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Corruption and the Question of Insecurity in Nigeria: A Case Study of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)

Cyrille Ngamen Kouassi¹ & Abu Frank Ogbemudia*²¹ Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Samuel Adegboyega University Ogwa, Edo-State, Nigeria² Post Graduate student, National Open University of Nigeria, Benin Study Centre, Edo State, Nigeria.

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Abstract: *This work is an attempt to understand Corruption and Insecurity in Nigeria using the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) as a case study. The state of corruption and insecurity in Nigeria till date is so alarming despite all the so called efforts put in place either by the Government, NGOs or any other well-meaning individuals to curb the menace. The main thrust of this paper therefore, is to critically look into (1) The causes of corruption and insecurity in Nigeria, (2). The strengths and weaknesses of the EFCC, (3). The way forward to salvage Nigerians from this cankerworm/ menace. This work made use of Expository/ Descriptive, Analytical and critical methods, as well as relying on primary and secondary data arising from the findings. The paper concludes that Nigerians should stand and speak with one voice by imploring the Government, Ngo and other well-meaning individuals to enforce the anti-corruption law to it's fullest without fear or favour. Improving the socio_ political and Economic Life of Nigerians, supervise the activities of the EFCC, offer public awareness on the effects of corruption and insecurity in Our Economy among others, if we really want to get out of the open_ ended situation.*

Keywords: Corruption, insecurity, Nigeria, Development, EFCC and Economy.

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INTRODUCTION

According to Ngamen (2012), It is very difficult if not impossible to come to term with a universally accepted definition of corruption. Basically, however it is admitted almost all over the world that corruption or corrupt behavior involves the violation of established rules for personal gain and profit in order words, corruption is an illegal exchange Ngamen (2012). Corruption is not only as old as the existence of mankind, it is also known as one of societies' greatest obstacle to development=. One of its main features is that it does not discriminate. For instance Democratic, dictatorial and Feudal politics as well as Capitalism and Socialist Economics are not immune to corruption.

It does not matter whether a society is Christian, Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist. Corruption in Africa is said to be one reason while the continent is so deeply in debt, Poverty, Farming and deaths. (Dieg & Theobald, 2000)

Aliu (2010), observed that people in high places are corrupt because of greed. His view tend to have wider support as most people feel that the resources available in these countries have the capacity to guarantee every members of the society with their basic needs of life.

According to political bureau report (1987), corruption is essentially a product of our highly individualized materialistic society which emphasizes struggle by individuals to acquire as much wealth as they can without regard to how much wealth was obtained. Mba-Afolabi (1999), maintains that this situation has led individuals and groups of persons to pursue various illegal and anti-social means of making wealth.

Akintunde (2007), stipulated that the challenges that corruption poses to national life is grave. He maintains that since independence in 1960, successive administrations have been enmeshed in a crisis of confidence based on formulating and implementing policy that will lead this country out of corruption.

Ibrahim & Igbuzor (2002), opined that the poor people in Nigeria rate insecurity as the key cause of poverty, they do not necessarily see poverty as a cause of armed conflict. They maintain that due to the inability of the government to provide basic infrastructural and basic service for its populace, new conflicts have emerged through politicized agents who have used the condition of the poor people to address the responses or non-responses of the State to the lawful learning of the citizen.

Corruption has become a socio-economic threat to National development in Nigeria. According to President Muhammadu Buhari's speech on Tell (September 28, 2015: 30 & 31), he said that "If Nigeria does not kill corruption, corruption will kill Nigeria". To walk this talk, the administration has not only set up an anti-corruption panel but has passed on a body language that places very sharp focus on the issue of corruption.

Finally, for the purpose of this study, insecurity is referred to as a breach of peace and security, (whether historical, religious, ethno-regional, civil, social, economic and political) that have contributed to recurring conflict, which Nigeria has witnessed over the years resulting in wanton destruction and loss of lives and properties.

Adeyemi (2003) observed that corruption is endemic and is deepened by neoliberal policies of the government. These policies are more or less prescriptions by multilateral agencies and institutions of the Breton Woods system which according to him are more interested in the capital transfer than genuine national development.

Abor (2006) sees corruption as a conscious and well planned act by a person or a group of persons to misappropriate by unlawful means, the wealth of another person or group of persons. This view sees corruption as the misappropriation of properties.

Abdulahi (2007) stated that corruption is the diversion of originally meant resources for the betterment of the community to the gain of individuals at the expense of the community.

Ciroma (2004) asserts that corruption is a deliberate bending of the system to favour friends or hurt foes, to him any misbehavior, deviation from or perversion of the system with intent to mislead Nigerians or give them wrong or distorted information about things they ought to know is called corruption.

Huntington, (1991) sees corruption as a lubricant "to intricate machinery of business and policies". To him, corruption is associated with rapid social and economic organization.

Owasu (2006) asserts that corruption revolves round the opportunistic manipulation of regulations and rules of social conduct to achieve selfish, often time materialistic desires in turn undermining the common goal.

Onyemaizu (2006) views insecurity as the breach of peace and security (whether historical, religious, ethno-regional, civil, social, economic and political) that have contributed to recurring conflicts.

According to Abraham (1942), insecurity is a feeling of general unease or nervousness that may be triggered by perceiving of oneself to be vulnerable or unstable, thereby threatening one's image.

Possible Solution to Corruption in Nigeria

It is common knowledge that corruption is very prevalent in all sectors of our national life, where practice is noted to be inhibitive of national growth and development. So in order to prevent corruption from happening at all, Nigeria should emphasis on the following:

- **Social Transformation:** The Nigerian society needs transformation. Educating the public is a necessary factor in concretizing for social transformation in Nigeria. Eme, (2009) opines that there is need for on-going formation and reformation, orientation and re-orientation of the minds and hearts of Nigerians. They need to begin to see that corruption is evil and is an enemy of development in the country.
- **The Enforcement of the Anti-Corruption Law:** The law should be enforced to its fullest without fear and favour.
- **Improvement of Social-Political and Economic Life:** This is another weapon against corruption in Nigeria. Agbaegbu, (2006) stated that the multiplying effect of this improvement will reduce the tendency of public servants to demand and take bribe or get involved in other corrupt practice.

Manifestation of Insecurity in Nigeria

The under listed are the various manifestations of conflict and insecurity in Nigeria.

- **Ethno-Religious Conflict:** Communal and societal conflicts according to Ibrahim & Igbuzor, (2002) have emerged as a result of new and particularistic forms of political consciousness and these conflicts (often structure around ethno-religious) have assumed alarming rate. To him, it has occurred in places like Shagamu (Ogun State), Lagos, Abia, Kano, Bauchi, Nassarawa, Jos, Taraba, Ebonyi and Enugu States respectively. Ugwu, (2008) in his own contribution stated that groups and communities who had over the years lived together in peace and harmony now take up arms against each other in gruesome "wars". The claim over scarce resources, power, land, chieftaincy titles, local government councils, control of markets, "Osu castle system" and Boko Haram amongst other trivial issues, has resulted in large scale killing and violence amongst groups in Nigeria.
- **Political Based Violence:** Politics in the current civil dispensation like the previous republic has displayed politics of anxiety which has played down on dialogue, negotiation and consensus. Uche, (2011)

stipulated that anxiety is a result of loss of power by an elite stratum.

According to Waziri (2012) the formal national security adviser to President Goodluck Jonathan stated that the People Democratic Party (PDP) is the major cause of Boko Haram violence in the Northern part of the country. He maintains that the inability of the ruling party to compromise with their zoning formula is the chief reason for the destruction of lives and properties by the Boko Haram.

Onyemaizu, (2006) added that a resort to violence, including armed militancy, assassination, kidnap, etc., have somewhat suddenly become attractive to certain individual seeking to resolves issues that could have ordinary been settled through due process. The end products of such misadventures have often been catastrophic. The decimation of innocent lives, disruption of economic activities and destruction of properties among others.

- **Economic-Based Violence:** In a popular parlance, this thesis is also known as “political economy of violence”. The recent writings in the mass media across the globe and across political divide have laid much emphasis on the role of resources in generating conflict which is a major cornerstone of economic-based violence.

Olonisakin, (2008) stated that cries of resources control and revenue sharing regularly rent the air between proponent and opponents. Although by no means limited to oil in the Niger Delta, the most prevalent campaign about the link between resources and conflict focuses on oil and the Delta region. Put differently, there is evidence to suggest that oil has given rise to vertical and horizontal between national, state and society or between dominant and subordinate geopolitical zone, classes and groups across Nigeria, given the pivotal role that oil plays in the restructuring of power relations in Nigeria.

- **Organized Violent Groups:** Organized violent groups take varying dimension and forms. These include ethnic-militia, vigilantes, secret cults in tertiary institution and political thugs. Bello-Imam, (2005) stated that various reasons and circumstances account for their emergence. The causes of the manifestation includes the culture of militarism that has its antecedents in military rule, the failure of the state and its institution, economic disempowerment, the structure of the State and Nigeria’s federalism, non-separation of State and religion, politics of exclusion, culture of State patriarchy and gerontocracy and

ignorance and poor political consciousness (Ibrahim & Igbuzor, 2002).

Thematic Explanation of the Cause of Insecurity in Nigeria

The thematic explanation of the causes of insecurity in Nigeria would show below:

- **Improper Funding of Security Agencies:** The improper funding of the police and other security agencies is the major cause of insecurity question in Nigeria. Osofisan, (2006) maintain that this cause stems from the fact that there are inadequacies in the security agencies, modern communication equipment, sophisticated arms and ammunition so that the security agencies will be able to curtail these criminal gangs. Also the allowances and salaries of these security agencies are hardly paid; their welfare is nothing to write home about.

As a result of above, the Nigeria populaces are bound to suffer the kind of scandal with its political elites running around in shame.

- **Monetization of the Labour Market:** This theme posits that as a result of high rate of unemployment, graduates without jobs have gone a lot of mental torture in the process of security jobs and in the process they have been involved in all sorts of fiscal indiscipline and corruption and other social vices. Ekpo, (2004) stated that these army of unemployed graduates force themselves into police force and other Para Military and military agencies. The fall-out of such a situation will be trying to cover lost ground by enriching themselves illegally thereby colliding with criminal gangs.

According to Oladepupo, (2005) it is irony of the Nigerian situation is that the nation’s law enforcement agents are even more corrupt than those they are supposed to police. This has sometimes been blamed on the manner and caliber of men and women recruited in the Nigerian security out-fits. The people who are actually qualified on the basis of merit and good character are thrown to the wind during recruitment, while men and women of questionable character (including criminals), bribe their way into the force little wonder therefore that many of the recruits hide under uniform to wreak havoc on the society.

- **Gross Party Indiscipline and Infighting among Political Gladiators:** According to Akintude, (2002) it is worthy to note that a sizeable proportion of those who have suffered attacks in recent times have been members of the ruling party and leading opposition parties and their allies.

Ibrahim & Igbuzo, (2002) opines that politics in Nigeria are beset with act of gross misconduct, lack of internal democracy, blackmail, and indiscipline. Their acts range from disobedience to the party's constitution, to in-fighting among party leaders and their hanger-on. Take for instance, the political wars between and among governors and their deputies, the legislative and the executive, god fathers and their god-sons, political dynasties, State and Abuja politicians, among others.

- **Inadequate Personnel:** Inadequate of personnel is another factor that promotes insecurity in Nigeria. The international institution for strategic studies as cited by Olonisakin, (2008) captures this when he posited that the police-population ratio in Nigeria is 1:450. At a minimum, citizens ought to have easy access to the police and feel safer as a result of the protection they offer. Yet Nigeria has failed to meet the standard set by the United Nations for effective policing.

INSECURITY CHALLENGES: THE WAY FORWARD

The message should be cleared to our government, Nigeria needs a polity that is stable, peaceful, and safe enough from criminal assault, murder, chaos, tyranny and breakdown of authority so that the populace can face issues of development with vigor and courage. To attain such a polity, the under listed solution are suggested.

- **Economic Empowerment:** Economic empowerment of the citizenship is the major way of addressing insecurity in Nigeria. According to Madike, (2010) various micro credit schemes should be put in place in pursuit of this objective. Local contractors should equally be used to execute government projects. The main aim is to boost the local economy, create jobs and ultimately social harmony.
- **Re-organization of Security Agencies:** Re-organization of security agencies to take them through a new re-orientation via re-training of security agents. People should be more security conscious, share information with the police and other security agencies.
- According to Thomas, (2006) the populace should not leave security matters to security personnel only. All should be involved in security information and data gathering. Moreover, efforts should be put in crime prevention than control.
- **Increment of the Size of Nigerian Security Agencies:** Nigeria government should increase the size of Nigeria's security agencies, empower and motivates them very well and strengthen neighborhood watch. Government should equally fix social infrastructures roads,

street lights, schools and skill acquisition centers.

- **Youth Empowerment:** Nigeria government should create programmes that would empower our youth technically. This will enable them to be self-reliant and avert their minds from criminal tendencies.
- **Rule of Law:** Oladipupo, (2005) stated that the practice of the rule of law, constitutionalism, avoidance of undue retrenchment of workers, payment of salaries and allowance as an when due and payment of compensation for properties destroyed and other means of which the question of insecurity could be avoided.

Corruption and Insecurity as Factors Militating Against National Development

It is common knowledge that corruption and insecurity have been the major factor militating against national development in Nigeria. It could be seen through the following:

- **Inflating Contracts:** This is the main block that stems our national growth. The corrupt contractors tend to inflate contracts. For instance, someone in the private sector, who is a contractor of government, who is to execute a contract that is supposed to cost government ₦10,000. The contractor will collaborate with the government functionaries to increase it to ₦30,000.
- **Cultism:** This is another strong force militating against national development mostly in the institution of higher learning. Some of these secret cults originated from various homes in which parents belongs to one cult group or the other some parents introduce their children to these nefarious acts, thus generating societal problems such as terrorism, maiming and killing of innocent citizens. All these hamper national development.
- **Boko Haram and Jos Crisis:** The criminal activities of these crises left countless numbers of lives in ruins and destroyed properties worth billions of Naira and death rolls running into hundreds of thousands.
- **Political Thugs:** This is another aspect and source of concern which is fast becoming a problem to our national development. Some of our politicians use the youths as political thugs, assassins among others; instead of empowering them to be productive to the nation. Moreover, assassination of parents/guardians render youths as orphans. Their progress in life could be hampered thereby steaming their effective contribution toward national development.
- **Diversion of Development Resources for Private Gain:** It is widely observed that most of our political office holders divert the money

meant for development program to their personnel gain. All this contributed to our underdevelopment.

Historical Background of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)

The historical background to the existence of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission derived from the recognition from the late 1980s of the need to create a special interventionist agency to investigate economic and financial crimes. At the time, the menace of advance fee fraud, with negative impacts on Nigeria had been recognized. At the same time, it was recognized that the sophistication of economic crimes were such, that there might be the need for a special commission to handle its investigation and prosecution as opposed to the regular law enforcement agencies. By 2012, Nigeria found its way in the financial action task force list of non-cooperative countries and one of the conditions for being taken off that list was compliance with recommendation 26 of the FATF's then 29 recommendations which required the creation of a financial intelligence unit.

Consequently, the EFCC was created in 2002 and Nigeria's financial intelligence unit domiciled there with the statute creating the EFCC was first enacted in 2004. The EFCC stated operations in 2003.

The statute creating the EFCC is vested with the mandate to:

- Investigate and prosecute economic and financial crimes Section 47 of the enabling acts issues such as bank fraud, tax evasion, capital market fraud, future market fraud etc.
- Be the national coordinator for anti-money laundering.
- Be the designated Nigeria financial intelligence unit.
- Implement the provision of the advance fee fraud Act, failed Bank Decree, money laundering Act and the bankers and other financial institutions Decree. From a practical point of view, the EFCC sees its mandate as the provision of financial security for the Nigeria economy. It implements the mandate through tackling those menaces such as official corruption, tax evasion, bank fraud, advance fee fraud, illegal bunkering and several other shades of economic crimes that can distort key economic indices and inhibit growth. It also seeks to create a level playing field for all stakeholders within the economy.

The Scorecard of the EFCC:

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has grown to become the premier anti-corruption agency in Africa and indeed the level of recoveries it has made is arguably unparalleled in the

history of any agency in the world. The following are their achievements:

- The prosecution and subsequent conviction of Chief Bode George marked a watershed in the history of the commission. Chief George a chieftain of the ruling People's Democratic Party, alongside Principal Officers of the ports authority was convicted and sentence to 2 years imprisonment. The importance of this lies on the fact that this was the first time in the history of the commission that a high profile case involving a politically exposed person went through the full process of trials and convicted without recourse to a plea bargain. A process that was equally affirmed and upheld by the court.
- The commission has recovered over \$ 11 billion since its inception in 2003. The bulk of this, this is, \$ 6.5 billion was recovered in the last two years alone. These recoveries include some part of the Abacha loot as well as recoveries arising from the bank sanitization exercise which the commission embarked on with the central bank of Nigeria.
- In the area of conviction, the commission has secured over 600 convictions. An analysis of the pattern of convictions shows that the bulk of them have come from areas of academic fraud and allied offences arising there from. There have been other high profile persons such as Tafa Balogun, Diepriye Alamiesigha, Bode George, Cecilia Ibru, and Lucky Igbinedion, among others. At the time of writing, there are pending before various courts over 1500 cases ranging from advanced fee fraud, official corruption, money laundering illegal bunkering, abuse of due process, economic crimes.

Criticism of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC):

The following are its criticism:

- The commission is severally being criticized for operating outside the bound of law and infringing human rights.
- The commission is perceived to be a tool of the incumbent President in dealing with political opponents and it is invariably accused of selectivity in investigation and prosecutions.
- The commission is equally accused of playing to the gallery. It is always pointed out that suspect are arrested, investigated and brought to count with so much fanfare and thereafter the case appear to wither away.

MOTIVATION FOR ENGAGING IN CORRUPTION

These are the most commonly motivating factors for corruption in the governance processes and other governmental agencies.

- **Desire For an Unfair Advantage:** Henry, (1987) stipulated that many officials are motivated to participate in corrupt behaviour because of the inherently selfish desire to have an unfair advantage over their peers. Through bribery, extortion, embezzlement, nepotism and other means; he maintains that corruption can help dishonest people get ahead while the public pay the price.
- **Lack of Punitive Measures:** Thomas, (2006) a great political philosopher, once said, “a man’s conscience and his judgment is the same thing as the judgment, so also the conscience may be erroneous”. This idea that an individual cannot always rely on a working inner moral compass alone to guide them to virtue is at the heart of the next motivating factor for participating in corrupt behaviour.

When the legal agencies do not impose sanction on parliamentarians and other government officials who have violated their public duties, there is lack of punitive measure for corrupt behaviour. This is the case for instance, when judges are in the pay of the ruling party or there are too few police officers to enforce the law. When there are not punitive measures to ensure transparency, monitoring and accountability through a working justice system, some people will participate in corrupt behaviour simply because they can get away with it.

- **Lack of Transparency:** Drogenes, (2008) stipulated that transparency describes when there is free access to public information. To him, when the rules, procedures, and objectives of the government are not available to the public, there is no budgetary and administration oversight to balance the power of government officials, transparency is lacking and corruption can be bred without oversight and transparency of budget and rules. National resources may be plundered and power may be abused in favour of the corrupt official only. Kaufmann, (2005) maintains that when there no public sector mechanisms that channel social preferences and specific involved in those complaints, people of power will not serve their purpose of representing the populace, but have free reign to do as they pleased in the public sector. Ugwu, (2008) stated that lack of transparency creates opportunity for public officials to abuse their office for private gain. This closely relates to accountability and weak accountability mechanism tends to facilitate corruption. He added that where there is a lack of transparency and accountability, corruption will flourish.
- **Poor Incentive Structure:** Bad incentives, such as Clerks not earning a living wage or not

having job security might also encourage corrupt behaviour, such as supplementing income with bribes. Johnson, (2006) stipulated that some people who do not have an incentive to perform their official duties, actually pay for their jobs with the understanding that they will make money through bribes. A lack of incentive also results when a position of power is granted as a result of favourism and nepotism, making people resist hard work.

- Incentives also come into the picture when salaries are so low that people cannot meet the basic living standards (food and housing). As a result of that, people will often take other jobs that cause absenteeism of public officials, and often increase the demand by government officials for bribes and other paybacks in order to supply the public service Staphenurst, (2004) stipulated.
- **Problem with the Law:** Lawless and over regulated government. Ake, (1993) stated that corruption can also be caused when there is excessive control and a sort of monopoly of power. In these circumstances, there is not a level playing field and decisions will always be made at the advantage of the group or person who dominates political control. As a result the rights of the ordinary citizens are lost and public resources are often plundered for the personal gain of the public officials’ poverty or scarcity of goods may also push people to live outside the law.

Bedeian, (1987) in his own contribution stated that corruption occurs when government officials resist government policies and programs. Introducing policies that allow for greater oversight would help to assure that power is balanced and no single person would be making all of the political decisions. When politicians resist this change they prevents political and cultural progress for their country, prohibit civic interest from be met, and allow the pattern of corruption to flourish.

INSECURITY CHALLENGES: THE WAY FORWARD

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Possible Solution to Corruption in Nigeria

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(2006) stated that the multiplying effect of this improvement will reduce the tendency of public servants to demand and take bribe or get involved in other corrupt practice.

CONCLUSION

From the discussion so far it could be inferred that corruption and insecurity have contributed to under-development in Nigeria.

Any environment inundated with corruption and insecurity is always accompanied with tensions and anxiety. The elimination of this threats and enemies of man should be the number one programme of the government in Nigeria. This will rise to human development and a habitable environment for us all. Apart from the government own role, all hands should also be on deck to eliminate this monster of insecurity in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the forgoing, the following recommendation appears very necessary::

- All future political office holders should declare their assets in an assets register before they can run for an elective post.
- Federal government should give EFCC full autonomy that will enable them carryout their duties without fear or favour.
- Federal government should equally supervise the activities of EFCC to ensure efficiency.
- Well design strategy should be adopted by the EFCC to checkmate the activities of all political office holders.
- There should public awareness on the effect of corruption and insecurity in our economy.
- There should be economic empowerment to reduce crime rate in the country.
- The Nigerian society needs social transformations. Educating the public is a necessary factor in concretizing for social transformation in Nigeria.
- The Anti-Corruption law should be nforced to it fullness without fear or favor.
- There should be improvement of Social-political and Economic life by the Nigerian Government.

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