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CORRUPTION AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA A DISCOURSE APPROACH

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Abstract

Africa is endowed with abundant natural resources and it has attracted development aid from the rich nations of the world. Despite these, the continent remains undeveloped. Different reasons have been attributed to the African development crisis among the modernist school and the dependency school. This study was undertaken to unravel the cause of the African underdevelopment. The paper pinpoints that corruption is the core reason behind African underdevelopment and it laid emphasis on corruption and underdevelopment interface in Nigeria. For Africa to break the impasse of underdevelopment, the paper calls for good governance and the establishment of special agencies to monitor all development projects undertaking by African countries.

Keywords: Africa, Corruption, Socio-economic development, underdevelopment

INTRODUCTION

The attempt by countries in Africa to break the cycle underdevelopment has been hindered by the high level of corruption in the continent. Africa is rich in natural resources and the proceeds from the sales of these natural resources to other countries are mismanaged by African leaders through corrupt process. Transparency International defines corruption as the abuse of entrusted power for private benefit (Transparency International, 2006). Since the early 1960s when most African countries were gaining independence, the rich nations of the world have extended development aids to Africa, yet Africa remains the lease developed continent in the world. Different schools of thought have come out with the causes of underdevelopment in Africa. For instance, the modernist school believes that Africa needs to follow the development part of the industrialized nations before it can develop. On the contrary, the dependency theorists argued that the exploitation of African by the superpowers was responsible for African



underdevelopment. However, there is the new school of thought that postulates corruption in Africa hinders development. Corruption affects the development in various ways. For example, billion of dollars that would have been used to provide social amenities in some African countries such as Nigeria are siphon and kept in foreign accounts. The former World Bank president, Paul Wolfowitz revealed that public officials in Nigeria have embezzled more than \$300 billion from the nation's pulse for the past forty decades (Ndibe, 2006). This statement was supported by the former chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Nuhu Ribadu and the former World Bank Vice President for Africa, Oby Ezekweili who stressed that Nigerians leaders have stolen over \$400 billion from the sales of crude oil since independence. The over \$400 billion that has been stolen from Nigeria would have impacted the development progress in Nigeria if such a huge amount has been channelled to aid development. Tanzi and Davoodi (1997) detect four outlets through which corruption may have an adverse effect on economic growth: higher public investment, lower government revenues, lower expenditures on business operations and maintenance, and lower quality of public infrastructure. According to Uneke (2010):

Corruption, because of its pervasiveness in many countries in Africa South of the Sahara, is detrimental to social, political, and economic development in a variety of ways. A program of sustainable development is contingent on several conditions, including principled and purposeful leadership; prudent, rational and far-sighted decision-making; and optimum use of available resources. Corruption tends to undermine all these conditions in terms of public cynicism and erosion of confidence on corrupt leadership; irrational, short sighted and illmotivated decision; and squandering of resources on ill-advised or unsuitable projects. The result has developmental stagnation, poverty, the cynicism of the political leadership, and disillusionment and hopelessness on the part of the masses and the deprived

The aim of this paper is to elucidate on the correlation between corruption and underdevelopment in Africa. Section 1 of this paper is the introduction. Section 2 and 3 are the literature review and the attempt by African countries to escape underdevelopment respectively. Section 4 is how corruption underdeveloped Africa, While section 5 is the conclusion.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The debate on the impact of corruption on African development continues to wax stronger in the academic cycle. Why some scholars have argued that corruption hinders development because it makes resources ineffective and alter economic growth (Scheifer and Vishny, 1993). On the contrary, others economic experts have stressed that corruption may be economically viable in some instances (Acemoglu and Verdier, 1998). As the debate rages on, some research findings of scholars further provide arguments for the empirical evidence views on the connected issues regarding the impact of corruption on development (Bardhan, 1997; Wei, 1998; Aidt, 2003; Drexer and Herzfeld, 2005). Mauro (1995) detects the impact of corruption on economic development using statistics from 67 countries. He discovers corruption decreases private investment which adversely affect economic development. In a subsequent study on, Mauro (1996) investigates the effect of corruption on investment, economic growth and government expenditure in 101 countries using cross-country data. In correlation with his previous study, he established that corruption harmfully affects economic growth basically of decreasing private investment and altering the structure of government expenditure, thereby reducing the budgetary allocation to the education sector. Li et al. (2000) examine the impact of corruption on income and Gini coefficient of income distribution using statistics from Asia, OECD and Latin America. From their study, they found that corruption rises the Gini coefficient in a quadratic way, that is, the Gini coefficient is higher in countries with a middle level of corruption while countries with a low or high level of corruption have a lower Gini coefficient. Gupta et al. (1998) identify that corruption increases income inequality in some developing countries. This can be said of most of the African countries that corruption is prevalent. In the their empirical findings, they also noticed that an increase in corruption is related to the decrease in the financial allocations to the education and health sectors. Hendriks et al. (1998) and Johnson (1989) pinpoint from their preliminary findings that the distributional impact of corruption and tax evasion are regressive which in a way increase inequality. The rise of poverty and inequality have been blamed for most of the conflicts in Africa. Still on the impact of corruption on development in Africa. Tanzi and Davoodi (1997) x-ray the process through which corruption influenced economic growth using cross-country information. They discovered corruption impacted negatively on public investment, reduces government income, decreases expenditure on operations and maintenance and reduces the quality of public amenities. Furthermore, their empirical findings indicated that corruption increases public investment and lowers its productivity. Ehrlich and Lui (1999) explore the interface between corruption, government and economic growth using a data that involved 68 countries. Their findings revealed that there are changes in both government size and corruption harmfully affect the level of per capita income. Mo (2000) investigates the effect of corruption on the growth of the economy and the means through which it impacts growth. He established that a 1% rise in the level of corruption decreases the growth rate by 0.72%. In addition to this, he found that corruption reduces the level of human capital and the share of private investment. Blackburn et al. (2005) devise a hypothetical relationship between corruption, economic development and other variable using a dynamic general equilibrium version of economic growth. The version identified that the

interface between corruption and economic development is both negative and two-ways casual. Buse and Hafeker (2006) examine the relationship between institutions, political risk and foreign direct investment inflow using cross-sectional and cross-sectional time-series. Their investigation of 83 developing countries showed that the government, stability, conflicts, corruption and ethnicity, law and order and democratic accountability of government are extremely significant determinants of foreign investment. For instance, in the most prone conflict parts of Africa, foreign investments are scarce in those areas. A case in point is that in Nigeria, economic experts have warned that the activities of Boko Haram insurgency and the kidnapping of over 200 schoolgirls threaten foreign investment in the country. Some of the evidence mentioned in the literature review may not be applicable to Africa. However, they offer some directions as to the procedures to which corruption impacted economic development negatively (Gyimah-Brempong, 2002).

ATTEMPT BY AFRICAN NATIONS TO BREAK THE IMPASSE OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

After independence was granted to many African countries, the political leaders of the new independent states began to initiate development policies that will make Africa move away from the underdevelopment stage to a more developed and prosperous continent. Some of the development approaches undertaken by African leaders in the various countries include:

- Import-Substitution Model (IS)
- Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP)

Import-Substitution Model

This is an economic and trade policy that discourages the importation of foreign goods and the encouragement of local production for exportation. The challenge of development that was confronting developing countries prior to independence prompted these countries to enact this development policy. This policy has made some of the Latin American countries such as Argentina, Brazil and Mexico to be emerging developing economies of the world. After most of the colonial masters have left Africa, the continent began to experience lots of social, economic and political challenges. To break away from these challenges, majorities of the emerging African leaders incorporated the Import-Substitution Industrialization Strategy. It must be noted that, in the Sub-Shara Africa, the government took up the leadership of a total underdeveloped economics with lack of public finance and without vital institutions to run the government, as well as the lack of human and physical capital (World Bank, 1994). According to Kilby (1975); Mkandawire and Soludo (1999) stress that the import substitution model was the original industrialization policy that the African governments have initiated to encourage production thereby increasing economic growth. However, this policy failed in addressing African development challenges. One reason for this according to Vitta (1999) is that with the urbanization of many cities, there was an increase in the demand for agricultural goods either as food for the increasing urban population or as raw materials for local industries. The low productivity due to crude implements in the agricultural sector did not allow the increasing demand to be met which eventually caused food safety in many African countries going by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 1984.

Structural Adjustment Programmes

African countries were experiencing in the areas of economic growth, standard of living and trade deficit owing to low productivity. According to FAO (1999) by the beginning of the 1980s most of the African countries were in severe economic difficulties with extreme inflation, unfavourable balance of payments and fiscal deficit. In order to solve these economic problems the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other donor agencies sold the idea of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) to African countries for the economic improvement of the continent (ibid.) Noorbakhsh and Noorbakhsh (n.d) posit that the ultimate aim of SAPs "were to improve standards of living through intermediate targets such as ensuring higher growth in the economy and maintaining its stability." The structural adjustment programmes were unable to solve the development crisis in Africa. Instead, the policy led to the mass retrenchment of public office workers and increase poverty in the continent. Most of the sacked workers from government establishments later migrated to the informal sector as a last resort. Aside SAP, some of the African countries device another development policy called the integrated rural development strategy, the objective of the scheme was to develop the rural area through agricultural development. The rural areas are known for agriculture production and to increase the yield of production most governments support the development of the rural areas. However, lack of democratic governance, corruption and lack to enforce contracts are liable to African economic woe and agriculture in particular Bryceson et al. (2010).

HOW CORRUPTION UNDERDEVELOPED AFRICA

Africa is blessed with abundant natural resources despite this, the continent remains the poorest and underdeveloped among the continents of the world. The argument attributing African underdevelopment to the colonial powers exploitation of the continent is justifiable, however, it has been over forty decades the colonial masters left. Forty years is enough to move the continent forward, if countries like India, Brazil, Mexico, Chile and Indonesia that were at the

same level of development with most African countries can now become the leading emerging economies of the world, then something is amiss with Africa. Water Rodney claimed that the underdevelopment of Africa was as a result of the exploitation of the continent by the European power through colonialism, capitalism and imperialism (Rodney, 1982 cited in Omotoye, (n.d). This is acceptable in the colonial era, however, "African states ought to have changed for the better after many years of political independence." For example, Nigeria has been facing development crisis for more than half a century (Omotoye, n.d). The major reason behind this is the high level of corruption in the country (ibid.). New political thinkers in Africa have blamed corruption by African leaders for the underdevelopment of the continent. Huge sum of money that would have been used to provide infrastructural facilities are stolen by African leaders and send to Western countries for safe keeping at the expense of African development. It was evaluated that the sum of \$30 billion aid to Africa ended up in overseas bank accounts (Celarier, 1996). This statement was also corroborated by the United Nations (UN) and the Africa Union (AU) who stressed that an estimated sum of \$148 billion is embezzled in Africa yearly by political leaders, multinational companies, business executives and the civil servants with the aid of financial institutions the Europe and North America (Adusei, 2009). In Nigeria, former chairman of the anti-corruption agency, Nuhu Ribadu and the former education minister Oby Ezekwesili accused Nigerian leaders of stealing over \$400 billion from the federal government account since 1963. \$400 billion would provide Nigeria with good road networks, well-equipped modern hospitals, power generating stations and functional oil refineries. Since 1960 that Nigeria got her independence, the government hospitals are just consulting rooms because the facilities are moribund, bad road networks and poverty have been increasing at an alarming rate. Corruption could be attributed to the present state of underdevelopment in Nigeria. Bamidele (2013) posits:

Corruption in Africa slows down development. One of the most widely discussed consequences of corruption is the distortion of African government expenditure. This often results in public money being wasted on white elephant projects, rather than people-oriented programmes such as health and education. As a result, more opportunities are presented for corrupt use or diversion of funds. Raising the ethical standards of governance can lead to many benefits especially for the economic, political and social development of a country. Fighting corruption and promoting good governance in Africa is therefore crucial to developing an environment that facilitates the social, political and economic development of the African people

Corruption remains the main cause of underdevelopment in Africa. This can be attested to by the massive looting of public funds by African leaders. Ayittey (2000) gave a breakdown of funds that have been stolen by some African Head of States:

- General Sani Abacha of Nigeria -- \$20billion.
- H.Boigny of Ivory Coast -- \$6 billion.
- General Ibrahim Babangida of Nigeria --\$5billion.
- President Mobutu of Zaire -- \$4billion.
- Mouza Traore of Mali -- \$2billion.
- Henri Bedie of Ivory Coast \$300million.
- Denis N'gnesso of Congo -- \$200million
- President Omar Bongo of Gabon -- \$80million.
- President Paul Biya of Cameroon -- \$70million.
- President Haite Mariam of Ethiopia -- \$30million.
- President Hissene Habre of Chad --\$3million.

The United Nations said in 1999 that over \$200 billion were stolen by African leaders and this amount was more than half of the continent debts of \$300 billion (George Ayitte, 2002). And this amount also "exceeds what comes into Africa as foreign aid" (ibid).

The impact of corruption on development in Africa include the cost of doing business, increasing poverty, insecurity and the challenge of sustainable development. Lubeck (1992) analyzes problems in Africa in relation to the high level of corruption in the continent. According to him, "any review of development and social structure must grapple with African's alarming statistical trends: (i) the world's highest annual population growth rate (3.2% average), which will raise Africa's absolute size from 451 million (1987) to 673 million by 2000; (ii) an absolute decline in the index of per capita food production (-5 since 1979), annual requiring \$18 billion worth of food imports for food deficits and for the 30 million facing starvation (World Bank 1989); (iii) the world's highest ratio of external, mostly public, debt to GNP (115%) and debt to export earnings (350%); (iv) the world's lowest rate of industrialization (10% of GNP); (v) the highest infant mortality rate (more than 150/1000) and the lowest average life expectancy (51 years); (vi) more than half the world HIV infection (6million) (Becker, 1990, Larson, 1990); (vii) the largest number of refugees (4 million); and (viii), despite a 2.5% annual increase of export commodity volumes between 1986 and 1990, an annual decline in export earning of 16% World Bank, 1989, United Nations, 1991)." It is on this scenario that (Gyimah-Brempong, 2002; Blackburn et al. 2005; Mauro, 1995; Buse and Hafeker 2006; Tanzi and Davoodi 1997; Gupta et al. 1998; Hendriks et al. 1998; Johnson, 1998; Ehrlich and Lui, 1999; Li et al. 2000; Mo, 2000) posit that corruption is inimical to development in developing countries and it also retards economic growth.

Corruption and Underdevelopment Interface: The Case of Nigeria

Nigeria was ranked the 35th most corrupt country in the world by the Transparency International (TI) in 2012. In 2013, Nigeria moved by two steps to clinch the position of the 33rd most corrupt country in the working, according to TI. The level of corruption in Nigeria has eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigerian society and that has been responsible for the crises of development in the country. Another way of stealing in Nigeria is through the self-increment of salaries by the members of the National Assembly without recourse to the constitutional body that is responsible for fixing the salaries of elected public officers. According to Awojobi (2014), "the lawmakers have perfected a system of increasing their own salaries, which make them earn more than their foreign counterparts." The annual basic salaries of Nigerian lawmakers and their counterparts in some rich nations are displayed below:

Table 1: Annual basic salaries of Nigeria and some advanced countries

Countries	Basic Salary
Nigeria	\$189.500
United States	\$174.000
Canada	\$154.000
Japan	\$149.700
Germany	\$115.500

Source: Ameh et al. 2013

Nigeria has 112 million poor people (NBS, 2010), 100 million Nigerians live in destitution (World Bank, 2013), the third country in the world with a large number of poor (World Bank, 2014). The irony of this is that Nigeria with a very low standard of living, the federal lawmakers earn more than lawmakers of countries mentioned above with a good standard of living. According to Nigerian Professor Ibrahim Gambari, the Special Advicer on the International Compact with Iraq and Other Issues for the Secretary-General of the United Nations in 2008, berated the Nigerian lawmakers for their dishonest ways of increasing their salaries which according to him affect the provision of good roads, railway system, power supply and capital projects. The high level of political corruption and its aftermath effect on the nation's development prompted the Obasanjo government to establish the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) in 2004. Mohammed (2013) gave a summary of details of political corruption cases be handled by the EFCC.

Table 2: EFCC corruption cases

S/N	Name	Case Status	Amount Involved	Status Suspect(s)
1	Ayo Fayose (former Governor of Ekiti State)	Arraigned on 51 counts	N1.2 billion	Case pending, granted bail
2	Adenike, Grange (former Minister of Health)	Arraigned on 56 counts	N300 million	Discharged and acquitted
3	Joshua Dariye (former Governor Plateau state)	Arraigned on 23 counts	N700 million	Case pending, Granted bail since 2007
4	Saminu Turaki (former Governor Jigawa state)	Arraigned on 32 counts	N36 billion	Case pending, Granted bail since 2007
5	Oji Uzor Kalu (former Governor Abia state)	Arraigned on 107 state counts	N5 billion	Case pending, Granted bail since 2008
6	James Ibori (former Governor Delta state)	Arraigned on 170 counts	N9.2 billion	Case pending, Granted bail since 2008
7	Iyabo Obasanjo (former Senator)	Arraigned on 56 state counts	N10 million	Case pending, Granted bail since 2008
8	Luckylgbinedion (former Governor of Edo state)	Arraigned on 191 state counts	N4.3 billion	Case determined, ordered to pay \$25 million as fine
9	Gabriel Aduku (former Minister of Health)	Arraigned on 56 state counts	N300 million	Discharged and acquitted
10	Jolly Nyame (former Governor of Taraba	Arraigned on 41 state counts	N1.3 billion	Case pending, Granted bail

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11	Chimaroke Nnamani (former Governor of Enugu state)	Arraigned on 105 state counts	N5.3 billion	Case pending, Granted bail since 2007
12	Michael Botmang (former Governor of Plateau state)	Arraigned on 31 state counts	N1.5 billion	Case pending, Granted bail since 2008
13	Roland Iyayi (former MD of FAAN)	Arraigned on 11 state counts	N5.6 billion	Case pending, Granted bail since 2008
14	Prof. Babalola Borishade (former Minister of Aviation)	Arraigned on 11 state counts	N5.6 billion	Case pending, Granted bail since 2008
15	Boni Haruna (former Governor of Adamawa state)	Arraigned on 28 state counts	N254 million	Case pending, Granted bail by court since 2008
16	Femi Fanikayode (former Governor of Adamawa state)	Arraigned on 47 state counts	N250 million	Case pending, Granted bail since 2008
17	Bode George (PDP Chieftain)	Arraigned on 68 state counts	N100 billion	Jailed in October 2009
18	Rasheed Ladoja (former Governor of Oyo state)	Arraigned on 33 state counts	N6 billion	Case pending, Granted bail since 2008
19	Senator Nichola Ugbane; Hon. Elumelu and others	Arraigned on 158 state counts	N5.2 billion	Case pending, Granted bail since 2009
20	Hamman Bello Hammed (Ex CG Customs)	Arraigned on 46 state counts	N2.5 billion	Case pending, Granted bail since 2009
21	Adamu Abdullahi (former Governor of Nasarawa state)	Arraigned on 149 count charge	N15 billion	Case pending, Suspect on court bail
22	Attahiru Bafarawa (former Governor of Sokoto state)	Arraigned on 47 count charge	N15 billion	Case pending, Granted bail by court
23	Hassan Lawal (former Minister of Works)	Arraigned on 37 count charge	N75 billion	Case pending, Granted bail by court
24	Kenny Martins (Police Equipment Fund)	28 count charge	N7,740 billion	Case pending, Granted bail since 2008
25	Esai Dangabar, Atiku Abubakar Kigo, Ahmed Inuwa Wada, John Yakubu Yusufu, Mrs. Veronica Ulonma Onyegbula and Sani Habila Zira	16 count charge	N32.8 billion	Case pending, Granted bail by court

Source: Mohammed 2013

These are high profile corruption cases that involved huge sums of money, most of the accused persons are past governors and ministers of the federal republic of Nigeria. If this massive amount would have been channelled for the provision of amenities in the country, Nigeria would not have the problems of erratic power supply, bad roads, poor health services, insecurity, high rate of poverty, high level of unemployment and the high rate of dropout of school-aged children.

In another development, corruption has been blamed for the insurgency that is threatening the co-existence of Nigeria has a nation, notable personalities such as Noble laureate, Professor Wole Sovinka and the former United States President Bill Clinton have said that political corruption is responsible for the high level of insecurity being experienced in the northern part of Nigeria. In a similar same vein, the United State Under Secretary for State for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Right, Sarah Sewall has stressed that corruption is the main obstacle to the fight against the insurgency group, Boko Haram, according to her, "despite Nigeria's \$5.4 billion security budget for 2014, corruption prevent supplies as basic as bullets and transport vehicles from reaching the front lines of the struggle against Boko Haram" (Ameh and Oladimeji, 2014). The military has come out to say lack of weaponry stall their fight against Boko Haram, which prompted the federal government to make a proposal to the Nationa Assembly for the approval of \$1 billion for the procurement of military hardware. The question that was asked by the renowned Human Rights lawyer and Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) Femi Falana, what has happened to the budgetary allocations to the Defence Ministry in the past. Just as Nigerians are still debating the issue of the \$1 billion, the South African government impounded a private jet from Nigeria that is owned by one of the popular pastor in Nigeria, Ayo Oresejafor with \$9.3 million. The Nigerian government said the money was meant for the purchase of arms to fight Boko Haram, but the South African government sees the confiscated money as an act of money laundering. If the Nigerian government claimed the money was meant for arms, why did the government not follow due process to buy arms from overseas instead of stuffing \$9.3 million on a private jet with two Nigerians and an Israeli? The Lagos State governor, Babatunde Fashola, stresses that the \$9.3 million confiscated by the South African authority has made Nigeria a laughing stock globally. On his part, with reference to the seized \$9.3 million, the former Archbishop of Lagos, Anthony Cardinal Olubunmi Okojie posit that:

Corruption is in every nation but Nigeria's own is number one. I am telling you. And if we are not careful, this nation will go down the drain. Now, people can't help you to bring something from that corner without asking for remuneration. Look at so many children and youths who have no school to go to, or no money to pay school fees, and there are rich men who parade themselves up and down the place as rich people. For what? They seem to have forgotten that this life is not the end. Nobody chose his parents, and nobody came into the world with a gold or silver spoon. The \$9.3 million can build hospitals, roads, schools, supply water, drugs and restore some of the capital infrastructures that have been dead for a while.

CONCLUSION

Corruption has been seen as inimical to African development. However, some African leaders have established anti-corruption agencies to checkmate the monster called corruption in order to move their various countries forward. Some opposition parties and some of these African countries have accused the reigning governments for using the anti-corruption agencies to harass opposition candidates why those that are close to the city of power are left the hook when they are involved in corruption cases. Nigeria and Kenya are the good examples of this scenario. For example, in Nigeria, the Kano and Jigawa governors that are opposed to the second term bid of President Jonathan have been harassed by the government security apparatus. Why the Kano state governor was having a meeting with some other governors in the Kano liaison office in Abuja was stopped by security operatives and the Kano State House of Assemble leaders was invited for questioning by the EFCC, his counterpart from Jigawa states, Sule Lamido have his two sons being investigated for money laundry. Whereas, the former governor of River state that has been accused of looting the state during his tenure as governor is walking as a free man because he is in the good book of those in authority. For Africa to break the impasse of underdevelopment, the leaders should incorporate good governance and tackle corruption in all ramifications. Furthermore, special agencies should be established to monitor, evaluate and process the execution of developmental projects, this will go a long way in addressing the deficit in social amenities for the African populace.

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