

Governance, Corruption and Anti-Corruption Initiatives in Nigeria: an Assessment of the Performance of EFCC

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Abstract

This work assessed the complex web of connections and relationship between governance, corruption, development and the quality of political institutions in Nigeria. It examined the various debates over corruption and poor governance in Nigeria over the years in order to understand the intricate issues surrounding the cultural and socio-political context of the problems of governance and corruption and how it equally affects anticorruption reforms in Nigeria. The work discussed various causes of corruption, anti-corruption measures and strategies adopted by Nigerian leaders towards curbing corruption. Descriptive research was adopted to assess the problem under discourse. Secondary data generated were analysed using content descriptive analysis. Results obtained shows that corruption is the bane of Nigeria socio economic development. It recommends amongst others the convocation of a national conference so as to produce a national template for the fight against corruption.

Keywords:

Governance, Corruption, Anti-corruption, Power, influence, Nigerian Society

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Background to the Study

This work explores the relationship between governance, corruption and economic development in Nigeria. Although corruption is a global phenomena which cuts across developed and developing nations alike, there are strong suggestions that its adverse effects are felt more severely in developing countries. Nigeria is frequently cited as one of the leading examples of resources-rich countries in the developing world that have been beset by underdevelopment and poverty after decades of poor governance and corruption. It has regularly featured as one of the world's most corrupt countries within transparency international surveys. Several decades of poor governance and corruption have seemingly played a role in exacerbating the levels of socioeconomic inequality between a small select group of politicians, public officials and business elites and the mass of ordinary Nigerians. According to world Bank estimates approximately 80% of Nigerian's oil wealth is concentrated in the hands of 1% of the population, while over 70% of the population live below the poverty line (United Nation for children Education Fund 2003, World Bank 2006 and world development Report 2016). It is this paradox of underdevelopment/poverty amidst fabulous oil wealth that this work examined the degree to which mismanagement and corruption lay behind the continued socio-economic hardship experienced by so many Nigerians and effort made by EFCC towards curbing corruption in Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this paper is to examine the effect of corruption towards Nigerian economic development and to assess some anti corruption initiatives in Nigeria, using EFCC as a study.

Defining Good Governance

The term governance, in its dictionary meaning, had commonly been used to describe the micro-level behaviour of corporate organisations. It only came into wider usage in the 1950s and 1960s as academic discourse excavated the state dominated models of economic development that were prevalent, throughout the socialist bloc and developing world (Thomas 2000). It is worth noting right from the outset that there exists a dilemma in the explanation of the concept of good governance since it appears to have no universally accepted meaning. Scholars and international development agencies (both regional and international) have tended to confront these conceptual difficulties by defining and interpreting the term within their area of interests and scope of work. In this regard, some scholars (such as Martin Doornbos) had argued that the concept's "intrinsic open-ended quality, vagueness, and inherent lack of specificity have tended to generate a good deal of searching and debate as to what its proper meaning is or should be, prompting multiple efforts to appropriate it and define it in particular ways" (Doornbos 2003).

These different emphases can be quite clearly seen when comparing the definitions employed by specific scholars and actors. For instance considering the contrasting definitions of some scholars such as Albrow and Schneider can be instructive. Albrow (2001, cited in Punyaratabandhu 2004) broadly defines governance as "the management of society by the people," whilst Schneider (1999) defines governance as "the exercise of authority or control to manage a country's affairs and resources". While Albrow emphasises the role of citizens in the management of a country's affairs, albeit without much clarification of the process, Schneider simply identifies governance as the management of a country's affairs without stating the way

and manner by which the authority is constituted and monitored. These definitions are clearly rather too simplistic and narrow in content.

However, the most prominent and widely used definition of the concept of “good governance” is the one provided by the World Bank. As such, it is worth spending a little more time here exploring quite how the World Bank has interpreted and operationalized the idea. The World Bank sees the concept as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources (World Bank, 1991, 1992, 1994). Three distinct aspects of governance have been identified by the bank and they include:

- a) The form of political regime,
- b) The process by which authority is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development, and
- c) The capacities of governments to design, formulate, and implement policies and discharge function (World Bank, 1997).

This introduction to the basic definitions of what is constituted under the concept of good governance has suggested that there are substantial differences over what is encompassed under the term. Good governance does seem to convey the idea that the quality of institutions and public management is integral to a sustainable economic development although there is also a sense in the literature that good governance cannot be limited to technical debates about efficiency and management.

Various Concepts of Corruption

Defining corruption is clearly one of the major challenges of scholars and other stakeholders like the international development agencies that are interested in the anti-corruption crusade. There is no single, comprehensive and universally accepted definition of what constitutes a corrupt behaviour, this to a large extent, may be attributed to the ambiguous nature of what is encompassed under the term.

This is particularly so because the sensitivity of public perceptions about behaviour that is corrupt varies considerably from one country to another and in different cultures. Thus, a particular behaviour that is considered corrupt in one cultural setting may not be labelled as corrupt in another. Furthermore, the complexity of this phenomenon is also underlined by the difficulties involved in gathering data which in most cases are unreliable and disjointed.

However, despite the array of controversies surrounding the phenomenon, corruption has been defined and classified in different forms and sub-forms as different authors and agencies have attempted to operationalise the term for practical analyses and actions. Against this backdrop, the attempts of these individual authors and institutions to provide workable definitions of corruption within the context of their understanding of what constitutes a corrupt behaviour have not been without their problems.

Some scholars have defined corruption as behaviour by public officials that deviates from the public interest (Morris 1991), others have conceptualized corruption, based on deviation from moral standards (Brooks 1970). Similarly, Morris defines corruption as behaviour that

deviates from serving the common good, suggesting that it is an embodiment of a state's original norms and legitimising ideology (Morris 2008). The lack of specificity, however, of the public interest centered definitions of corruption has continued to generate a lot of criticism from some quarters. For instance, one of the probing questions concerns who defines what is in the public interest? As Theobald suggests, complex societies have a wide range of publics, each with their own interests (Theobald 1990). This can be illustrated, for example, through some of the problems associated with the politicisation of Nigeria's anti-corruption crusade, where it has become difficult to bring corrupt political officials to justice as a result of the ways in which politicians have been able to turn the country's multi-ethnic divides to their favour by promoting their regional and ethnic interest. In the same vein, Peter and Welch (1978) contend that almost any act could be said to be in some sense of public benefit.

The most prominent definition of corruption, however, is the one used by the World Bank and this is worth exploring in a little more detail given how prominent it has been within discussion of corruption within the “development” context. The World Bank defines corruption as the “abuse of public office for private gain” (World Bank 1997). This definition is also used by Transparency International (TI). Although, this definition may be useful, it is rather too narrow and simplistic, for as argued above corruption is also prevalent in the private sector. Thus, for example, in the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) judgment, the definition provided by the World Bank does not give adequate attention to the problem of corruption in the private sector or the role of the private sphere in fostering corruption in the public sector. Thus, the ADB define corruption as the abuse of public or private office for personal gain (ADB 1998). In consonance with the ADB's judgment, therefore, I would argue that corrupt practices do not only occur in the public sector, but they also occur within and between private business and individuals in society, with or without the involvement of public officials. For instance, domestic firms, multinational corporations and banks have often been implicated for corrupt behaviour. However, because of the huge economic and political implications of public sector corruption, more emphasis is often placed on public sector corruption.

Causes of Corruption

Clearly, the debates surrounding the multiple definitions of corruption and those concerning its measurement and impacts are also closely related to questions about the causes of corruption, since any individual author's understanding of the nature of corruption will greatly influence what they see as its major causes. This debate is complex because some of the effects of corruption may, in effect, also perhaps constitute its causes. Poverty, inflation and inequality for instance, have all been discussed as major consequences of corruption in the literature, but they are also discussed as major causes.

As suggested at the start of this discussion, the controversies over the meaning and effects of corruption often come to the fore in discussions concerning the cause of corruption. Thus, as discussed in the previous section, some development actors like the World Bank, frequently seem to attribute the degree of corruption to the size of the public sector within a country. In a similar vein, Tanzi (1994) asserts that corruption tends to increase with the size of a state and

the degree of intervention within the economy, because it is argued that larger states are difficult to monitor and manage in a transparent and accountable manner, while excessive state intervention also creates greater avenues for corruption to flourish.

Nevertheless, critics such as Montinola and Jackman (2002), disagree with this assertion, and argue that, the size of government does not systematically affect corruption. Furthermore, available evidence from the Transparency International corruption perception index, suggest that some of the least corrupt countries like Denmark, Finland, Canada, Sweden, Botswana, and the Netherlands, have some of the largest public sectors in the world. There are then, a whole host of factors which may have an influence on the levels of corruption in a given country at a given time. These include: regulatory barriers to market entry, excessive government control and regulations, low competition amongst private firms, recruitment not based on meritocracy, poor working conditions and wages, lack of free media, unethical leadership and nepotism towards family and friends amongst others (Lambsdorff 2005; Hope and Chikulo 2000, Senior 2006 Montinola and Jackman 2002; Mbaku 2007).

From the institutional perspective, corruption can definitely be related to the quality of governance, which constitutes a major thrust of this research. Weak state institutions, characterized by inadequate capacity to manage society, through a framework of social, judicial, political and economic checks and balances, creates a breeding ground for corruption to flourish. In those places, like many African states, where the social stigma attached to corruption is lower, bureaucrats frequently see a position in government as avenue to advance their personal interests and those of their immediate families (Apter 1963), as there are often hardly any effective transparent mechanisms in place to promote checks and balances. In the case of Nigeria for instance, Achebe (1984) suggested that Nigerians are corrupt because the system under which they live today makes corruption easy and profitable and they will cease to be corrupt when corruption is made difficult and inconvenient. In many African cultures, extended family assistance and high levels of community spirit are other factors, which compel the rich and the employed to render financial assistance and other support to relatives and other members of their community. As a politician, the degree of prestige and influence and political support is determined by the degree of financial status and the level of financial support they are able to supply towards sustaining the needy, as well as donations made toward public projects.

Conflicts of interest may be another factor responsible for the high levels of corruption. In Nigeria; for example, conflicts of interest among high level and low level personnel, between ethnic groups, and between local communities, which could result from disagreements over public office appointments and promotions often result in corruption. There is a suggestion that Africans frequently give political support on the basis of ethnic allegiance (Nwosu 1977). As a result, citizens frequently do not condemn corruption if it is carried out by their relatives or someone of the same ethnic background.

The causes of corruption vary considerably from one country to another and unsurprisingly difficulties often exist in trying to single out the major factors causing corruption. Similarly, the clouds of ambiguity surrounding the debates over the meaning of corruption are often encountered in discussions over the causes of corruption. There is, however, no question over

the fact that a combination of a range of connected and integrated factors could perhaps reinforce one another to result in higher levels of corruption. Amongst existing writings on corruption in Nigeria, one of major factors frequently presented as fostering and sustaining the culture of endemic corruption in Nigeria is not unconnected to what Ilufoye (2009) has described as the struggle over the “national cake” otherwise known as national resources. This primarily involves struggles to control national wealth between the various ethnic groups and constituencies in Nigeria dominating over any attempts to build a strong, united and egalitarian society. This situation has effectively provided a convenient environment for a few powerful political elites to plunder state resources with impunity. Many scholars have argued that this phenomenon signals the problems of national identity and citizenship. Most Nigerians complain about corruption as a vice holding down economic progress, but they easily forget or forgive or even celebrate the perpetrators if they come from their own tribe.

Chalal and Daloz (1999) described the significance of such solidarity networks via a famous African proverb: “whoever does not rob the state robs his kith and kin” (Smith 2010). In a similar vein, Eghosa Osaghae, a political historian, has also described this phenomenon in the following way: “it is a popular Nigerian saying, which took root under the colonial rule, that government business is no man’s businesses. There was thus nothing seriously wrong with stealing state funds, especially if they were used to benefit not only the individuals but also members of his community” (Osaghae 1998). This phenomenon can effectively be illustrated by referring to theoretical discussions over linkages between the nature and character of the Nigerian state and political corruption.

According to Osaghae (1988) the role and character of the state is central to any analysis of corruption in Africa and Nigeria in particular. Ekeh, (1975, 1985) succinctly provided a theory of “two publics” (instead of one public, when compared with many countries in the west) for understanding Africa’s governance and development problems, and more importantly the problem of endemic corruption in Nigeria. He argued that this phenomenon is rooted in the cultural system, implying that individuals in many African countries including Nigeria function within “two publics”: the primordial and civic publics. In the case of Nigeria, he argued that the former public operates on the morality of society and is committed to the private realm, while the later public is amoral and lacks any claim to morality. Accordingly, while individuals in Nigeria see corruption as evil in the primordial public realm and try to discourage it at that level, in the civic public realm corrupt practices are generally encouraged. This is against the backdrop of the general belief that the state belongs to no one, thus individuals are justified when the looting of state resources is used to benefit their people from the primordial public.

This divisive and unpatriotic tendency towards state affairs, engendered by a lack of national identity or any sense of a united centre, is also often exploited by powerful elites in politicizing anti-corruption campaign exercises in Nigeria. For instance, when certain elites are prosecuted for corruptly enriching themselves with public funds, it is common practice in Nigeria to associate such anti-corruption exercises to ethnic politics, a situation that has continued to pose a serious challenge for effective anti-corruption reform in Nigeria.

In Nigeria, there is strong evidence that powerful political elites have exploited social identities like ethnicity to promote their own personal interest. According to Dudley (1973) and Osaghae (1995) ethnicity and regionalism have often been deployed by a few powerful elites to access political power at the state level, thus providing them political and economic control over the management and allocation of state resources. The maintenance of this state of affairs can be connected to what some have termed Nigeria's oligarchic (a social system ruled by few people) political structure. These oligarchs are constituted by self-serving politicians, businesspersons, political fixers, "godfathers", former military officers, and elite bureaucrats with vested interests in holding onto power (USAID 2006). There are wide ranging academic debates about how to characterize these oligarchies and from where their power and influence derives (and over whether the term oligarchy is the most appropriate). Some interpretations stress their connections to the influence of the colonial administration (Ekeh 1975, 1985). Osaghae (1988), for example, explores the impacts of indirect rule that left governance in the hands of a series of traditional local networks, which had the effect of encouraging patronage and decentralizing authority.

Others however question the fact that the same systems of colonial dominance did not lead to the same outcomes in other African states and see factors such as the long period of military rule which followed independence and the particular issues of the ethnic and religious divisions within Nigerian society as having greater influence on the oligarchic systems which have developed (Adeyemo 2004 and USAID 2006). Nevertheless, from Nigeria's democratic experience (as discussed in the previous section) of the second republic and particularly since the return to democracy in 1999, this phenomenon has not been limited to a particular regime type; rather it appears to be inherent in the character of the Nigerian state. Nigeria's oligarchies have managed to arrogate power and influence around themselves by claiming to represent various regions, ethnic constituencies and professional bodies.

Nigeria's oligarchic structure is sustained and reproduced through a kind of informal network of power based upon friendships, financial deals and pragmatic alliances, monopolization of information and distribution of patronage (Ayoade 2006). These systems have allowed the development of a political culture which has been predicated on the abuse of national resources and resulted in endemic corruption through which the oligarchies have accumulated unjustifiable wealth that would have been impossible via legal earnings. This illegally acquired wealth is then used in turn to further monopolise financial and political power by fixing elections, organizing political violence and ensuring against the formation of effective oppositional political parties (Adeyemo 2004).

In addition to the theft and mismanagement of public funds, there is also evidence that Nigeria's oligarchs also sponsor the services and weapons behind the endemic political violence in the country. This has made entering into political competition a very expensive endeavour in the country, (a significant number of political officials are far more accountable to the powerful and violent political godfathers (or oligarchs) who sponsor them into political offices than they are to their constituencies).

Against this backdrop, a remarkable example of the godfather phenomenon in Nigeria could best be illustrated by the activities of a wealthy member of the powerful Uba political family, Chris Uba (Human Rights Watch 2004). A detailed study by Human Rights Watch (2004) illustrates how as a strong member of the ruling political party (PDP) Board of Trustees during the 2003 elections, Uba single-handedly sponsored the majority of PDP candidates and rigged their election to office across Anambra state. After that election, he publicly claimed to be the “greatest godfather in Nigeria's history,” for single headedly installing his loyalists into all political offices in Anambra state (Human Rights Watch 2004). One of the biggest beneficiaries he sponsored in the 2003 elections was the ruling political party (PDP) gubernatorial candidate Chris Ngige, who later fell out with Uba for allegedly refusing to divert a substantial amount of state funds into his sponsor's personal pocket. His refusal to meet with the mutual agreements, signed prior to his appointment as the governor, triggered a very serious political crisis in the state that almost crippled economic activities for over six months. The terms of their agreements were explicitly spelt out in form of a written contract and a declaration of loyalty that was signed by Ngige, prior to the election. In defence of his actions, which resulted in serious violence in the state, leading to the deaths of several hundreds of innocent people, Chris Uba provided a copy of this document to bolster his contention that Ngige had reneged on the terms of their agreement.

The Uba and Ngige case clearly illustrates the type of notoriously corrupt and predatory oligarchic political networks that have come to dominate Nigerian geopolitical space. It is the entrenched nature of these networks which is said to have helped to explain the perseverance of the problems of poor governance and endemic corruption which have been described in this chapter and which have made national and international efforts at combating corruption and improving governance so complex and problematic.

Some High Profile Anti-Corruption Activities in Nigeria (Before 2015)

The year 1999 marked a turning point in the history of Nigeria's anti-corruption campaigns. Specifically, following his election in 1999, former president Olusegun Obasanjo, initiated certain policy reforms that were specifically targeted at tackling corruption. Subsequently, two major anti-corruption bodies were established, the Independent Corrupt Practices And Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in 2000 and 2003 respectively. The pioneer headship of the ICPC was a retired judge of the Appeal Court and that of the EFCC was a senior police officer. While the former appeared to be more deliberate in its approach to fighting corruption, the later was more aggressive and proactive and thus gained as much popularity as notoriety (Adebanwi and Obadare 2011). The establishment of the EFCC in 2003 was a response to the perceived inefficiencies of the ICPC, although in many ways their responsibility appears to be the same. Over the years since then, for virtually the first time in Nigerian history, these anti-corruption agencies have successfully prosecuted corrupt powerful government officials. They have identified and recovered ill-gotten wealth from prominent Nigerian officials and have prosecuted and removed about five former ministers and former governors from office.

From its initial establishment, the EFCC under the leadership of Nuhu Ribadu quickly emerged as an arrow-head in the fight against corruption in Nigeria. The EFCC was given a broad mandate to prevent, investigate and prosecute a series of financial crimes in both the

public and private sectors, including internet fraud, oil bunkering, terrorist financing, money launderings and government corruption (Economic and Financial Crimes Establishment Act 2004). The EFCC initially started with the clamping down on Nigerian's internet fraudsters and recovering of former president Abacha's loot. Ribadu, a police officer himself was redeployed from the Nigerian Police Force (a notoriously corrupt public institution) to head the new anti-corruption commission. Public expectations of the new institution were initially low, given the Nigerian government's past track record of politicising and not being steadfast in implementing its previous anti-corruption programmes (Lawson 2009).

However, in October 2005, the EFCC's credibility and public acceptance received a boost, when it recorded an unprecedented breakthrough in the nation's history of anti-corruption campaigns, by securing the conviction of Nigeria's former police chief himself, Tafa Balogun. He was forced into early retirement when the EFCC found \$52 million hidden in a network of fifteen bank accounts. However, he was eventually sentenced to a mere six-month imprisonment (Transparency for Nigeria 2005). Over the following years, apart from the over \$5 billion in stolen assets the institution helped to recover from corrupt officials and the securing of over 400 convictions, investigations by the EFCC led to the removal from office and prosecution of a Senate President, five governors, ministers, national assemblymen, bank executives and many other key personalities, who prior to its establishment were regarded as sacred cows (Byrne, et al 2010).

Despite these achievements, the EFCC under Obasanjo's administration was also heavily criticised for having been selective in its anti-corruption drive. For example, former president Obasanjo, in 2005, in his own quest to hang on to power, attempted to alter the constitution, to pave way for his return to office for a third time.

Accordingly, huge amount of bribes, estimated at over 50m Naira (£260,000), were offered to each legislator to lobby for a change in the 1999 constitution (Adegoro 2006). Following his failure to amend the constitution, thus effectively blocking his chances of running for a third term in office, a political crisis ensued between him and his Vice President, Atiku Abubakar, which later resulted in the forceful eviction of the latter from the ruling PDP political party. His perceived loyalists were also not spared, as the EFCC, which is under the direct control of the president, became a veritable tool for witch-hunting and knocking out political opponents from the presidential race by bringing charges of corruption against them, which eventually led to the impeachment of five state governors (Lawson 2009). In a similar vein, following the announcement that the sum of about \$709 million and another \$144 million had been recovered from the late President Abacha's family and his henchmen, there had been a reawakening of hope that the country was finally addressing its deep-seated financial irregularities. Nonetheless, this had been short-lived, as the recovered loot itself was discovered to have been quickly re-looted, when the Senate Public Accounts Committee found that only \$6.8 million and \$2.8 million of the recovered amounts were still in the Central Bank of Nigeria (Ayittey 2009).

In the light of these developments, different interpretations and criticisms of the sincerity of the administration's anti-corruption drive came from different quarters. In particular debates have raged over why there were so many impeachments within such a short time. On the one hand, supporters of the EFCC's work argued that Ribadu focused on those cases with sufficient evidence for prosecution, while building up information on the others to be used at the end of Obasanjo's tenure (Lawson 2009). On the other hand, others (such as the International Crisis Group 2007) suggested that the exercise was designed to systematically marginalise Abubakar's supporters, thus creating a soft landing for Obasanjo's handpicked political successors. In answer, Ribadu contended that he took advantage of the opportunity created by the removal of immunity (related to the impeachment of the state governors), while building up the case files on others to be used when they were no longer „protected“ by immunity (Lawson 2009).

However, whatever the controversies that may have ensued from this particular process, whilst it cannot be entirely denied that the series of impeachments may have been politically motivated, it remains obvious that most of the convicted governors had in their possessions state funds running into several millions of dollars. For instance, the former Plateau State Governor, Joshua Dariye (PDP), who was the first to be removed from office in 2004, was found to have been operating several secret accounts in foreign banks. He was later arrested for money laundering in London. Although he managed to skip bail in the UK and returned to Nigeria, he was eventually impeached by the state legislatures. He was accused of diverting N1.1 billion (over \$90 million) into his private bank accounts. Before his impeachment, he was brought before a Federal High Court in Kaduna by the EFCC, however, according to Section 308 of the Nigerian Constitution, which protects sitting governors from criminal prosecution, Justice Abdullahi Liman ruled in December 2004, that although Dariye was a principal actor in the case, the immunity clause protected him from further prosecution while still in office (Ayittey 2009). Whilst Section 308, which protects a sitting president, vice-president and governors from criminal prosecutions, may have been enacted to protect executive heads of government from unnecessary distractions when still in office, the immunity clause is seen by many as a major constraint militating against effective anti-corruption initiatives, because of the common knowledge that political leaders at various levels of government are often susceptible to misappropriating public funds. A large part of the funds looted by Dariye has since been returned to the Nigerian government by the UK government.

After the Dariye saga, the second governor to be prosecuted by the EFCC was the Governor of the oil rich Nigerian state of Bayelsa, Governor Diepreye Alamieyeseigha, who was also arrested on money laundering charges in London. A few days later, appearing before a UK court, he was charged with laundering £1.8 million (\$3.2 million) which was found in cash inside his London apartment and in seven London bank accounts that were traced to him. Alams, as he is popularly called, reportedly made his escape from the UK dressing as a woman (Akinbajo 2011). He was subsequently impeached in 2005, and later charged by the EFCC in December. While these represent just a few cases of corrupt practices involving some of Nigeria's state governors and public officials, who looted their state treasury with impunity, the lack of independence of the anti-graft agency could perhaps make it vulnerable to political interference by the presidency, who ultimately oversees its activities. For the purposes of this paper what is important to stress is that for all of its limitations and short-comings, the anti-

corruption activities embarked upon by the EFCC during this period did succeed in putting the questions of probity, transparency and achieving real breakthrough in the struggle against corruption firmly at the centre of the national political agenda. What is also clear is that the profile of the EFCC was also greatly enhanced by the support that it received from the international community.

International Support for Nigeria's Anti-Corruption Campaign Exercise

As discussed earlier, since the 1990s there has been a dramatic increase of international interest in curbing corruption, both in terms of exposing the degree to which corruption exists and in formulating measures by which it might be curtailed. Many countries, particularly developing countries, have been influenced or even compelled to take steps in curbing corruption through the provision of assistance (both financial and technical) in, for example, building more transparent and effective institutions, creating or sustaining an environment where a free press and an independent judiciary are prioritized, and strengthening a criminal justice system that can investigate and prosecute corrupt individuals and organizations alike. To this end, during the government of Obasanjo, when the EFCC was initially established, various financial ties were established with international partners, which helped to increase its institutional capacity. The international community helped support, for example, the creation of a Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to kick-start necessary reforms, which provided the EFCC with a model for building a strong national reform program, needed to clean up the financial institutions and bring to justice those who sought to undermine them. This eventually led to the capitalisation and consolidation of the banking sector, which saw about 100 Nigerian banks merging into just 25 banks after the exercise. More specifically, the EFCC's efforts under Ribadu were supported by various international institutions like the United Nations, regional agencies, and many bilateral institutions like the US Secret Service, the FBI, the US Postal Service, and the Department of Justice (Ribadu 2006).

To give more specific detail, the EFCC received a total of \$32 million in donations from the European Union between 2004 and 2008, representing 85% of its foreign support (Adebanwi and Obadare 2011). Apart from the EU, the EFCC also received smaller amounts from other individual European governments, the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program (Thomas-Greenfield 2006).

Most of these funds were channelled toward infrastructure, which included the construction of an EFCC Training and Research Institute and a Data Centre at EFCC headquarters. Similarly, the US provided support in terms of capacity development, by training over 800 prosecutors, valued at an additional \$1 million (EFCC 2006).

Additionally, Ribadu established ties with other law enforcement agencies across the world including: the UK Metropolitan Police, the US FBI, the Canadian Mounted Police and the South African „Scorpions“, giving the EFCC a leverage in the anti corruption campaign to other parts of the globe, including those countries where most of the resources appropriated through corruption are to be found (Ribadu 2006).

As suggested in the previous section, by 2007 the EFCC had secured convictions in over 400 of the near 1000 cases in the courts. These convictions marked the very first time high-ranking officials, like the Nigerian Police chief, a number of state governors, ministers, legislators and top bureaucrats had been prosecuted for corrupt practices. Jonathan Rush, an official of the Fraud Prevention Section of the US Department of Justice affirmed the EFCC's achievements under Ribadu in the following way: "I understand how substantial the problem of corruption is in Nigeria but I also see how EFCC is making very serious efforts to deal with it and change the climate that has made corruption very tolerable. Again we have been very satisfied with the workings of EFCC; we have ongoing contacts on corruption as well as fraud issues with them" (EFCC, 2006).

To a large extent, this impressive achievement signals the importance of political will (from top) and sustained commitment (by anti-graft agencies), as well as intentional-cooperation towards the successful implementation of anti-corruption reforms.

Nonetheless, after building Nigeria's EFCC into a world-class crime-fighting agency, which earned Ribadu trust amongst his international partners, the situation, like many of the other reform efforts in the country, have changed considerably at the beginning of Yar'Adua's administration in 2007. A year after Yar'Adua became the president; Ribadu was removed from office under controversial circumstances and was forced to go into exile in the UK for fear of assassination, whilst many of the indicted political elites during Obasanjo's administration, like the former governor of Delta state, James Ibori, became prominent figures within the ruling party (PDP) and Yar'Adua's administration. The EFCC's international credibility under Yar'Adua's administration plummeted, partly due to his lack of political will in bringing indicted political officials to justice and the perceived protection and overwhelming influence that notable corrupt elements exhibited under his administration, while those who had championed the anti-corruption struggle during Obasanjo's administration found themselves under investigation or harassment from the state.

Recommendations

1. There should be a national template which successive administration should build on.
2. There should be a national conference on corruption, where each ethnic region should be represented.
3. Ethnicity support towards corrupt practices should be discouraged.
4. The institutions that should fight corruption should be overhauled because anti-corruption war has taken some clannish decoration.
5. The fight in both private and public institutions should be bottom-top approach and not being targeted towards politicians or political appointees only.

Conclusion

The study concludes as follows;

1. The immunity clause for public office holders should be removed.
2. A special court to handle corruption cases should be set up.

3. Foreign banks should discourage acceptance of funds deposit from sources they know is questionable.
4. Foreign government where looters deposit their funds should quicken the process of repatriating looted funds from African countries.

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