oil fields continues.

A basic assumption of this paper is that undemocratic regimes undermine anti-corruption and development efforts. As one of Africa's largest oil producers, Equatorial Guinea has the highest per capital income on the continent. Although the country is among the top five oil producers in sub-Saharan Africa, it still ranks low, 141 out of 189 countries, in the Human Development Index, boasting one of the world's largest gaps between per capita

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wealth and human development score.

In Equatorial Guinea, it is argued, illicit enrichment is a key element in economic underperformance and a major obstacle to poverty alleviation, growth and development. Corruption hurts the poor disproportionately by diverting funds intended for development, undermining a government's ability to provide basic services, feeding inequality and injustice and discouraging foreign aid and investment.

I further argue that by exacerbating inequality, corruption fosters bad governance, stymies the administrative process, and makes the implementation of government reforms policies ineffective, thereby undermining the legitimacy and stability of democratic regimes and sustaining the survival of authoritarian ones. In substantiation of this claim, I highlight widespread corruption and illicit enrichment as attributes of Equatorial Guinea's patrimonial state. Finally, I review the distributional effects of corruption on critical development fields such as education and public health.

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Corruption and Illicit Enrichment in the Management of Equatorial Guinea's Patrimonial State

Autocratic regimes form an institutional environment for entrepreneurship that differs substantially from those in democratic capitalist societies. They subordinate the economy in order to create rent and maintain power (Wegner, 2019). The politico-economic model that developed in Equatorial Guinea under Obiang Nguema's rule is patrimonial. This system is characterized by the strong role of the state, the nationalisation of strategic industries, ownership of large business ventures by the oligarchs, and the placement of loyal elites at the commanding heights of the economy. Patrimonialism is a form of political organisation whereby authourity is primarily based on the personal power exercised by a ruler, acting alone or as part of a powerful oligarchy. Swiss legal scholar Karl Ludwig von Haller (1768 – 1854) applied the concept of patrimonialism to the study of politics at the beginning of the 19th century by arguing that the state should be viewed as the patrimonium, that is, the patrimonial possession of the ruler. In the 20th century Max Weber, (1864 – 1920), German sociologist and political economist, adopted the term Patrimonialstaat as a label for his ideal-type model of traditional authority (Herrschaft).

Patrimonial states are autocratic political regimes that exclude the lower, middle and upper classes from power. Their very essence “consists in the idea that "the whole government authority and the economic rights which correspond to it, tend to be treated as privately appropriated economic advantages" (Medard, 1996). At the outset, patrimonialism is centered on family structures, particularly on the authority of fathers within families. Here, the leaders typically enjoy absolute personal power, since people are accountable to the leader, not the

nation. In Equatorial Guinea, power relations unfold according to the logic of patrimonialism. For example, Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, the country's Vice President and son of President Obiang, has overall control of the security forces. The minister of defense, who also fulfills police functions in border areas, sensitive sites, and high-traffic areas, reports directly to the Vice President. Civilian authorities do not maintain effective control over the security forces, while the government by and large overlooks acts of impunity by state officials, whether in the security forces or elsewhere in the government.

Corruption extends to the Equatorial Guinea's political and human rights sectors, thereby endangering democratic values and fundamental freedoms. Mismanagement of public funds, credible allegations of high-level corruption, and serious human rights violations persist nationwide. After monitoring elections and the enslavement of women and children by traffickers, Freedom House gave Equatorial Guinea its possible lowest possible ranking in 2015 (Freedom House, 2015). In December 2017, police arrested 147 members of the opposition party Citizens for Innovation (CI) in the eastern city of Aconibe. Two people were physically tortured to death. Twenty-eight were sentenced to 30 years in prison and the party dissolved. (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

Significant state-sanctioned human rights violations in Equatorial Guinea's patrimonial state include the following: torture, arbitrary detention by government agents, harsh and life-threatening prison conditions, arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy, restrictions on free expression, substantial interference with the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of association, overly restrictive laws on non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and violence against women and girls, including rape, with limited government action to investigate or prosecute those responsible (US Department of State, 2019: 1 - 2).

illicit enrichment forms the cornerstone of corruption in Equatorial Guinea. The country ranks 173 out of 180 on the corruption index with a score of 16 out of 100. There is lack of transparency in government due to corruption. There are no specific laws about conflict of interest or nepotism. In this respect, the United States Department of State country report on Human Rights Practices for 2019 notes that:

"While the law provides severe criminal penalties for official corruption, the government did not effectively implement the law. Officials frequently engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. There were numerous reports of government corruption during the year, as the president and members of his inner circle continued to amass personal fortunes from the revenues associated with monopolies on all domestic commercial ventures, as

well as timber and oil exports. Corruption at all levels of government was a severe problem. Numerous foreign investigations continued into high-level official corruption. According to Freedom House, the budget process was 'opaque.' The government implemented a number of IMF recommendations to improve fiscal transparency during the year, including auditing state-owned enterprises and public debt using international accounting firms, and publishing data on public sector debt in the budget" (pp. 8 – 9).

With respect to financial disclosure, national legal instruments require public officials to declare their assets to the National Commission on Public Ethics, although declarations are rarely made public, and the government does not effectively enforce the law. There are no formal procedures to control submission of asset disclosures and no penalties for noncompliance.

The ostentatious display of wealth by the president's family and other officials in contrast to the poverty in the country is a case in point. Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, Vice-President of Equatorial Guinea and son of the president Obiang Nguema, has been accused of illicit enrichment. Global Witness has long investigated this paradox by publishing its findings in two reports, "Time for Transparency» in 2004 and "The Secret of a Shopaholic » in 2009. Piecing together bank, mortgage and corporate records, the organisation revealed in 2006 that, as a minister in the government, Teodorin Obiang bought a US$30 million mansion in Malibu, California – despite an official salary of US$ 4,000 - 5,000 a month. Eight years later, Obiang had to give up this mansion after an investigation by the United States Department of Justice's Kleptocracy Asset Recovery Initiative.

On paper at least, Equatorial Guinea spends heavily on while elephant physical infrastructure projects. For instance, while its total budget is around US$5 billion per annum, US$4 billion – about 80 per cent of that – goes to infrastructure. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the average percentage spent on infrastructure is about 30 percent. From 2009 to 2013, most of the country's resources ostensibly went to infrastructure projects, many of which do not have any social value. Only a pittance went to critical sectors such as healthcare, education, agriculture, rural development, industrialization, mining and technological development.

Oil revenues, the country's economic mainstay, are mainly used for the development of infrastructure that has little impact on improving the population's living standards. Instead of spending the country's oil riches on improving life for ordinary citizens, Equatorial Guinea is diverting its enormous wealth towards unproductive infrastructure projects such as highways and luxury hotels, a sector where state

corruption is rife (Human Rights Watch, 2017 A).

Many of these projects fall under what the International Monetary Fund (IMF) describe as "prestige projects." Among these is luxury 5-star hotel and resort, the Sipopo, near the capital city of Malabo. In addition to a 5-star hotel, Sipopo boasts of 52 villas built specifically for the 2011 African Union summit – one villa for each head of state, who slept there for three nights, and which are now empty. To access Sipopo, the government built an enormous six-lane highway, which is generally underused. There is the new capital city the government decided to build in the middle of the jungle called Oyala. It also constructed government buildings in Bata, which serves as an alternate capital. As a result, each ministry has three separate buildings for a population of 1 million. Likewise, the country has five major airports. One tiny island of just 5,000 people, Annobon, has a US$112 million seaport, but no high school (Human Rights Watch, 2017 A). Several villages have a presidential palace and a helipad, even though public authorities barely visit them more than once a year.

Many popular residential neighborhoods, receive little or no government investment despite the massive outlays in public infrastructure for government buildings and other prestige projects. Surveying the situation in Equatorial Guinea, Sarah Saadoun, Researcher at Human Rights Watch, concludes that "[T]he contrast is so great – there are people living in tiny homes by muddy roads with no running water next to these enormous mansions" For instance, an Italian trader reported to Human Rights Watch how the corruption scheme works: "the government would award contracts to a company owned by the first lady, and the entire project would then be subcontracted to a company partially owned by the president's son" (Human Rights Watch, 2017 B).

Effects of Corruption on Education and Public Health

Due to the aforementioned practices, health, education and social well-being sectors have been ripped apart by corruption. Equatorial Guinea, according to a HRW Report, has failed to provide "crucial public services, and does not produce reliable data relevant to economic and social rights" (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

Corruption and illicit enrichment have had a negative impact on elementary education funding in Equatorial Guinea. With a population of one million, the Central African country has the seventh highest proportion of children not registered in primary schools in the world (UNICEF, 2016). Liberia was home to the highest proportion of out-of-school children with nearly two-thirds of primary-aged children not accessing school. The second highest was South Sudan, where 59 per cent of children are missing out

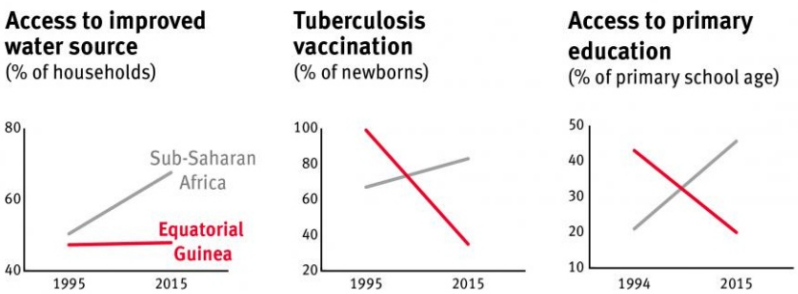
on their right to a primary education and 1 in 3 schools is closed due to conflict. Sudan (45 per cent), Niger (38 per cent) and Nigeria (34 per cent) also feature in the top 10 countries with the highest primary out-of-school rates, painting a clear picture of how humanitarian emergencies and protracted crises are forcing children out of school. The UNICEF data highlight the extent of an education crisis affecting countries already blighted by conflict, corruption, prolonged periods of drought, flash floods, earthquakes and high rates of extreme poverty.

Equatorial Guinea does not live up to its obligation to support people's right to health and education. The amount of money invested in these sectors hampers the government's ability to deliver elementary and secondary education, health and clean water to citizens. Human Rights Watch reports, following a field study, that several schools were in filthy condition, have no working light bulbs, no electricity, with the ceiling falling down and dirty bathroom. Classes are crowded, with some having close to 105 students per classroom. Half of the children nationwide attend private school due to the derelict state of the public schools. Without education, a generation of children living in countries affected by conflict, natural disasters and extreme poverty will grow up without the skills they need to contribute to their countries and economies, exacerbating the already desperate situation for millions of children and their families.

Equatorial Guinea's mismanagement of its oil wealth has contributed to chronic underfunding of its public health system. There are two main hospitals in the country. One is a public hospital, but it is not free and doctors will not see the patient unless full payment is received upfront. There is a private hospital – built with public funds – but its fees are far too expensive for the average citizen. Even if people can afford these hospitals, the quality of care is extremely poor: long wait times, poor training, and lack of basic equipment such as gloves. Most importantly, if people do not have the money to pay, they will not be able to see a medical practitioner.

The mismanagement of natural resources is most apparent in Equatorial Guinea's critical public health sector where indicators like vaccination and school enrollment rates have actually plummeted over the past 20 years. Over 75 per cent of people in the country live below the poverty line, while millions lack clean water, food, housing, decent hospitals or adequate schools or basic dignity. In a country of stark contrasts, people live in tiny homes by muddy roads with no running water next to enormous mansions and highways. Despite its wealth, ‘Equatorial Guineas immunisation rates are among the lowest on the planet.

Despite its wealth, Equatorial Guinea's health and education indicators fall far behind those of Sub-Saharan Africa.



Sources: Human Rights Watch, 2017

Conclusion

In recent times, Equatorial Guinea's economic windfall from oil production has resulted in a massive increase in government revenue. However, the 2014 drop in global oil prices put enormous strain on the state budget and pushed the country into economic recession. In the meantime, corruption and human rights issues discourage several foreign corporations needing to invest. The control of corruption in Equatorial Guinea is among the lowest in the world, with the public authorities believed to be performing for their personal gain only.

Equatorial Guinea should focus its development strategies on the diversification of the country's economy to better contain external shocks caused by over-dependence on the export of raw materials (notably crude oil) and as a basis towards sustainable growth and development. Unless some new reserves are discovered, Equatorial Guinea's oil will run out in 2035. In fact, production is already in decline. This, coupled with low oil prices, means an economic crisis is kicking in and the country is now facing cuts. On 26 October 2017, under Article 57.3.c of the United Nations Convention against Corruption of 31 October 2003 prescribing that laws should be put in place to return stolen assets to their rightful owners, Transparency International France published, in October 2017, a report advocating that assets confiscated in cases of grand corruption should benefit the population in the country of origin by financing development efforts, anti-corruption initiatives and work to strengthen the rule of law.

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Rethinking the Dominant Narratives about Corruption in Africa

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Abstract

From a Nigerian perspective, this paper discusses some major narratives about corruption in Africa, and argues that they are flawed and misleading. Drawing on ethnographic data, we consider some of the psychological variables aiding corruption in the region, including ignorance, inferiority complex related to (neo-) colonialism, and emotions. These variables deepen our understanding of the phenomenon corruption and show that it can be combated through therapeutic and powerful educational anticorruption measures.

Keywords: Corruption; Africa; Nigeria; development

Introduction

'Corruption is an insidious plague that has a wide range of corrosive effects on societies. It undermines democracy and the rule of law, leads to violations of human rights, distorts markets, erodes the quality of life and allows organized crime, terrorism and other threats to human security to flourish' – UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan (2003).

Generally conceptualised as the use of public office for private gain, corruption has multiple negative effects on peace and development. Though a universal phenomenon, it seems to have generated a lot of concern in African countries. Because it hampers the growth of democracy and economic development, as well as negatively affects human rights, it is understandably on the front burner of discourses on African development. Warf (2017) observes that corruption is an aspect of African politics, especially at the highest levels of the state, as illustrated by high-profile scandals involving multiple heads of state. Apart from cases involving members of the political elite, other sectors of the African society have been involved, while those at the grassroots are not entirely innocent.

For example, in the education sector, cases of corruption include examination malpractice, favouritism in admission and employment, teachers' absenteeism, pay delay, and fraud in selection of prescribed textbooks (see Serfontein & de Waal, 2015; Coughlan, 2013; Campbell, 2018; Konte, 2018). McFerson (2009) states that, unlike the situation in developed countries, corruption actually kills people in Africa. Whereas corruption could kill

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anywhere, McFerson's point appears to be that the situation in Africa is worse than what obtains in so-called developed Western countries. While this is debatable, it is inarguable that extensive corruption in parts of Africa has had very unhelpful consequences for the peoples of the areas concerned.

Some scholars argue that corruption in Africa is different from corruption in other societies, especially in relation to its driving force, and that anticorruption measures depicting western and international appeals may be inappropriate for the African context (Szeftel, 2000). While this is understandable - that is, the idea that responses to corruption in various settings should be designed based on the context – a related idea that is more questionable is the widely held notion that corruption is an African norm (see Smith, 2001, 2007; Uslaner, 2010; Ekeh 1975). Smith (2001), for example, is of the opinion that what may appear to be corruption in some settings may be regarded as moral behaviour in Nigeria. In this paper, we argue that this narrative does not reflect the African reality and that it diverts attention from the real causes and consequences of corruption in the area, thereby hampering its eradication in the continent. In what follows, we discuss some of the dominant narratives of corruption in Africa and highlight some of the factors aiding corruption in the region.

a) Dominant narratives about corruption in Africa

a) Corruption is an element of African patronage system or culture: Clientelism and patronage, known to fuel corruption, are said to be historically part of African culture. Clientelism is the proffering of material goods in return for electoral or other support, where the criterion used by the patron to distribute the goods is certainty that the beneficiaries of the goods supported (or will support) them (Stokes, 2013). It drives corruption to the extent that it weakens compliance with ethical standards while increasing abuse of public duties, power and office.

According to Stephen Ellis (2006), political power and social prestige are accumulated through patronage in African societies. Szeftel (2000) has also argued that part of the reason why anticorruption measures fail in Africa is that they focus on institutional reforms, and neglect patterns of private accumulation and clientelist political mobilization.

The problem with this narrative is that not only does it misrepresent the very nature of patronage in African traditional setting and blindly compares contemporary political patronage to traditional patronage; it suggests selfishness as inherently

African. What is termed patronage in traditional African setting is communal or cooperative lifestyle, and in some cases philanthropism and altruism rewarded with an honour (such as social title) or gratitude. In traditional African setting, titles were not awarded solely based on material acquisitions but also as reward for engagement in community development services as well as the moral standing of awardees.

Wealth was not the only measure of eligibility for award of social titles or honours. While traditional patronage was done largely on the basis of altruism and gratitude, contemporary patronage is employed by selfish individuals, who exploit the socioeconomic conditions, and fragile psychology of beneficiaries, for example, for future political, social and economic gains. Even in Western contexts, philanthropists are rewarded with awards and large followers, yet that does not suggest patronage. Therefore, this narrative appears to be a colonial invention which some actors leverage to exploit postcolonial nations.

b) Corruption is approved in African ethical guide: It is also suggested that corruption is socially approved in interpersonal and intergroup relations in Africa, but we argue this is misleading. In his theory of the two publics, Ekeh (1975) suggests that different ethical principles guide the private and public affairs of Africans, using 'public' to mean formal institutions or positions serving the interest of the public. He also divides the public into primordial and civic publics with primordial public representing familial, kinship and ethnic attachment, and civic public representing one that comprises people with different ancestral, historical and ethnic features.

Ekeh argues that, unlike in the Western context where the same moral standards guide private and public behaviours, in an African context, morals guide private behaviour of Africans while their behaviour in public (civic) is amoral. He further observes that amorality in civic public is founded on the desire for legitimacy before members of one's primordial group who expect their members in civic public arena to be dishonest and partial in civic arena and accumulate largesse from the civic public for the benefit of the primordial public, with the irony being that the same individual is expected to be honest, moral and impartial in his affairs in primordial public.

Based on these postulates, Ekeh (1975:110) argues that it would be absurd for a Nigerian to demand bribe or embezzle resources in performance of his duties to his or her primordial public. De Maria (2007) and Akanle and Adesina (2013) echo Ekeh's claims. In the same spirit, Wraith and Simpkins (1963) hold that:

> *To put your fingers in the till of the local authority will not unduly burden your conscience and people may well think you are a smart fellow and envy your opportunities. To steal the funds of the union would offend the public conscience and ostracise you from the society (p. 50).*

Yet, a critical analysis of Ekeh's two publics reveals that at best it applies to politics and not to other aspects of African existence, and is misleading. The geographical formation of some countries such as Nigeria where ethnic groups cluster in one location resulting in a primordial member governing their primordial people offers the possibility of evaluating the strength of Ekeh's theory of the morality of primordial public.

The nepotism and corruption in these primordial spaces undermine the 'two publics' theory. For example, state governors and local government councillors reportedly embezzle funds meant for developmental projects in primordial settings without regard to primordial morality, morality or group interest.

They also collect bribes for award of major infrastructure contracts. Civil servants collect bribes and extort their fellow citizens irrespective of primordial affiliation. Even when it may be plausible to argue that the stealing or embezzlement of public funds by state governors and civil servants in primordial arena does not offend the spirit of primordial morality, since the fund flows from the civic arena and not ethnic association, widespread cases of embezzlement of association funds (including by women and youth leaders) –especially that of associations whose members live in distant places– suggests corruption is an opportunistic and contagious phenomenon.

Most likely, corruption is widespread in the civic public arena because of citizens' ignorance of processes of institutional governance and their responsibilities. It could be that association funds were not embezzled in earlier days because members lived close to one another, were aware of their collective ownership and responsibility in the management of the fund, and enjoyed the benefits of proximity

(excluding the possibility of ignorance) in checking the excesses and accountability of association fund holders.

c) Corruption can be traced to the history of African leaders: Africans who served as colonial chiefs and representatives for the colonial masters were deemed to be highly corrupt, extravagant, nepotic, and self-aggrandizing (Tignor, 1993).

The fact that they engaged in the extortion of their own people challenges the notion of primordial morality. Trignor (1983) blamed the grounding of corruption in Africa on colonial masters' tolerance of corruption cases, illustrated by use of trivial sanctions. It is important to note that the colonial masters' style of recruitment of representatives has also been implicated as causing corruption. According to Ojo (2018) they, i.e. the colonial overlords, mobilized majority ethnic groups against minority ethnic groups for easier control. Non-trustworthy and gullible individuals saw it as opportunity to gain recognition among the people, who could go against their traditional values.

Some Drivers of corruption in Africa

In this section, we discuss some of the factors aiding corruption among ordinary people in Africa. These factors, which we argue should receive more attention, include ignorance, neo-colonialism, and impaired or unhealed emotions (victimization-revenge theory).

a. Ignorance:

Ignorance is used here beyond its common understanding as 'something in need of correction or a kind of natural absence or void where knowledge has not yet spread' (Proctor, 2008:1). We find this common understanding problematic because it assumes an absolute epistemology (or true knowledge) (Smithson, 1985) and does not take cognizance of wilful and sanctioned ignorance. Sullivan and Tuana (2007) have also characterised ignorance as a tool of oppression wielded by the powerful. In corruption discourse, ignorance could be used to represent both wilful and actual lack of knowledge of existing or established facts (causes, consequences, and solutions) about corruption in one's context: this is largely the consequence of institutional weaknesses.

In the case of corruption in Africa, ignorance (when wilful) is more of a survival strategy whereby the victimized, through rationalization,

feigns or assumes ignorance of the right positions in order to avoid further victimization. An example is a young person or commuter feigning ignorant of his or her right to dignity of human person and liberty in order to escape police brutality and framed allegations against him or her. When ignorance is not wilful, it serves as a tool of oppression and manifests in government's non-transparency as well as a communication gap between relevant institutions and citizens. Lack of access to information about ministerial, departmental, institutional or agency rules, functions, and operational ethics, processes and limits hampers citizens' inquisitive power and resistant actions irrespective of their level of education. Because awareness precedes planned action, highly educated persons – who are found more likely to protest against corruption even in non-democratic states (Botero, Ponce, & Shliefer, 2012) – cannot protest corruption in the absence of institutional transparency and information about corrupt activities.

Deceptive knowledge propagated by elites from specific ethnic groups fosters ignorance on the part of the citizenry, vitiating their participation in the democratic process. For example, when the former governor of Nigeria's Abia State, Orji Uzor Kalu was convicted for ₦7.65 billion corruption and fraud, most Nigerian citizens of Igbo ethnic group could not see the implications of the conviction on good governance of the people but instead believed it to be ethnically motivated, as Orji Uzor Kalu is a member of Igbo ethnic group (see Levi, 2019). The understanding was that the Federal Government is victimizing Igbo senators who are pushing for Igbo presidency in the Senate.

The power of ignorance in promoting corruption led the Nigerian government, following UN recommendations, to enact the Freedom of Information Act (2015) which supports the rights of citizens to access institutional information upon demand, and the launching of the Financial and Transparency Open Treasury Portal.

b. (Neo-) colonialism and inferiority complex:

Colonisers' policy of divide and rule was not only divisive; it aided corruption. Colonial oppression tools included systematic denigration of the colonized person and their culture, and the continuous denial of humanity of the colonized person which often led to the development of self-doubt, identity confusion, or

feelings of inferiority among the colonized (Fanon, 1965; Memmi, 1965). The ensuing identity confusion and inferiority complex made the colonized persons disassociate themselves from their indigenous culture thereby imitating the culture and lifestyles of their colonial masters (Freire, 1970). David and Okazaki (2006) have found this to be the case with the Filipino people who perceive anything Filipino as inferior to European, American and White products. Something similar obtains in Nigeria, as illustrated by several examples. (see Oluwafemi, 2019.

Nigerian leaders and the educated classes have employed corrupt means to fulfil their need to distance themselves from their people and be like their colonial masters. Unfortunately, this mentality remains active.

The elite lifestyle (e.g. brand of wine, whisky; clothing designers, location of parties, place of shopping, etc.) portrayed in Nigeria's Nollywood movies is that of Western elites. In a quest to be like their colonizers or feel superior to (and distance themselves from) their fellows, Nigerians prefer shopping for goods from the West, with more financial cost. Thus, people engage in so many fraudulent and corrupt means to actualize or satisfy their 'superiority' desires.

c. Emotions and the victim-revenge factor

Emotions have to do with affects or feelings which could be intrinsically or socially induced. They include psychological or mental states or moods 'such as anger, bewilderment, anxiety, caring, and excitement, that are inextricably linked to personal, professional, relational, political, and cultural issues' (Chubbuck & Zembylas, 2008:277). Emotions have been shown by many studies to play a critical role in helping the survival and adaptation of human beings, and promoting their motivation to learn and communication with others (Hyson, 1996 cited in Zembylas, 2003), and influencing the ways we know the world, the values we have, and the relationships we develop with others (Zembylas, 2003; Glasman & Albarracin, 2006; McCarty & Shrum, 2001; Corral-Verdugo & Frias-Armenta, 2006).

Most causative hypotheses about corruption are sociological, political and economical in nature (Shera, Dosti, & Grabova, 2014; Johnson, LaFountain, & Yamarik, 2011; Ndikumana, 2006). Psychological studies on corruption are scanty. The existing few, like psychological studies mapping the relationship between personality (agreeableness, extraversion, neuroticism,

conscientiousness, openness) and criminal behaviours (e.g. Sharma et al., 2015; Mariano et al., 2016), consider the relationship between personality traits (e.g. conscientiousness) and corrupt behaviours (e.g. Connelly & Ones, 2008; Agbo & Iwundu, 2015). However, the strong correlation between emotions and behaviours (Chebat & Slusarczky, 2005) suggests the need for a psychological explanation of corruption beyond intrapsychic personality traits to psychological breakdown.

Smith-Crowe & Warren (2014) show how emotions of shame and anger, arising from sanction for being anticorrupt, positively and negatively interact with future engagement in corrupt practices. The narratives of individuals confronted for engaging in petty corruption (such as those highlighted subsequently) reveal emotions of anger (directed at others), defeat and revenge, arising from previous and everyday victimhood of corruption, as their cause for engaging in corruption. This emotion of anger precedes (and sometimes follows) feelings of defeat and victimhood, and then gives rise to thoughts of revenge and finally, leads to operationalization of the revenge. We call this victimization-revenge theory.

Victimization-revenge theory assumes that victims of corruption, in pursuit of faster equity which is usually disproportionate, redistribute their victimhood to or against people (who are not the perpetrators of corruption on them) in less strategic position than the avengers are at the point when they are redistributing their perceived loss or anger arising from their victimhood of corruption.

The nature of the sense of victimization revealed in our data differs from that highlighted by Olivier de Sardan (1999) where corrupt persons legitimate their own behaviour on grounds of monetary or time-cost. Victims in our study did not regard corrupt practices as right, and redistributed corruption mainly as a way of propitiating their anger or serving justice. This theory agrees with the long-standing position in violence studies that violence begets violence as victims stand greater chances of perpetrating future violence (see Widom, 1987).

Victimization-revenge corruption theory further explains the usual defence by corrupt persons – 'same was done to me', 'we all suffered the same thing', 'I am recouping what was taken or stolen from me.' The non-treatment of or non-healing from the psychological torture,

trauma and sickness of being a victim of corruption promotes its redistribution by victims, which explains growing corruption despite measures to eradicate it.

The sense of victimhood and revenge, with time, gives way to the sense of moral disengagement – a situation whereby people either consciously or unconsciously adduce reasons and justifications that enable them to engage in immoral conducts as though they are morally approved (Bandura, 2002) – more represented in (anti)corruption literature as "collective action problem" where people's trust and perception of how others act influence their decisions on whether to engage in or resist corruption (Marquette & Peiffer, 2018).

At this point, people use sanitised language (such as national cake, greasing the palm or wheel) to represent corruption, some blame the corruption on victims of corruptions (e.g. he enabled corruption by disregarding traffic rules, she enabled extortion by establishing close relationship with her lecturer, etc.), others exonerate their corrupt practices through social comparison (e.g. everybody does it, nobody is a saint, sin is sin irrespective of the quantum or magnitude, etc.). Just like people behave more cruelly when assaultive actions are given euphemistic names than aggressive names (see Diener et al., 1975), representing corruption with sanitised names bellies its cruelty, enabling people to often engage in corrupt acts. This neglected counter narrative explains the widespread-ness of corruption in Africa as many individuals are initiated into this victimhood and revenge emotions in everyday African societies.

For example, Homberger (2018) highlighted various ways in which young middle-class South Africans undergo the rituals of corruption with the most rampant being at police check points and during the processing of driver's license acquisition. In Nigeria, teenagers and adolescents come to be initiated at the police check points and they become first victims, in most cases, during external entrance examinations such as First School Leaving Certificate Examination, West African Senior School Certificate Examination, etc. The non-exclusion of any class or generation from corruption in Africa is very troubling and this implicates therapeutic solutions to corruption menace. In the next section, we present some real life stories from Nigeria that illustrate the victimization-revenge process.

While normative narratives can hardly offer justifications for increasing corruption, especially petty corruption, despite anticorruption measures, the framed counter narratives could offer possible explanations for the increasing rate of corruption. We use three accounts collected in Nigeria, out of many other similar accounts, to illustrate this.

Case 1: Mathew is a lecturer in one of the Nigerian universities. He said the reason he extorts money from students before reading their projects (or collecting their assignments), which are his official duties by the way, is because he was suffered, as a student, by his lecturers who extorted him in various ways. He said he has to recover all the money he spent unjustly as a student and the ones he still pays as bribe to get some of his work or requests done in some occasions. He further said, his major targets are those students who could not pass on their own and are willing to pay off their ways. He "justified" his action by claiming that he passes unserious and weak students without them meeting the required standards, and as right with his belief that most individuals controlling Nigerian finance and governance did not go to school and some among them bought their ways through schools.

Case 2: On one occasion, one of the authors prevented a policeman from collecting bribe (money they extort from motorists) from an Okada man taking her to school even though they had to stay for over 15 minutes on that check point since the policeman refused to let them pass, insisting on collecting the money. As she argued the impropriety of their actions, the police officer learnt she was a lecturer and boldly asked her, as a defence to his action, "would you say you don't extort your students?" and added that "as a student, my lecturers were imposing handouts on us and forcing us to sort their courses".

When she told him that she does not, he maintained his ground that corruption is deeply practiced in every institution not just the police. He then narrated how he almost died from an ailment because an over-the-counter prohibited drug made available in hospitals at a reduced cost (for beneficiaries of National Health Insurance Scheme) was said to be unavailable by a medical doctor at a federal teaching hospital and the same doctor went on to request for a sum of N100,000 to make the drug available to him. He believed the drug

was available and only hoarded by the doctors with the cooperation of the pharmacists. He could not afford the money and the doctor refused accepting N20,000 from him but he was dying. He said he gave up hope of living beyond that week until an anonymous source revealed to him of a private chemist that secretly sells the prohibited drugs where he bought it at N7,000.

Case 3: Favour, who lived in one of the author's neighbourhood and is a graduate of a Nigerian polytechnic, while congratulating her on getting lectureship job expressed, her expectation as follows: 'I wish I were you. Next Christmas you will come home with one of the latest cars, and when you launch your first mansion in the next five years, please invite me'. Surprised, she asked where the money would come from – the meagre salary? She looked surprised and then said, "from your students, of course. You prepare hand-outs and sell to them at exorbitant prices, you make them pay money before submitting their assignments to you, and they have to sort (pay money) if they want to pass your exams..." In response, the author explained, 'I was never extorted by my lecturers and I won't extort my students even if my lecturers had extorted me'.

But Favour added, "you are not serious. In my own school, we pay for every service rendered by our lecturers to us. They demand for money in everything: if you can't pay, you fail. Students are not allowed to write their projects themselves, you have to pay your project supervisor or another lecturer to write it for you or they won't graduate you. I had to sleep around to meet up with their demands. If God gives me lecturing opportunity, I would be so grateful. I will not show students mercy, I will use them to get rich. If you see the type of cars my lecturers drive, you won't talk nonsense."

Conclusion

We have argued that corruption is not embedded in an 'African culture of patronage,' nor is it the result of parochialism, but the result of psychological disposition especially ignorance, greed, inferiority complex related to neo-colonialism, and bitterness arising from being victims of corruption. As violence begets violence, so does corruption beget corruption, and corruption victims most times do not heal from the psychological trauma of being victims of corruption, leading to its redistribution.

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Corruption and Democracy in Nigeria: A Preliminary Analysis

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Abstract

This essay examines the connection between corruption and democracy in Nigeria. Corruption, understood as a dishonest act or an abuse of power undertaken to acquire illicit benefit or gain, threatens political and socio-economic development. Democracy, on the other hand, because it derives from popular will, is seen as the best form of governance conducive to dignity and freedom. With democracy and corruption being so diametrically opposed to each other, it is jarring that corruption would flourish and become endemic the way it has in contemporary Nigeria, to the extent of becoming an impediment to the country's democratic aspirations. This essay argues that constitutional provisions which foster the rule of law should be effectively enforced to combat corruption. It concludes with relevant recommendations to promote effective democratic governance in Nigeria.

Keywords Democracy, Corruotion, Nigeria, EFCC, ICPC

Introduction

An effort of successive administrations notwithstanding, Nigeria has found it difficult to attain democratic stability. In the main, this failure is due to the lack of adherence to ethos, rule of law and constitutionality, thus stunting the growth of Nigerian democracy. This shortcoming has been attributed to the effect of corruption on the socio-economic, cultural and political landscape of Nigeria, and unless it is curbed, progress will remain unattainable.

Successive Nigerian governments have taken various measures to address the incidence of corruption in the country, including public service reform (monetization to reduce waste and reduction or over-bloated personnel, reform of public procurement); and establishment of anti-corruption agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corruption and other Practices Commission (ICPC). Despite the gains made by these institutions, the situation remains unpalatable as corruption continues to spread and penetrate every facet of national life in Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that this essay analyzes the tensions between corruption and democracy, the consequences of corruption for good governance and social-economic development in Nigeria, and tables some recommendations.

The Concept of Democracy

Democracy is the equal participation of citizens in the decision-making process. For example, if a country wants to introduce a new law, the citizens should first be consulted before such a law is introduced. Furthermore, citizens should also

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actively participate in the implementation of the law.

However, it is critical to note that in any democratic society there are some people, especially the minority, who will have their views or opinions overwritten by the majority. In this regard, for democracy to prevail, there tolerance and respect for different and opposing opinions are essential. In fact, the very admission that there are some views which are going to be suppressed means that democracy is relative and, therefore, differs from one place to another. A democracy that is meaningful to people is that which positively affects at least their social and economic well-being. Thus, these economic and social impacts suggest the primacy of the political objectives of the whole democratization process. However, to ensure broad participation of the people and ensure legitimacy, principles and procedures of democracy as well as protection of human rights are essential ingredients.

Corruption

Corruption refers to the securing of wealth or power through illegal means – private gain at public expense; or a misuse of public power for private benefit. In addition, corruption is behavior which deviates from the formal duties of a public role, because of private gains - regarding (personal, close family, private clique, pecuniary or status gains. Examples are bribery (use of reward to pervert the judgment of a person in position of trust); nepotism (appointment because of relationship rather than merit); and misappropriation (illegal appropriation of public resources for private regarding use).

Admittedly, the foregoing definition becomes difficult to operate where corruption is widespread and regarded as the norm by majority of the people. Corruption is also perversion of integrity, which could be present in acts such as bribery, inordinate favours or moral depravity. It occurs when two or more parties interact to subvert the structure and processes of a society. It is concerned with the behaviour of functionaries which promote dishonest situations.

The World Bank (2009) defines corruption as abuse of public office for private gain, where an official accepts, solicits, or extorts a bribe. The Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act 2000 also define corruption to include bribery, fraud and other related offences. The United Nations on its part defines corruption as the abuse of power for private gain, while Transparency International chose a clear and focused definition of the term as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. The definition Transparency International is quite descriptive, though it focuses only on the public sector. However, there is corruption in the private sector too, which has

negative consequences for the whole society.

Typologies

A) Private Corruption: This is about private individuals engaging in unethical acts. These could be individuals outside organizations who commit acts of perversion and acts of fraud or scamming. The other group of people is persons in the organized private sectors who may loot or carry out other acts of fraud in their companies, or who collude with those in government to perpetrate sharp financial practices. Private corruption also manifests in Nigeria as everyday bribery to obtain a desired objective, breaking of traffic laws, piracy, plagiarism, alteration of school grades, illegal inflation of petroleum pump prices by dealers, robbery, solicitation of sexual favours for higher grades or promotion, and so on.

B) Public Corruption: This is the familiar corruption that takes place in government or by government officials and their accomplices in the private sector. Another name for public corruption is official, grand or institutional corruption. This is the kind of corruption involving public office holders. Here, persons in position of authority exploit the power that comes with the position for personal gain or benefit. Public corruption includes the following:

I. **Political corruption:** This is the kind of corruption that occurs in the three arms of government in a democratic rule, namely, executive, legislative and judiciary. Corruption at this level is egregious because it involves state resources. The issues of personal and primordial attachments in appointment, award of contracts; as well inflation of contract monies, embezzlement of funds, and misappropriation of fund are critical examples of public corruption in the executive.

The Federal cabinet in Nigeria has in recent times been in the news for high profile bribery scandals. The judiciary becomes vulnerable when it looks away from an obvious case of crime, tries to downplay the veracity of a crime, or commits travesty of justice for a particular political interest.

II. **Bureaucratic corruption:** Corruption here is also at the government level. It involves technocrats and civil and public servants who implement government policies. These include the leadership and personnel in ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs). The corruption at this level is significant as it involves the allocation, release and use of money in government offices. In many cases, staff are the ones who propose and submit financial needs of the units or projects and they are the ones who transfer and effect payment.

Bureaucratic corruption also manifests in nepotism through appointments, promotions and reward systems in public offices. Certain individuals get rapid promotions and rewards on the basis of family, friendship, ethnic or religious affiliations to the boss; while some never get promoted due to such frivolous considerations.

III. Other forms of institutional corruption: The other forms of institutional corruption include those in the media and entertainment industries and even in the labour movement. The media is particularly known for the graft or 'brown envelope" syndrome in which news reports are only publishable when certain individuals or groups in the story pay their way; or when image-polishing is done for those who can pay the reporter; or negative stories are stepped down when money has been paid to destroy such stories.

In the entertainment industry, prospects for musical or movie auditions often have to "sort" or "settle" with money or sexual favours in order to be given roles in films-regardless of their qualifications. Labour groups are sometimes compromised by government not to embark on industrial action or to betray the cause of the movement by "settling" labour leaders through the fattening of their accounts.

Corruption and Democracy in Nigeria

As mentioned earlier, corruption finds expression in the misuse and abuse of public office for private or pecuniary purposes. This brand of corruption involves the violation of public trust which in itself is a negation of the collective social contract binding governors and the governed. It takes place in two phases. On the one hand, it involves unwholesome cornering or diversion of public funds into private coffers through the means of primitive accumulation with impunity by the public office holder. On the other hand, it shows itself in the arbitrary use of ill-gotten wealth and the forceful application of state powers by office holders, either to perpetuate themselves in office, or maintain the status quo by all means necessary.

The critical elements of democracy include, but are not limited to constitutional rule or what has been variously christened 'rule of law', conduct of free and fair elections devoid of violence, protection of minority interest and freedom of citizens within the specifications of the law; creating a conducive environment for the realization of citizens aspiration. Accordingly, a democratic society can thrive politically, economically, culturally

and socially when it has the following essential ingredients: equality, sovereignty of the people, respect for human right and human life, the rule of law within the context of fairness and/or prudent use of state resources for the overall enjoyment of the teeming populace.

Combating corruption is a prerequisite for democratic governance and the rule of law, which are the pillars of sustainable development in any society. In Nigeria, public roles and responsibilities are, in theory, entrusted to the public office holders by the people in a quest for good governance. However, in many cases, this trust has been abused.

The World Bank (2000) has identified three distinct aspects of governance, which are hereby used as indicators in analyzing the effects of corruption on democratic governance in Nigeria. These are:
(i). the form of political regime, which refers to the degree of democratization in the country

(ii). the degree of accountability in the management of the nation's economic and social resources for national development; and

(iii). the capacity of governments to identify, formulate and implement development policies. This relates to the competence of government.

Effects

Corruption in a democratic society is a contradiction insofar as the actual practice of democratic principles rests squarely on the legal code of society. Accordingly, a high incidence of corruption tends to have more serious consequences for democracies because of the express collision with democratic norms. Scholars agree that corruption is inimical to democracy as it erodes the meaning, mechanisms and the very essence of democracy.

Furthermore, by inhibiting people's power to participate meaningfully and positively influence collective decisions, corruption overheats the polity, creating profound public disaffection. By extension, since political corruption is a deviant behavior that inhibits the rules and tenets of democracy, it also poses a dangerous threat to the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. Corruption has a devastating effect on Nigeria because it hinders any advance in democracy.

Corruption wastes resources by turning government policy against the interests of the majority and away from its proper goals. It turns the energies and efforts of public officials and citizens towards easy money instead of productive activities. It hinders competition, frustrates efforts to alleviate poverty, and generates apathy and cynicism.

The afflictions caused by corruption, which are as numerous as the shapes corruption can take, have destroyed well-intentioned development projects as well as undermined good governance and development in Nigeria.

Conclusion

To conclude: corruption is responsible for Nigeria's lack of good governance, poor growth outcomes, as well as decay in morals and values. Indeed, corruption is a major factor responsible for the nation's underdevelopment despite abundant natural resources.

Corruption can destroy a state, its political establishment as well as progress accumulated over generations, thereby retarding economic and social progress for decades to come. As argued above, it is almost impossible not to be corrupt in Nigeria as both leaders and citizens find it absolutely impossible to restrain from cutting corners. Because of corruption, citizens have lost trust in the political system, its institutions and leadership, hence the violent clashes and litigations that usually trail election results.

For democracy to thrive in Nigeria the people must be proactive and demand accountability& transparency from the leaders. Since the strength of a democracy is only as great as the will of the people to uphold it, citizens must be politically educated and mature. This would enable the future leaders to make ethical decisions and for the people to begin to make political office holders accountable. Secondly, foreign countries that aid and abet corrupt practices in the area of money laundering should support Nigeria in its fight against this activity by confiscating such monies and returning same to the country. Also, legislative enactments that will domesticate the international charters, convention and protocol on corruption in Nigeria should be passed by the National Assembly without delay. Finally, constitutional provisions which foster the rule of law should be effectively enforced, while the various arms of government, especially the legislature and the judiciary, should be alive to their constitutional responsibilities.

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'Making Nigeria Work Better': The Bearable Weight of a Public Life

By Wale Adebanwi.*

Book: These Times: Selected Writings and Speeches of Nasir Ahmad El-Rufai, Volumes I (Outside) & II (Inside)
Author: Nasir el-Rufai
Publishers: Safari Books Limited, Ibadan, Nigeria.
Year of Publication: 2020.

Every good collection of essays and speeches tells a story. However, the narrative arc does not necessary bend towards the will or intention of the author. This is because that arc is open to interpretations and reinterpretations by the readers. This is no less true of the two volumes under review, These Times: Selected Writings and Speeches of Nasir Ahmad El-Rufai, Volumes I (Outside) & II (Inside).

Therefore, in this review, I will deal simultaneously with the intentions of the author as expressed in the two volumes as well as the interpretation and reinterpretation to which the essays, speeches and the expressed intentions of the author are open. I end with the implications of the intention and the (re)interpretations for Nigeria's politics and future.

Around late 2014, as the major political gladiators in the major opposition coalition, the All Progressives Congress (APC), were strategizing on how to unseat President Goodluck Jonathan and the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP), being privy to the dominant thinking among one of the major factions of the APC, I sent an email to the author, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai, on the contestations over the possible national flagbearer for the new party. It was the only email message I sent to him before he became governor to which he never replied. And I know it was deliberate. Why do I bring this up now? I do so because these two volumes, I believe, are, in part, a response to the question I raised in my message to the author – a question which shall remain confidential for now. As I go along, you will see why I think he has answered the question in part by publishing these two volumes.

The author's brilliance, boldness, assertiveness, passion, facility for provoking political controversy as well as his indomitable spirit are all evident in this volume. It is for this reason that my review is partly entitled "the bearable weight of a public life," So, how does the author explain why he decided to share his thoughts about the total organisation of the Nigerian state, its

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democratic potentials and realities, as well as its politico-economic developmental challenges, reflected at national, state, and sectoral levels? Writes Governor el-Rufai in the 'Preface' to the first volume, sub-titled, Outside, "This book presents edited versions of articles published in various journals, as well as papers I presented at various forums on aspects of the Nigerian economy and politics, in the last decade or so. As the writings cover many aspects of our lives, I thought it useful to compile them into a volume that will be handy for those interested in a quick appreciation of the socio-economic and political dynamics of Africa's largest economy and most populous nation." Why are the volumes important? The author answers that: "My first foray into democratic governance persuaded me that not only is genuine public service the highest contribution one can make, it is a vocation that every patriot must seriously consider. However, I found to my dismay that analysis and public policy-making were often lacking in rigour, and were typically not based on facts and evidence-based debate." He then further justifies the two volumes: "My intention in virtually all of the articles and papers is to make good use of available and reliable data as a basis for policy analysis, formulation and recommendations for actions that I believe will make Nigeria work better."

The author compares Nigeria to other nations such as Malaysia, Singapore, Botswana and Indonesia who "had their first set of elected post-colonial leaders going into offices" in the 1960s. Reflecting on the advances that these countries have made, the author asks, "What went wrong" in Nigeria? The books provide the author's answers to this crucial question. Perhaps what we might see as the central message of this two volumes, or what we might call the author's manifesto, as articulated in the books, is this: "It is time for Nigerians to stop passing the buck to God....As the world moves firmly into the 21st Century, we must firmly reject those that want Nigeria to remain in the dark ages – and move forward to restore dignity and hope in our younger generation. They must see a country that can work in their lifetimes – where electricity is stable, crimes are solved and criminals brought to justice – a Nigeria where capability and hard work are the primary tools for success in life..

These two books, particularly Volume I, cogently – and dialectically at times – identify the core problems of the Nigerian federation, and reflect on the practical, policy, economic, as well as political solutions to these core problems. The author emphasizes the implications of all the problems of the Nigerian federation for "human capital infrastructure", which the author sadly, though, correctly, concluded has "suffered irreparable damage under years of misrule" and under a "leadership that had no clear interest in developing the Nigerian state." While Volume I is

sub-titled Outside, Volume II is, instructively, sub-titled Inside. The speeches in Volume II include those delivered by the author in his bid to lead Kaduna State, after he became the candidate of the APC and then the governor-elect and also since he became the Governor of Kaduna State. Therefore, we move from reflections, intellection and critique in Volume I to articulation, action, and implementation in Volume II. Hence readers can use Volume I as the benchmark or scale for analyzing or measuring, respectively, Volume II, and by that token, as an appraisal of what the critic turn doer has accomplished, even if strictly within the lens of what he articulated as an "outsider."

Against this backdrop, I will suggest that the publication of the two volumes at this point in the political career of the author is an honest endeavour. Someone else in the author's position would either not include some of the critical speeches and essays in these books, or if he did, would hope that no one reads them. I am persuaded that Mallam el-Rufai included such potentially controversial speeches and essays deliberately. Therefore, this intellectual honesty has crucial implications. For one, it means that the author is willing to engage in a serious debate about the state of the nation under his party's watch and also under his own stewardship. While readers may have disagreements over the political and economic paths canvassed by the author, as well as the substance and style of the arguments, I think that most serious readers will agree that this kind of intellectual honesty marked by a preparedness for a serious debate about the direction of the country must be praised, encouraged and promoted among those who have the great honour of occupying public offices in this potentially great polity. Beyond that, readers and critics would be eager to use the promises and lofty statements in Volume I in testing whether the author has been faithful to the ideals espoused in his discourses about socio-political and economic transformation in Nigeria, generally, and in Kaduna State, specifically.

Under Section 2 of Volume I, while reflecting on leadership ("In Search of Leadership"), the author examines "the extent of … institutional destruction [in the country] and how it occurred, amidst the claims of good intention in some cases and complete malevolence in some. The purpose of this is not to apportion blame but to learn from past errors and move our nation forward." In another chapter, the author writes: "We are about to elect a government that must work for us, because those elected will know that they serve at our pleasure." He adds that as Nigerians prepared to go to the polls in 2011, "They see an opportunity to reinvent our democracy." Against this backdrop, the author states that "Nigeria faces five key challenges that a future federal government

must address decisively." The five challenges, as identified by the author, include: i. "high levels of insecurity and near-state failure in many parts of the country"; ii. "Infrastructure deficits like perennial electricity supply shortages, poor transportation and logistics infrastructure, near absence of rail and mass transit systems nationwide and the like, unemployment and youth hopelessness;" iii. "collapse of social services like public education, and health care"; iv. "the complete absence of a social safety net for the vulnerable groups;" and v. "the destruction of governance institutions and corruption." Readers can judge how the author and his party have responded to these five key challenges since 2015.

One other major asset of this book is that it raises interesting, or what some might describe as pertinent, questions. However, when a book or, say a public intellectual, raises a critical question, the book or intellectual doesn't even have to satisfactorily answer the question. It is sometime sufficient that one raises a question. The question can take a life of its own and continue to challenge others to find answers.

Therefore, some of the questions raised in this book, particularly the kind that I will speak to in a moment, are even more germane now that the author has formally become an old man – having clocked 60 yesterday. An example of such questions is this: "How do we restore hope in our younger generation, our nation, and democracy?" This is one of the most critical questions faced by the present political formation and its leadership.

Apart from reaffirming the author's profile as a proficient public intellectual and policy wonk, Volume I also fully demonstrates the author's capacity and facility as a tormentor of those in power. This is where these two volumes constitute a double-edged sword. In a sense, the author is taking a risk by publishing these volumes, and thus inviting critics, including existing and potential political adversaries to size him up and/or take him up, or even take him on regarding the issues he addresses in the books, especially in terms of how his record of service measures up against the criteria he sets up in the book for good and transformational leadership.

Members of the ruling party will find that there are parts of the two books – particularly Volume I – that would seem if they are reading an opposition newspaper or listening to Radio Kudirat! If you want to know what parts of I am referring to, read the books. And if you insist on a cue, start with the chapter, "In Search of Leadership – Roots of Historic Crisis (1)."

Beyond what the author suggests, you can also read these volumes in many different ways. I suspect that the author would want us to approach the volumes as statements

of public policy options, directions and reflections, as well as patriotic contemplations on the crisis of nation-building, including the impediments to, and opportunities for, national transformation. And he will be right. But there are other ways to approach them. You can approach them as bold statements of ethical and political provocations; you can read them as political manifesto or as a testament for constitutional reform; you can read them as an indictment of the Nigerian ruling class or as a catalogue of the fundamental crises of the Nigerian state; you can read them as a testament of collective hope and shared optimism about the future of Nigeria despite the grave odds facing the country; or you can read them as a re-affirmation of the incredible and abundant human resources that Nigeria possesses which make it possible to envision a better future – despite the mathematics of subtraction imposed by competitive thievery, vexing ethno-regional enmities, terror, and the aggravating administrative impotence which the country has experienced.

If you read the books as political manifesto, you might, for instance, be pleased with the author's almost absolute conviction in the possibilities of transformational leadership. To give an example, he calls for "a paradigm shift in leadership identification, selection, and nurturing" ("In Search of Leadership: Restoring Hope by Avoiding Breakdown," part 2). He then suggests some parameters for ensuring this shift. I will mention only two, the first of which is often overlooked and the second which has been repeated so often that its importance may seem to have been denuded. The first is "Strong, Dedicated Advisers and Inner Circle." As the examples of Lagos and Kaduna States have shown in recent times, a leader's performance is often a function of the quality of advisers and aides that s/he surrounds himself/herself with. The second is "Recognition for the imbalance in our Federalism."

The author argues that due to years of administrative centralization by the military, Nigeria is a federal system only in name. As if in anticipation of contemporary debates, Mallam el-Rufai stated in January 2013 as contained in the book, "We must … demand the legislation of state and federal crimes and cause the amendment of our Constitution to enable states and local governments establish community-level security agencies to address our disparate internal security needs." [See also "A federation without Federalism"

Another strength of these books, particularly Volume I, is that they show again that the author is a good student of Nigeria's political arithmetic. In 2011, he already prefigured the alliance that was to defeat PDP in 2015 – though he initially thought that arithmetic would work in 2011. Hear him:

"Approximately 42.5% of the voters are resident in the South of Nigeria with 57.5% in the North. Indeed, what is now evident is that two zones, the North-West and South-West have between them some 34 million voters — nearly half of the voting population." This was in fact the foundational political arithmetic that influenced those who came together to form the political alliance that eventuated in the APC. Therefore, in many ways, the author must enjoy the ease as well as carry the burden of the consequences of this insight.

In the piece "Budget 2012 - N3 Billion Daily for Insecurity," the author provides the rationale for his public intellection: "The democratic space can only be expanded with more freedom to express opinions and disagree often, and it is not just about politics. It is about improving our nation, enlightening our citizens and raising the levels of accountability." Under "Nigeria and the Oil Fortune", he laments the country's refusal to "take and give effect to rational decision about the oil sector." Mallam el-Rufai even makes radical proposals. For instance, he argues that one of the most important national goals ought to be restoring our educational institutions to their past glory: "And this will only start when all public officers and political office-holders are compelled by their oaths of office and terms of appointment to enroll all their children in public primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in Nigeria. That will be some really fresh air indeed." I wonder if the members of the ruling elite will agree with him.

The two volumes cover other issues, including the transparency of elections; integrity of electoral management body; electoral violence; the responsibility of leadership; resilience of Nigerians; elite politics; party politics; building democratic institutions; the role of the judiciary in democratic governance; leadership crisis; economic reasoning and rationality; local government in a federal state and local governance; the armed forces and defence spending; economic and fiscal analyses; policing; the politics and economics of oil revenue; land use act, public service; unemployment; girl-child education; housing; transportation; and there is no much luck for President Goodluck Jonathan in Vol I! In fact, Section 5, 'Sleeping with both Eyes Open," is mostly about President Jonathan.

As we all know, the author does not suffer fools gladly. I suspect that some might regard him as the stormy petrel of Nigerian politics. He can be quite biting in his critiques. For example, in one of the chapters, he writes: "But Nigerians now know better because the people currently in control of the PDP have no altruistic guiding principles and ideology to shape the party and promote good governance." He then mentions a few people in the PDP, including at least one serving governor at that time who now

shares the same party platform with the author, all whom he accused of engaging "in a naked dance that amounts to exhibition of little more than raw and unbridled ambition." He continues, "None of the naked dancers is interested in seeking solutions to the problems of growing poverty, de-industrialisation, deteriorating infrastructure, rising inequality, falling standards of education or decaying health care." If you want to know who they are, read the books!

Furthermore, the author accused the PDP of levying a "nuclear war on the Nigerian people"! Even for the APC, the author warned in the early period of the merger, "[The APC] has to ensure that we do not eventually become another failed merger bereft of individuals who truly have the interest of the nation at heart."

In these volumes, the author not only apportions blames but also praises outstanding efforts. A few examples include the essays, "Lagos government, sound budget" and "Nasarawa's Budget of Social Inclusion" both of which he later contrasts with "Bauchi's Hopeless Budget" and "Anambra's budget of misplaced priorities." Also a few individuals receive praises such as the then Governor of the Central Bank, and now Emir of Kano, whom he describes as "my friend, brother and can-do-no-wrong-in-my-eyes" and "the best performing public servant in an otherwise incompetent Jonathan administration."

Between the author's intention for publishing these volumes at this critical period in Nigeria's history and the ways in which we can (re)interpret the essays and speeches in the two volumes, it seems to me that one central message that the author and his readers will need to grapple with is el-Rufai's warning about the dire consequences of failing to do what is right for and about the country in this grave period: "Failing to do that [that is, address the fundamental problems of the Nigerian economy and polity] within the next decade [that is by 2023] will lead to the breakdown of our society if not the total failure of the Nigerian state.... In this avoidable scenario, none of our great grand-children may have the opportunity of seeing Nigeria celebrating its century of independence. That will be a sad indictment on us all, particularly those born just before or around the end of colonisation."

These two volumes constitute valuable additions to the political literature on contemporary Nigeria. We should not only read them, but also engage with them. To borrow the insight of the Cameroonian social theorist, Achille Mbembe, the ultimate key question that these two volumes raise is this: "How do we construct, or bring to place a Politics of Hope that is at the same time a Politics of Principle, yet retains its ultimate value as a Politics of Possibilities."

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