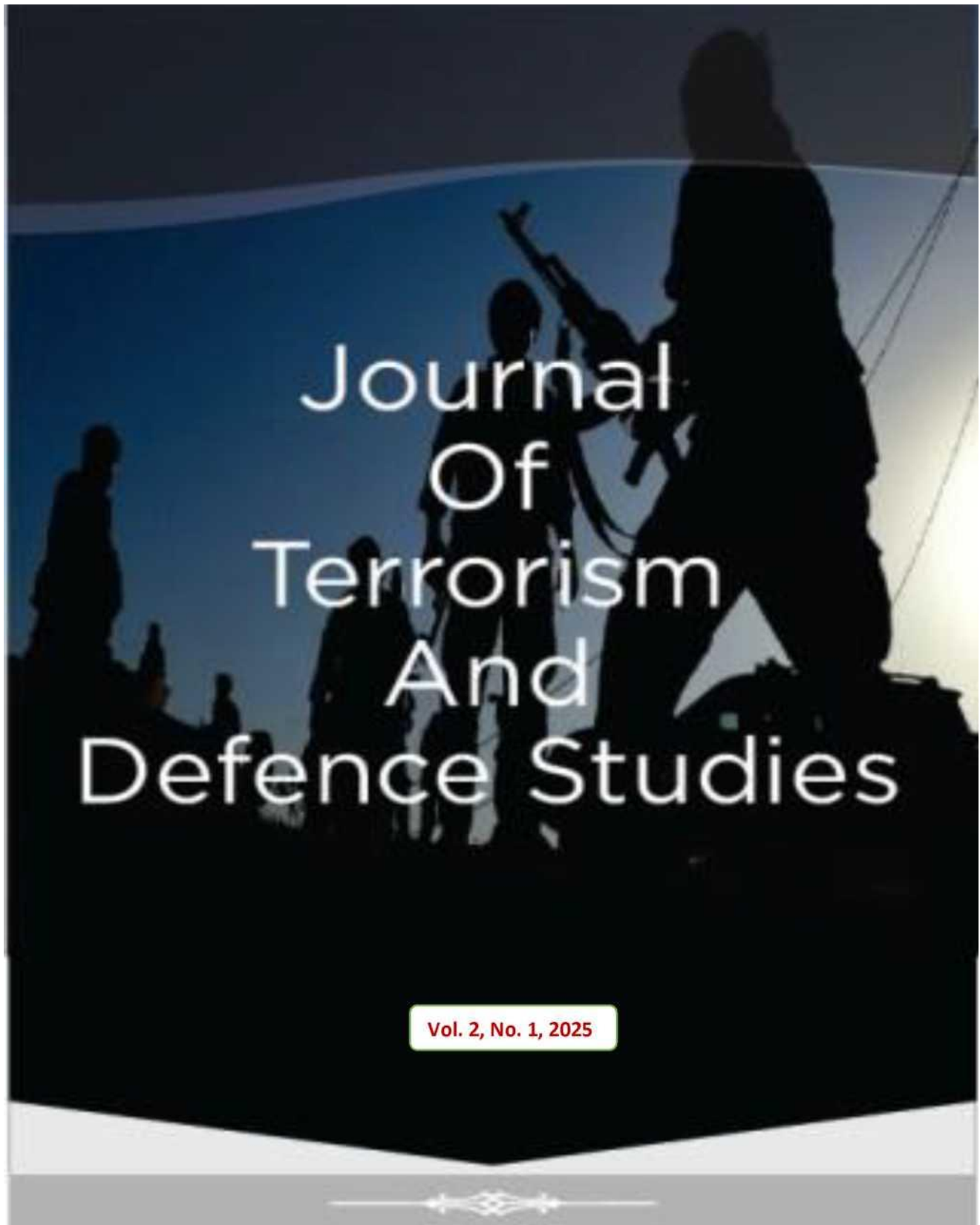




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EDITORIAL NOTE

This special issue started with a wholistic review of the different dynamics of insecurity and defence threats within the African states.

The first article presented the challenges of kidnapping, terrorism and police brutality in Nigeria. It reveals that the Nigerian state has been weighed down by the multiple threats of progressive terrorism often carried out through mass abduction of villagers, groups and targeted travelers. Unfortunately, the hope of the victims for rescue is often worsened by the increasing culture of police brutality, which turns the expected saviors into part of the popular source of terror.

The second article presents military coups as a major threat in West Africa. In contemporary times, West African states have become a centerpiece of continuous coups and failed coups. This wind of coups in West Africa is largely driven by the culture of corruption, nepotism and bad governance which creates ungoverned spaces for insecurity and a beautiful environment for coup plotters to launch their attacks and win public opinion. The article that followed unraveled the negative wind of human trafficking and the negative psychology as well as false hope that drives victims into the untold hardship. The situation is worsened by the crisis of untold hardship that goes with reintegration.

Furthermore, the next article presented the crisis faced in the Contemporary Zimbabwean state. These crisis were driven by a combination of neocolonialism, bad governance, land crisis and poor fiscal policy which weakened national spirit of development and undermined nation building process in Zimbabwe. The last article evaluated the culture of military rule. It unveils the multiple corruption, nepotism, ethnicity and human rights violations within the Nigerian state under military rule. The implications became that the Nigerian state was high jacked and pushed away from the part of democratization towards the part of militarism in the post-independence years of the state.

Finally, I wish to invite you to take your time and read through the wonderful contents of the articles. They are highly scholarly and have sound promise of satisfying your intellectual appetite.

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CORRUPTION AND THE NIGERIAN STATE, 1960-2007: A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

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Abstract

This article argues that corruption in Nigerian state takes its roots from the systemic debasement or flagrant disregard for the moral and social prescriptions that shape the conduct and behaviour of people in a society. While corruption has repeatedly defined the Nigerian state, how it has, without form and shape found a dwelling place in the midst of Nigerians as a people is rarely examined. Drawing on Marxism and historical document analysis, this article examines how corruption crept into the lives of Nigerians and its implications for socio-economic growth and development. The findings expand discussion on the dimensions of corruption in the Nigerian state and its implications for the Nigerian state. The findings also explain means through which corruption weakens governmental and non-governmental institutions including religious, legislative, and financial institutions in Nigeria. It concluded that there is a positive interconnectivity between corruption and the Nigerian state and it has been responsible for Nigeria's socio-economic declines.

Keywords: Bribery, Corruption, Marxism, Nigerian state, weak institutions,

Introduction

Gradually, everything that defines Nigerians existence as a people in Nigeria is being weaved around the phenomenon of corruption. The distinguishing characteristic of corruption is located in its pervasiveness and obscurity. It is difficult to trace it to any form, colour, stature, or quality. Its pervasiveness and obscurity has taken the phenomenon beyond trading centres, corporate boardrooms, to hallowed enclaves such as churches and mosques. It is evidently clear therefore that the phenomenon of corruption in Nigeria like in other political climes, takes its roots from the systemic debasement or flagrant disregard for the moral and social prescriptions that shape the conduct and behaviour of people in a society. Succinctly put the phenomenon of corruption; though pervasive and obscure, without form and shape, has found a dwelling place in the midst of

Nigerians as a people in Nigeria. How? Nigerians have overtime destroyed the moral fibre of the society through the flagrant disregard for things that were sacrosanct national moral values. This way, various forms of vices committed in the political, economic, cultural, and social sectors of the Nigerian state has often been blamed on the prevalence of poverty and ignorance.

Can the prevalence of poverty and ignorance explain the pervasiveness of corruption in Nigeria from independence to 2007? While the twin concepts of poverty and ignorance can to some extent explain its prevalence, the paper wish to state that the factors of impunity, lack of deterrent measures, the question of federal character, and the lack of political will by governments at all levels to address the issue of corruption, has helped to promote the pervasiveness of corruption in

Nigeria since independence in 1960. This has also helped to promote its pervasiveness. What then are the theoretical explanations for this pervasiveness and obscurity?

Some preliminary explanations for the pervasiveness and obscurity of the phenomenon of corruption in Nigeria can be traced to the nature and character of the state that emerged at independence in 1960. Drawing on the postulations of Engels, in primitive communist societies, the state did not exist. What existed according to him were kinships or (family relationships) which formed the basis of social groupings. According to him, these societies were essentially agricultural and therefore there was no need to produce surplus beyond what was necessary for subsistence.¹ This made it impossible for large amounts of wealth to be accumulated and concentrated in the hands of a few. Thus, the tendency for primitive accumulation of wealth was discouraged. But, as the paper will show, the promotion of the mechanisms for accumulation; corruption and political manipulation, nurtured, maintained and deepened the quest for primitive accumulation. Theorists such as Miliband, Poulantzas, Jessop, Gramsci, and others, have been influenced by Engels' postulation in their explanation of the emergence of the state and its behaviour. This they have done with slight political, economic, and social bent.

In the Nigerian context, the emergence of the state cannot be explained without reference to the postulations of theorists mentioned above. Succinctly put, the emergence of the Nigerian state conformed to the theoretical perspectives of Marxist and neo-Marxist theorists. In light of this, the paper will rely extensively on the postulations of the Marxists and neo-Marxists theorists as the basis of our explanation. This is because, a number of scholars that have put forward theories of the state have been heavily influenced by Marxism. However, the paper will also make references to individuals and other perspectives where necessary.

How has the nature and character of the emergent Nigerian state engendered corruption?

What are the theoretical perspectives that can be used to explain this phenomenon? The paper will provide answers to these questions by linking the explanations for the emergent state with the problem of corruption in Nigeria.

The State and Corruption: Conceptualization, Interconnectivity and Issues

Its historical evolution well noted, the context in which the concept of the State is used in the paper derives its meaning and substance from the factors of; colonial experience, lack of relative autonomy, the federal system of government, incorporation into the global capitalist orbit, and the deliberate distortion of the indigenous political, economic, and social institutions. The harsh reality about these factors that helped to determine and shape the emergent Nigerian state at independence was that, they helped to make the colonies producers of primary commodities for the industries of the metropolitan countries. Furthermore, it made the colonies dumping grounds for the manufactured products from the metropolis. By implication, the colonies were turned to specialized grounds for the production of raw materials for the industrial needs of the metropolitan countries.

Thus, the emergent state since independence has been characterised by the elements of dependency, political instability, economic crisis, and social decadence. In a nutshell, what Dudley, Ekeh and Joseph all share is the assumption that an amoral value-system, which Ekeh attributes to disjuncture between the state and society under colonial rule, prevails in the public realm, and this gives rise to corruption, abuse and exploitation of public office to serve private ends, ethnicity and reliance on patron-client networks for legitimacy.¹¹ While attempting not to be too sociologically engaging, the paper states that, the family which is the smallest unit in society has been morally debased, due in part to the obnoxious policies initiated by the emergent political elite class that inherited political power from the departing colonialists.

Consequently, what could be regarded as the post-colonial state at its emergence became

heavily burdened by contending demands from the competing sectors of the society. This resulted in what Ake has referred to as the sectoral disarticulation of the post-colonial state in Nigeria. The State as the paper will show in the course of our analysis became entangled in the fierce struggle for survival due to class formation and intra-class struggles within the locally dominant class. The whole essence of the struggles as Ekekwe has identified it is to get 'access to and/or control of state apparatuses or institutions which are vital for this class in consolidating its dominance and as its members seek opportunities for personal wealth or accumulation of capital.'¹¹¹

In continuation of his argument, Ekekwe further opines that, 'given the primacy of the state and the critical importance of access to and/or control over its apparatuses, those members of the dominant class that lacked this access and/or control initiated, or strongly supported...'¹. In other words, the denial of access to control of states resources could be damning and of great consequence for those that do not have the access. The paper therefore fully subscribe to the view that, the fierceness of the intra-class struggles are reinforced by the 'survival instinct' which involved the use of the instrumentalities of state power to gain access and/or control of the apparatuses/resources of the state.

The phenomenon of corruption; although may be difficult to define, has its obvious traits whenever you come across it. For example, as Akin Oyeboade has observed, 'whenever or wherever the rules of the game are crooked, twisted or otherwise manipulated in order to give an undeserved preferment or advantage to any player(s), corruption would stick out like a sore thumb.'^v In continuation of his point, he stated, 'therefore, any attempt to bend the rules in favour of some participants in contravention of well-established guidelines clearly smacks of corruption.'¹ Meanwhile, the Cassell Compact Dictionary defines the phenomenon as, 'the act of corrupting, the state of being corrupt, bribery or fraud, moral

deterioration, and misrepresentation.'^{v11} In another breath, corruption can be seen as the lack of selfrestraint on the part of government officials to demand bribes or side payments. In this regard, a public official is corrupt if he accepts monetary reward or its equivalent in exchange for carrying out an act or duty that he or she is under obligation to do. The phenomenon of corruption manifests in the form of White-collar crime, corporate crime, and insider dealing.

In the post-colonial Nigerian state, the issue of malfeasance has dominated the activities of the private and public sectors of the economy. This has been engendered by the factors of; impunity, lack of deterrent measures to scare people from perpetuating fraud, federal character commission, and the lack of political will. Thus, the emergent Nigerian state in the early period of its independence was not adequately equipped to combat the menace of corruption. As Oseghae has pointed in his work, 'Nigeria had the potential of becoming a highly developed country. Indeed, it was regarded in the 1960s as a potential African *tiger*, but by 1995, according to World Bank sources, it had slipped far behind Malaysia, with which it was roughly on a par in that decade, to the status of one of the world's most indebted and fifteen poorest countries.'^{v111} One of the reasons advanced for this decline was attributed to pervasive corruption and the absence or ineffectiveness of institutions of oversight. Moreover, Nigeria's peripheral location in the global system led to the crisis of disarticulation and extraversion.

In light of the foregoing, the paper will use the concept of the State to mean the entire structures, processes, and limitations that are employed by a set of individuals acting for or on behalf of other individuals in the society. These individuals may have been selected through an electoral process or have accessed political power through force (military coup d'état). It must be noted that these individuals are found within a geographical setting that is properly demarcated (territory), with a population, sovereignty, and permanence.

The context in which the paper will use the phenomenon of corruption will be restricted to those acts of omission or commission that contravenes or run afoul of good conduct in both the private and public sectors of a society. The paper will also see the concept from the perspective of deviance, because, related to the phenomenon of corruption are societal malaises such as crime, delinquency, fraud, bribery, and insider dealing. However, the paper intends to portray deviance in the light of negativity which should be sanctioned through punishment.

Since the phenomenon of corruption is pervasive and obscure, the paper will adopt its use to cover the activities of private individuals in their domestic dealings. This is imperative because, existing works in the area of corruption have treated the malaise as a problem peculiar to public officials only. Moreover, existing works in the area have dwelt extensively on giving an expose on the subject of corruption without an examination of the theoretical underpinnings that make it pervasive and obscure. Therefore, this paper attempts to examine the various perspectives and theoretical bases upon which its pervasiveness and obscurity has been founded.

Corruption and the Nigerian State: Theoretical Explanations

However pervasive and obscure it may look, the phenomenon of corruption manifests itself in societal behaviours that are culturally determined or that does or do not conform to the values of society. It goes to show that these behaviours have their origin in the living patterns subscribed to by the society. For example, the American sociologist Marshall B. Clinard suggested that the term 'deviance' should be reserved for behaviour which is so much disapproved of that the community finds it impossible to tolerate. In terms of this definition, crime and delinquency are the most obvious forms of deviance. These forms of behaviours refer to those activities that break the law of the land and are subject to official punishment. What is the cause(s) of this/these behaviour(s)?

A functionalist analysis of deviance begins with society as a whole. The emphasis of the functionalist is to look for the source of

deviance in the nature of the society rather than in the individual. Construed in the emphasis of the functionalists is the assumption that all societies have shared norms and values which form the basis of social order. In this order, it is expected that when the shared values are broken, the society would invoke its punishment on the offenders. Interestingly, with the functionalist emphasis on the importance of shared norms and values as the basis of social order, it would appear that deviance is a threat to order and should be seen as a threat to society.

But, some functionalists also argue that deviance is a necessary part of all societies, and that it performs positive functions for social systems. This manifests in the conduct of some Nigerian political officials who at one time or the other were alleged to have been involved in one form of financial sleaze. While their actions were condemned by a section of the society, others were of the opinion that they should be left alone. After all, according to them, 'all dog dey chop shit'!

However, all functionalists are agreed to the fact that social control mechanisms such as the police, anti-graft agencies, and the courts are necessary to keep deviance in check and to protect social order. In the Nigerian context however, the establishment of these mechanisms

notwithstanding, deviance behaviour is still pervasive. Perhaps this could be explained by the argument of Emile Durkheim that, crime is an inevitable and normal aspect of social life. In fact, he went further to say that, 'crime is an integral part of all healthy societies'.^{lx} Its inevitability finds expression in the fact that not every member of society can be equally committed to the collective sentiments (the shared values and moral beliefs) of society. In furtherance of his argument, Durkheim observes that, since individuals are exposed to different influences and circumstances, it is 'impossible for all to be alike'. Therefore, crime is not only inevitable, it can also be functional. It only becomes dysfunctional when its rate is unusually high or low.

Continuing in the tradition of Durkheim,

Robert K. Merton argued that deviance resulted from the culture and structure of society itself. Merton began his postulations from the perspective of the standard functionalist position of value consensus; that is, all members of society share the same values. At this juncture, it is necessary to ask the fundamental questions of; what is value consensus in Nigeria? Are all Nigerians agreed to the fact that we all share the same values? In an attempt to provide answers to these questions, the paper will briefly examine the culture and structure of Nigeria.

Alluding to the Marxist perspective on the origins and evolution of the state, it is instructive to note that the development of states in the territories of modern-day Nigeria, from the period of the earliest archeological findings in the late stone age to the coming of European traders in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, showed that human societies have been constantly present in all regions of Nigeria for several thousand years. Falola and Heaton have observed that, 'initially, their societies were decentralized in nature, focusing on small village or village-group units'.^x

Some societies, particularly in the eastern and middle belt regions of modern-day Nigeria, maintained these decentralized state structures until the advent of European colonialism. As Falola and Heaton have continued, by the end of the first millennium CE, some societies were developing more centralized state structures based on ideas of kingship. And that these centralized and decentralized states had their roots in the agricultural economies of indigenous African communities.

Thus, it goes to show therefore that the Marxist perspective on the origin and evolution of state conformed to that of Nigeria considering the important role of agriculture to their economies. Since no surplus was produced beyond what was necessary for subsistence, it became impossible for wealth to be accumulated and concentrated in the hands of a few members of the society. There was therefore value consensus in that period. But, as societies developed to the stage where they began to produce surplus, it became possible for a ruling

class to emerge. The emergence of this class led to the intra-class struggles discussed earlier in the paper.

Having illustrated the origin of both centralized and decentralized states in the Nigerian region, it is important for the paper at this juncture to allude to Merton in his illustration of cultural goals and institutionalized means. Using the USA as an example, he outlined his theory as follows. 'Members of American society share the major values of American culture. In particular, they share the goal of success, for which they all strive and which is largely measured in terms of wealth and material possessions.'^{*1} He goes further to state that in all societies there are institutionalized means of reaching culturally defined goals. These means/ways are prescribed and are expected to form the basis for the pursuit of the culturally defined goals.

Similarly, in the Nigerian context, especially in the early years after independence, members of the Nigerian society shared the values of a Nigerian culture. They shared the goal of success for which they all strived and worked hard for. It was largely measured in terms of wealth and material possessions. The institutionalized means of reaching culturally defined goals in Nigeria are prescribed in our traditional norms and conventions. These are usually manifested in the forms of; hard work (dignity of labour), honesty, trust, drive, determination and ambition. The contradiction therein just as in the American society of Merton, is that great importance is attached to success, and relatively little importance is given to the accepted ways of achieving success.

Consequently, as Merton has pointed out, "as such American society is unstable and unbalanced. There is a tendency to reject the 'rules of the game' and to strive for success by any available means."^{*11} When this is allowed to go on for some time, the tendency is for the society to reach a situation of normlessness or anomie. In this situation, norms no longer direct behaviour, and deviance is encouraged. The Nigerian landscape since the late 1960s to the 1970s has been inundated by allegations and

counter-allegations of corruption and other societal malaises.

As Falola and Heaton have observed, 'corruption in the Gowon regime was accompanied by gross mismanagement of government revenues. For example, in early 1975 Gowon announced the purchase of 16 million metric tons of cement to build a new army barracks, among other projects.'^{*iv} In order to show the level of sleaze that happened in this period and the level of involvement of both government officials and their cronies, Falola and Heaton in the same place have shown that, 'the amount ordered was later determined to have been a huge overestimation of the necessary tonnage, as contractors have inflated their bids in order to squeeze as much money out of the federal government as possible.'^{*lv} These forms of crimes are either seen or not heard or are heard and not seen. As the paper will show in the coming paragraphs, white-collar crimes are committed by top government officials in order to further their interests, often against the interest of the corporations or organizations which they work for.

Edwin Sutherland was the first sociologist to carry out a study on the phenomenon of white-collar crime. He defined the phenomenon as 'crimes committed by persons of high social status and respectability in the course of their occupations.'^{*v} According to him, such crimes include bribery and corruption in business and politics, misconduct by professionals such as doctors and lawyers, the breaking of trade regulations, food and drug laws, and safety regulations in industry, the misuse of patents and trademarks, and misrepresentation in advertising.

Although Sutherland's perspective has been criticized based on ambiguity in definitions, but its deficiency could be made up for in what Gary Slapper and Steve Tombs have identified as distinguishing between white-collar and corporate crime. For Slapper and Tomb, the distinguishing element should be emphasized using the term white-collar crime for individuals while corporate crimes should be used in respect to crimes committed by or for corporations to

further their interests rather than the interests of the individuals.

But whatever the shortcomings in Sutherland's perspective, he aptly captured the substance of the thrust of this paper. This is so because an overview of Sutherland's perspective shows that the level of corruptive crimes committed in Nigeria since independence, are summarily captured in his prescription. After all, white-collar crimes are often committed by officials in the high echelon of government parastatals, and non-governmental organisations. This is not to suggest that officials of the lower ranks do not as well perpetuate these forms of crimes. Also, officials of private organisations are not exonerated.

Interestingly, the phenomenon of corruption could be positive to societal growth and development. Like conflict and conflict situations, corruption if properly managed, could contribute to the growth and development of societies. For example, if the resources corruptively acquired are invested in the home country and not allowed to be frittered away to foreign countries, they could be invested in sectors of the economy in order to generate capital, employment, and market for the local economy.

Between Fiction and Reality-- the Pervasiveness of Corruption in Nigeria

In reality, the dominance of the phenomenon of corruption in everyday discourse in Nigeria has made it more of a solution than a problem. The rush to 'make it quick' has endeared corruptive tendencies in the minds of almost every Nigerian to the extent that if you fail to catch the train, you will be regarded as the biggest of failures, even by your family members. Thus, its pervasiveness in Nigeria has almost reached the high heavens! As Akin Oyeboade has observed, 'corruption has become so pervasive that no sector or institution is immune, not churches, mosques, public sector or the private sector, schools, colleges or universities.'^{xvi}

This brings us to the questions of; is the phenomenon of corruption really pervasive or we are exaggerating? Is it that bad in Nigeria? Or perhaps we do not understand its meaning! The

paper will at this juncture examine the concept in order to show its level of pervasiveness and see whether it is obscure. The paper will attempt to do this by cataloguing issues and perspectives of corruption from 1960 to 2007.

The First Republic in Nigeria's political life is represented by the period between the granting of flag independence in 1960 by the British, and the first military coup d'état on January 15th 1966. This period witnessed periodic upheavals in the political and economic spheres of Nigeria's life. These were not unexpected as the foundation for their occurrence had been laid by the factors of; colonial experience, incorporation of the local economy into that of the metropolis, skewed institutions that had no connection to our political culture, and failure to respect the rules of the game in political contests.

When examined against the backdrop of the perspectives of some of the theoretical explanations, one would observe that the foundation for corruption had been laid even before Nigeria got independence in 1960. As the study would show shortly, 'the setting for the success or failure of the First Republic was provided by the 1959 federal elections whose outcome determined the nature of post-independence government, and the structural framework within which the Republic was to be operated.' No sooner had elections been won and lost than the country was embroiled in political crisis. The crisis was partly a consequence of lack of respect for the rule of the game which Merton had outlined in his perspective on deviance.

Sutherland's perspectives come handy when examining the period of the 1970s in Nigeria's political history. The period coincided with the oil boom. This was a period in Nigeria's political history when Nigeria generated loads of revenue for the sale of oil in the global market. In this period, white-collar crimes were brazenly committed with impunity by both government officials and non-government officials. In fact, some contractors in that period fleeced the government dry. In illustrating this point, Falola and Heaton observed that, after the ouster of the

Gowon military regime by Mohammed, the latter instituted a tribunal of inquiry to look into the massive spending on FESTAC (Festival of Arts and Culture) undertaken during the Gowon era. The tribunal presented a report in May 1976 that revealed widespread mismanagement of funds. According to the report, many contracts for construction and supplies had been grossly inflated, with many companies being paid millions of naira for work that was never done.

More evidence of the profligacy of the Gowonian era came to light from the report of the tribunal of inquiry. For example, a Bulgarian firm by the name of *Technoexportsroy* received a large contract for work related to the construction of the National Theatre. The tribunal found that 'the company had received over N12.6 million in excess profits over and above those stipulated in the contract, including N403,000 for redundant surveying.'^{xv1} While the contracts were being grossly inflated and poorly supervised, FESTAC officials were involved in the collection of 'kickbacks', 'kickfronts' and 'ten-percents' from these contracts. Moreover, they were living ostentatiously at the expense of the government.

The Mohammed/Obasanjo military regime which the Gowon military regime set out to cleanse Nigeria of the perceived corruption that had taken government at all levels by surprise. But because the foundation for sleaze had been laid, the regime could not be totally said to have been upright. There were allegations of corruption leveled against the regime. This could not however be substantiated owing to the promulgation of a decree in 1976 which made it illegal for anyone to bring false accusations of corruption or mismanagement against government officials. In what looked like a move to further its repressive hold on the people, the Mohammed/Obasanjo regime 'bought 60% of the equity of two of Nigeria's largest newspapers, *The Daily Times* and *The New Nigerian*.'^{xv111}

The Second Republic which was ushered in by the Mohammed/Obasanjo military regime was characterised by profligacy perpetuated by both

government officials and their cronies, and non-government officials in collaboration with every sector of the economy. The Shagari administration (1979-1983) has been adjudged the worst in terms of wanton disregard for the rule of the game. As Falola and Heaton have observed, 'as in previous administrations, the massive corruption of the Second Republic was initially fueled by high oil yields, which rebounded in 1979 after a brief dip in 1978.'^{xlx} In spite of Nigeria's dwindling oil fortunes, Second Republic politicians did not curb their corrupt ways or embark on a fundamental restructuring of the economy. Rather, they sought for foreign aid. Interestingly, the aid that came in the forms of loans and assistance were also mismanaged through diversions, false declarations, and 'bilateral back-slapping.' Thus the growing resentment of Nigerians at the corruption and mismanagement of the Second Republic led to an outpouring of dissent that took various forms of; labour unrest, press war, and civil unrest.

The pervasiveness of corruption and its attendant consequences led to the distortion of moral values. To this end, vices such as smuggling, absenteeism, drunkenness, and poor and inefficient work habits, petty corruption on the part of employees who increasingly resorted to taking bribes from customers and clients to offset the loss of wages they were experiencing, became rampant in the society. These vices with time assumed the right practices. On the political front, the ruling party (National Party of Nigeria) was accused by the opposition of having massively rigged the 1983 elections. According to the opposition, the number of votes returned for the ruling party, especially in their perceived strongholds 'were astounding and indicated widespread frauds.'^{xx} In light of the foregoing, and coming to grasp with the theoretical prescription of Merton on the issue of cultural goals and institutionalized means, one cannot but understand the reasons for the failure of the Second Republic.

The Buhari/Idiagbon military regime that ousted the Shagari administration in 1983 appeared on the Nigerian political scene like a saint that was bent on

carrying out a cleansing process. The regime did not take into consideration the level of damage previous administrations had done to the psyche of the average Nigerian. The level of deviant behaviour that characterized the Nigerian society of that period required a system of sanction or reward. This is in spite of the realization that punishment does not remove crime from society. However, 'in order to realize his goal of manufacturing a corruption-free, "disciplined" Nigerian society, Buhari introduced a broad collection of authoritarian measures.' Tried as much as he could, the society began to grow resentful to his rule. Therefore, when his regime was ousted by the Babangida regime in 1985, Nigerians went on the streets to celebrate the ouster of what was referred to as a 'draconian regime.' With Babangida in the saddle Nigerians heaved a sigh of relief. If not for anything, at least their perceived lost freedom had been restored to them. Although the Babangida regime has been severally criticized and vilified as been the 'worst and most corrupt' regime to have ruled Nigeria in its recent history, it must be pointed out that, had the regime not participated in the annulment of the June 12, 1993 elections, perhaps it would have been hailed as one of the best regimes to have ruled Nigeria in our recent history. Specifically, the activities of the Babangida regime and the subsequent three that came after were marred by the questions that surrounded the annulment of the June 12 1993 general elections in Nigeria.

What apparently seemed like a solution to the June 12 debacle was the conduct of general elections that ushered in the civilian democratic administration of Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999. He did not mince words in his resolve to tackle corruption head-long. But just like the Buhari/Idiagbon regime that came out smoking, Obasanjo was frustrated. In spite of the creation of anti-corruption agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offences Commission (ICPC), and the Code of Conduct Bureau, the phenomenon of corruption under the Obasanjo civilian democratic administration from 1999 to 2007, became even more pervasive. This was not unexpected as the

institutionalized means to achieve cultural goals were not sacrosanct observed. Emphasis became more focused on the fast and easy ways to achieve success. These were consequences of the factors of impunity, lack of political will on the part of government to stem the tide of corruption in Nigeria, incorporation of the economy to that of the metropolis, and greed.

Indeed, cases of institutional corruption became arguably more rampant from 1999 to 2007. As the paper will show, most of the cases were allegations which had not been substantiated. For example, the *Daily Sun* newspaper in one of its reportage had a caption; “N6.9b fraud; Nyako, Deputy, others quizzed.”^{xxl} In another similar report, the *Daily Sun* newspaper reported the story of the arraignment by the EFCC of the national coordinator of the Police Equipment Fund (PEF) along with his boss on the allegation of breach of public trust and the mismanagement of about N833m out of N7.740b belonging to the Association of Local Government Employees of Nigeria (ALGON).^{xxl1} Under the caption of “Corruption Pervasive in our Universities” *This Day* newspaper reported the expression of disgust

Endnotes showed by the late President of Nigeria.

Umar Yar’Adua over the poor quality of graduates from Nigerian Universities. The former president as quoted by the newspaper remarked, ‘when will the certificates and degrees that universities award on the basis of having been found worthy in learning and character begin to live up to the highest level of the content of its intentions?’^{xx111}

Conclusion

Over the course of the 1960s and 2000s, the phenomenon of corruption in Nigeria became highly pervasive and somewhat obscure. In light of this, the paper attempted an exploratory survey of theoretical perspectives that explains the phenomenon of corruption from diverse disciplinary persuasions. Emphasis was deliberately placed on relying on sociological perspectives in order to give the study a different analytical bend. The essence was to investigate the degree or level of its pervasiveness in the Nigerian society.

In the final analysis, the paper discovered that the phenomenon of corruption was pervasive because it manifested in other forms such, white-collar crimes, deviance, and corporate crimes perpetuated by both the highly-placed and lowly-people in society. This has been explained by the various perspectives the paper has studied.

¹ For a fuller discussion on the evolution of the State see, Michael Haralambos, Martin Holborn and Robin Heald. (2008) *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*. London: HarperCollins Publishers, pp. 535-536

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