DEMOCRACY AND THE FIGHT AGAINST LEADERSHIP CORRUPTION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: IMPLICATION FOR CONTINENTAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT
This paper examines democracy and the fight against leadership corruption in relation to Africa and its implication on development and security issues using a qualitative data gathering and analysis method. There is a particular Nigeria's current governance system. Scholars frequently see corruption as a fundamental impediment to growth and development. Every society hates corruption and frequently holds the leaders accountable. Anti-corruption advocacy mechanisms exist all around the world to promote ethical leadership in government. For example, the African Union has adopted a set of continental anticorruption protocols to help member nations combat the rising tide of corruption and its ramifications for human security. It claims that the nature of African political leadership breeds a tendency for power abuse. We find that the political elite's entrenched vested interests have promoted corruption and abuse of power as instruments of governance, and have rendered the necessary statutory institutional oversight systems ineffectual. While society is gripped by governance crisis with all of its ramifications, the political elite lives in luxury. As a result, the study contends that if citizens continue to tolerate unethical behaviors by political leaders, the governance crisis caused by misuse of public resources by political leadership will worsen insecurity and underdevelopment in Nigeria, West Africa.

Introduction

The continent of Africa is filled with underdeveloped human societies. Though it stands as the cradle of human civilization, but a mere mention of the continent signifies poverty, unemployment, inequality, dependency, acute corruption, political instability and bad governance among other vices. Democracy may not be alien to Africa, but the modern democratic ethosis not readily found in African societies due to leadership corruption. Little wonder why African governments were able to jump at the opportunity to declare the year 2018 as Anti-corruption year. The African Union Summit in Addis Ababa addressed the repercussions of corruption on the continent's growth under the subject "Winning the Fight Against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation."General Muhamadu Buhari, Nigeria's president was at that programme, and he officially introduced the topic, calling corruption "one of the worst ills of our day" (Tankou, 2018).The leaders committed to "fight together to defeat this evil" after

acknowledging that "corruption deprives our young citizens of opportunities to create meaningful livelihoods" (cf. Tankou, 2018). Corruption is still rampant in Africa two years after this proclamation, with disastrous repercussions.

In its 2019 report, Transparency International (TI) noted a worsening report of corruption on the continent, urging leaders to "urgently address the corrupting role of big money in political party financing and the undue influence it exerts on our political systems," as its Chairperson, Delia Ferreira Rubio, advised (TI, 2020: 7). Only eight of the 49 African countries included in the index scored more than 43%.

The continent's average score was 32 percent, and "corrupt actions continue to hinder economic progress and good governance across the continent," according to the report (Marais, 2019). Corruption's effects on governance are more widespread in Africa (Appiah, Frowne, & Frowne, 2019; Mlambo, Zubane, & Mlambo, 2020). Despite countless studies on the implications of power abuse, the impact of power abuse in Africa continues to reverberate at every stage of development (UNICEF, 2019). While the effects of sustainable development have been detrimental, efforts by civil society have been ineffectual. Nonetheless, different development indexes and assessments have continued to show worsening occurrences of widespread governance instability (World Poverty Clock, 2020). The management of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the procurement process was marred by corruption, exemplified this epidemic of manifested unscrupulous activities in public affairs, as government officials and political leaders exploited the healthcare crisis to achieve personal goals.

The corruption that characterized the acquisition of personal protective equipment (PPE) during the pandemic in South Africa, for example, revealed how political leaders used the epidemic to advance personal interests (Nkanjeni, 2020; Cele, Amashabalala, Deklerk, & Shoba, 2020; Wicks, 2020). Similarly, political leaders in Nigeria hoarded relief items intended for public distribution while government officials diverted monies to themselves (The Observers, 27/10/2020; Obiezu, 2020; Shaban, 2020).Government officials in Zimbabwe and Somalia who were arrested for COVID-19-related corruption were either fired or prosecuted (Africa Research Bulletin, 2020).During the pandemic, the Kenya Medical Supplies Agency (Kemsa) was accused of corruption to the tune of US$400 million (Africa Research Bulletin, 2020).All these case scenarios above are impediments to development and are perpetuated by those in leadership.

Objectives of the Paper

The following objectives provided guides for this paper to;

i. unravel the nexus between leadership, democracy and corruption in Africa using Nigeria as a case study.

ii. assess the impact democratic leadership plays to thrive or delimit corruption to promoting development and security in Nigeria

iii. understand the true nature of the fight against corruption and its implication for democracy, security and development in Africa and Nigeria in particular.

iv. make recommendations on ways to improve democracy, leadership, security and development in Africa and particularly in Nigeria.

Methodology

This is aqualitative paper with primary and secondary data as instruments of analysis. It is ex post facto in nature. Primary data were derived from personal observation and various reports of relevantpublic institutions and archival materials, while extant literature constitutes the source of secondary data. Thematic presentation of thedata was supported by relevant primary data for analytical purposes.

Conceptual Clarifications

Concept of Leadership:

The concept of leadership is not an easy subject to define and explain. Leadership experts have studied leadership in one or several academic fields such as social psychology, anthropology, human resources, sociology, political science, education, theology and business. In the beginning, the definitions identified leadership as “a focus of group process and movement- personality in action. The next definitions considered it the art of inducing compliance” and “the more recent definitions

conceive of leadership in terms of influence relationships, power differentials, persuasion, influence on goal achievement, role differentiation, reinforcement, initiation of structure, and perceived attributions of behaviour that are consistent with what the perceivers believe leadership to be" (Bass and Bass, 2008).

However, Ogbeidi, (2012) defines leadership "as a body of people who lead and direct the activities of a group towards a shared goal". This implies the ability to lead, direct and organize a group towards achieving a mutually shared goal. Udegbe (1999:282) defines "leadership as the process of creating the subordinates' identification with the group's mission and creating their desires to achieve the group's goal". In the light of this understanding, (Norman Schwarzkopf quoted in Ogbeidi, 2012) defines leadership as a potent combination of strategy and character and strongly stresses that, of the two elements, character is the most preferred for leadership. Leadership is a social influence process in which the leader seeks the voluntary participation of subordinates to achieve organizational goals (Graig, 2005).

Similarly, John Gardener describes leadership as the process of persuasion or example by which an individual induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers (Weekly Trust, 2004). Accordingly, leadership is a process of social influence by which a superior influences subordinates to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent (Chemers, cited in Ogbeidi, 2012). A leader therefore is expected to be visionary, selfless, tact, prudent, level-headed with good character, and must have ability to lead by example. Leadership is defined as the ability to consistently influence a group of people and includes a variety of critical characteristics. While management is concerned with the general direction and monitoring of a team's work operations, leadership is concerned with the team's continuing motivation, engagement, and productivity.

Concept of Democracy:

Democracy can simply be defined as a political system that is capable of rectifying its own dysfunctions. It is a form of government whereby the autonomous power belongs to and is implemented by the citizen, directly or indirectly. A system in which ordinary citizens have influence, although indirectly, in the affairs of the state (Shihata, 1997). The minimalist definition of democracy according to Schumpeter, (1942) 'that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide employing a competitive struggle for the people's vote'. Dahl, (1971) expands on this definition by identifying seven key principles essential for democracy or as he calls it "polyarchy", these include; Control over governmental decisions about policy constitutionally vested in elected officials. Relatively frequent, fair and free elections. Universal adult suffrage. The right to run for public office. Freedom of expression. Access to alternative sources of information that are not monopolised by either the government or any other single group. Freedom of association, i.e. the right to form and join autonomous associations such as political parties, interest groups, and more. As a result, an increasing number of democratisation experts are turning towards a substantive definition of democracy, which is a definition that gives greater importance to the role and significance of accountability. This could be vertical, horizontal or societal. Democracy is a government in which the people have supreme power, which they exercise directly or indirectly through a system of representation, which usually includes free elections held regularly.

Corruption:

Corruption like most concepts in social sciences has been conceptualised in different ways by a variety of scholars and institutions. (World Bank, 1973) views corruption as an abuse of public office for private gains. Public office is abused for private gain when an official accepts, solicits, or extorts a bribe. It is also abused when a private agent actively offers bribes to circumvent public policies and processes for competitive advantage and profit.

The World Bank's definition emphasizes the abuse of public office for private gains but did not mention the fact that it is induced by the private sector through patronage. (Aluko 2009) while examining the act of corruption in Nigeria's local government system, opines that corruption is the act of illegally diverting resources (particularly financial) meant for the good of the citizenry in a defined geographical area by a privileged individual or a group, for personal use, presumably for self-aggrandizement. This definition though broad based, did not include some attributes of corruption such as nepotism, favouritism and offering of classified information

for undue advantages which are prevalent in Nigeria. The definition also did not consider the remote effect of corruption in a particular country or other parts of the globe and therefore not suitable for this study.
According to Osoba (1996), corruption is a form of anti-social behaviour by an individual or social group that confers unjust or fraudulent benefits on its perpetrators. It then means that it is inconsistent with the established legal norm and prevailing moral ethos of the land and is likely to subvert or diminish the capacity of the legitimate authorities to provide fully for the material and spiritual well-being of all members of society in a just and equitable manner. This definition is broad-based but failed to state whether it is corruption in the public or private sector. Corruption is a sort of dishonesty or criminal conduct committed by someone or something in a position of power to obtain unlawful benefits or abuse power for personal gain.Corruption is a sort of dishonesty or criminal conduct committed by someone or something in a position of power to obtain unlawful benefits or abuse power for personal gain.Corruption can entail a variety of actions, such as bribery and embezzlement, as well as practices that are legal in many nations.When a public official or other government employee acts in an official role for personal gain, this is known as political corruption.

Concept of Development:

The concept of development can be said to be relative since there cannot be one precise definition for it. As a result, it has been defined by various people in different ways. The process of growth, advancement, good change, or the addition of physical, economic, environmental, social, and demographic components are all examples of development.The goal of development is to improve people's living standards and quality of life, as well as to create or expand local regional income and employment possibilities while preserving the environment's resources.Development is apparent and beneficial, although not always right away, and involves aspects of quality change as well as the establishment of conditions for that change to continue.

According to Okoye (2010), development should imply not simply an increase in the productive capacity or income which may mean just growth without development, but major transformations in the socio-economic structures whose inequalities and rigidities resulting from outmoded systems, have tended to inhibit all-sided and even development of many third world societies. He went further to report that McNamara once emphasized that development is complex like life itself, and that 'development has been expressed in terms of growth of output. There is now an emerging awareness that the availability of work, the distribution of income, and the quality of life are equally important measures of development.

Okediji (2011), in Ibe (1989:20), summarized his definition of development as, 'A process of initiating societal change to improve the capability of the institution and values of the community to meet the increasing and various social, cultural, political, economic and technological demands of its people'. Almaric (2007:137), defines development as a path of societal evolution that combines structural changes with improvement in people's welfare. From the above conceptualization, it can be deduced, that development is for people and not people for development. For any development effort to succeed it has to be people oriented and focused.

Koinyan (1987:11) opined that true development must mean the development of man, the unfolding and realization of his creative potential enabling him to improve his material conditions and living, through the use of resources available to him. He went further to say that, it is a process by which man's personality is enhanced, and it is that enhanced personality that is the moving force behind the socio-economic transformation of society. His argument therefore is that when the emphasis on development is on things, all human resources remain latent. Untapped potential and a society can be poor amidst the most opulent material resources. According to Olatunbosun (2012:39) Seers (1969) pointed out the following important questions in his discussion about development; what has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? He went further to assert that if all three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result '"development", even if per capita income doubled.

Leadership, Corruption and Governance

Leadership has a critical role in the governance of every society.As a result, any society's top priority is to select leaders charged with the responsibility to achieve the common good (Walker, 2017; 2020).Early political thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, for example, were extremely concerned by the lack of a central authority to control men's activities in the natural world.As a result, life in Hobbesian nature was solitary, impoverished, ugly, brutish, and brief (Carey, 2020; Zivanovic, 2013). Because, as Hobbes also reasoned, a well-ordered society was in the best interests of everybody, John Locke harped on the requirement for leadership to achieve justice (Mouritz, 2010). While Hobbes proposed a Leviathan as a solution to the hazards of nature, Locke proposed the existence of a contract based on the notion of laws ruled by ethical leadership. In this regard, the laws apply to all citizens, including leaders, to protect their lives, freedom, and property (Cawthon, 2017).

There are three main defining characteristics of leadership: power, the pursuit of collective goods, and innovation (Schoeller, 2017). Leaders acquire power for the pursuit of collective goods with constantinnovative measures and mechanisms. In practice, however, leaderscould manipulate these features to serve their pecuniary interests. Innovative leaders are agents of change, who devise a variety of ways ofexercising powers to ensure equilibrium in the administration of thesociety. This requires the emergence of ethical leadership to advancegovernance.

Citizens would seek to follow leaders with a pedigree and qualities that would assist them in steering society in the direction of realizing and achieving their collective goals. Citizens implicitly prefer to "follow someone whose goal we believe is magnificent or at least worthy, and who possesses particular qualities or powers to steer us and assist us in achieving the vision" (Crosby & Bryson, 2018: 1268).

This is an ethical process in which leaders and followers interact in mutually advantageous ways in order to ensure the maximum wellbeing of citizens and society as a whole (Crosby & Bryson, 2018).Corruption undermines good governance in emerging countries, particularly in African states, and leads to a series of crises of poor public service delivery.Only six African countries – Seychelles (67), Botswana (61), Cape Verde (58), Rwanda (53), Mauritius (52) and Namibia (52) were discovered among countries with scores above the average in Transparency International's Annual Corruption Perception Index 2019.This is primarily a leadership issue.

An Overview of African Leadership and Corruption Challenges

In Africa, leadership has been the most powerful factor in precipitating the governance crisis. The majority of African political elites frequently utilize the state for personal gain."Most African presidents, explicitly or covertly, frequently convert the state to their personal properties, especially those who have a history of extended stays in power, thereby making political power a family heritage," according to another source (Fagbadebo, 2019b: 18). African leaders met in May 2013 to discuss the state of the continent and adopted Agenda 2063, dubbed "The Africa We Want."The leaders expressed concern about the need for inclusive social and economic development, regional integration, democratic governance, and peace and security (MO Ibrahim Foundation, 2019). In realization of the damage of corruption on development andgrowth, African leaders initiated the continental anti-corruption legislation in 2003 and later ratified it as the African Union Conventionon Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC) (Fagbadebo,2019b). African Union leaders expressed their concern “about thenegative effects of corruption and impunity on the political, economic, social, and cultural stability of the African States and its devastatingeffects on the economic and social development of the African peoples” (AUPCC,2003). The convention identified some activities thatamounted to corruption.

Solicitation or acceptance of bribes, offering or granting of bribes, any act or omission in the discharge of official tasks, diversion of public property, unlawful enrichment, and solicitation or granting of influence on an individual's behalf are all prohibited. Others include after-the-fact participation as a principal, co-principal, agent, instigator, accomplice, or accessory, as well as the use or concealment of proceeds gained from any of the actions.

In an environment marked by systemic corruption, institutionalised robbery of the public treasury has become prevalent, while legendary docility has increased the rate of incompetence in the conduct of public affairs.For

example, in Nigeria, the bars of administration and leadership have fallen into a muddy floor of incompetence and corruption, "because to the ruling elites' lack of good moral and ethical principles in their behaviour" (Fagbadebo, 2019: 56-57).According to the annual Corruption Perception Index 2020, corruption is widespread in 46 of the 52 African countries, giving the continent the lowest-scoring region among the 180 countries. Misuse of public resources implies that public service delivery is jeopardized, as is the well-being of the people.

Corruption and the Crisis of Governance in Nigeria

Increased instability in Nigeria, for example, appeared to have normalized criminal acts such as abduction. Kidnappers had found a safe refuge in the demand for ransom, which had become a profitable source of income due to security authorities' inability to apprehend the culprits.

Despite his self-confessions to a series of killings of some of his victims, even after they had paid payments, the litigation against Chukwudi Dumeme Onuamadike, popularly known as Evans, who was arrested for leading a gang of kidnappers on June 10, 2017, has remained in limbo (Jannah, 2019; Onyekwere et al., 2017). Kidnapping has become a "booming" business for criminals due to the government's lackluster response to the threat of insecurity. Boko Haram insurgents have kidnapped students and other residents for ransom on several occasions (Okoli, 2019). Nigeria has the biggest proportion of people living in extreme poverty, with 95.9 million (48%) of the country's 201.6 million people living in poverty (World Poverty Clock, 2020).377 million Africans will live on less than $1.90 per day by 2030 (Hamel et al., 2019).

Democratic Leadership and the Fight against Corruption in Africa, Nigeria in Focus

After attaining political independence, African states experienced various degrees of political turmoil. Many of the countries suffered from serial rapes of the political system by the military. This was considered the height of political corruption in the continent. However, corruption has a far longer political history in Africa than its post-independence colouration. Imperialistic relationships between Europe and Africa were corrupt entanglements. For example, corruption in Nigeria dates back to the independence era (around 1960) and has existed since the country's independence.

Corruption was rampant at the time, but it was hidden. However, due to public administration and the finding of oil and natural gas, it soon became the norm. Today, corrupt activities include nepotism, greed, and megalomania, among other things. It is so common that numerous nations have issued travel advisories to their citizens, and many experts have condemned Nigeria's sorry state. Ironically, various political efforts have been established throughout history to deter corruption. Despite this, military incursions into the first, second, and third republics were launched in response to allegations of corruption under civilian government. As a result, democracy had little room to breathe.

After the death of Sani Abacha, the dictatorial military ruler, the present republic, which began in 1999, provided some hope to Nigeria. Nigeria, on the other hand, had continued to suffer from corruption even after embracing democracy, a legacy of military dictatorship. After independence, many anti-crime and -corruption commissions such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) were set up. Further, years after the EFCC was formed, several other policies and laws got promulgated to fight corruption and crime.

For example, the Ministry of Finance issued a "whistle-blowing policy" in 2016 to encourage people to report corrupt acts. Another important anti-corruption policy introduced by President Muhammadu Buhari in 2015 was the so-called anti-graft battle. Despite the numerous measures taken to combat corruption, little has been accomplished other than regressive growth. Electoral activities are marred by fraud, forgeries, and violence, and living conditions are at the other end of the scale, with food costs skyrocketing. Kidnapping has also become a lucrative business for the past few years. Between June 2011 and March 2020, at least $18.34 million in ransom was paid to kidnappers, according to SB Morgen (SBM) Intelligence.

Moreover, embezzlement has become a sort of responsibility for some political leaders. To top it off, Nigeria was ranked 146th in the Transparency Corruption Index in 2019. In the previous year, it dropped to 149th place. Ironically, this is the only type of growth that the country has ever had.

Key Findings of the Study

After reviewing various literature, it is discovered in the findings, that there is a clear nexus between leadership, democracy and corruption in Africa. The role democratic leadership plays to thrive or delimit corruption in relation to promoting development and security in Nigeria is very significant.

The true nature of the fight against corruption and its implication for democracy, security and development in Africa and particularly Nigeria.Africa's underdevelopment is solely propelled by corrupt practices carried out by its leaders even in the faceof democratic eras and regimes. Nigeria was ranked 146th in the Transparency Corruption Index in 2019. In the previous year, it dropped to 149th place. Ironically, this is the only type of growth that the country has ever had.

Also, democratic governance that is blowing across the various regions of Africa seems to lack the touch of Africans, hence, its embellishment with corruption. The continent is finding it hard to transform democracy into development and security because it has failed to polish this Western democracy with the oil of African communalism. The democratic process has been turned into conduit pipes to siphon national resources and projects continental underdevelopment. In addition, the paper found that democracy has not been able to change the patriarchal nature of leadership in Africa and Nigeria in particular. Males still dominate the leadership positions across the continent, except in Rwanda, where genocide contributed to the more pronounced role of women in politics.

Conclusion

Africa used to be a sane continent where global leading capitalists found trade solace even with less people participating in governance. However, it has become a reversed trend even with democratic governance spreading across the continent. Corruption has been the major factor responsible for the continuous underdevelopment of the continent. In its 2019 Global Corruption Barometer, Africa, TI discovered that ahigh proportion of Africans bemoaned the rising tide of corruption ingovernment activities and its consequences on service delivery (Transparency International, 2019). Participants in the survey agreed that corruption was getting worse with devastating effects on the well-beingof citizens, especially on development and security. Citizens were able to access public services, such aseducation and healthcare, only after the payment of bribes to government officials. Those who paid bribes were mostly the poorestcitizens. In other words, a large population of African citizens have theperception that unethical behaviours characterize their politicalleadership in government. The implication of this is that Africans aredisenchanted by the manner their leaders run the affairs of government.

Public trust in governance is a rarity, and members of the public feelalienated and abandoned by the government (Asala, 2020; Majavu,2020). When leaders refuse to compromise the rule of law and adhere topunishing unethical behaviours, the path to recovering from theconsequences of the past begins. The warped societal values, which have ascribed wealth to leadership positions, compound thepaucity of ethical leadership in Africa.The resentment against corruption and the determination for goodgovernance requires effective anti-corruption policies and concertedefforts to explore the possibilities offered by democracy (The World Bank, 2018b).

Recommendations

The paper makes the following recommendations:

i. There is need to strengthen the voting process in order to prevent fraud. This would necessitate the development of an engaged civil society as well as independent supervision structures and agencies.

ii. For the formation of credible political leaders, electoral integrity is a must. Rigging and other voting irregularities should be discouraged via electoral reforms and administration. This will make it easier for Nigerians to demand and respond to genuine development, accountability, and good governance.

iii. Furthermore, delivering inclusive and transparent public services should be a top priority. When citizens have equal access to public services, public trust in government is restored, and resource management is maintained. To apprehend and penalize unethical

behavior, oversight systems and institutions should be effective in the application and execution of required statutory accountability measures.

iv. Like China, Africa should evolve a democratic governing system that captures its diversities and histories. This will reduce the humongous amount that is being spent on the democratic processes in Africa which have not yielded development or guaranteed security.

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