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LEADERSHIP-CORRUPTION NEXUS IN PUBLIC SECTOR GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Democracy is considered the most ideal form of government in the modern world as it encourages participation of every segment and strata of the society to engender good governance. This is, however, not the case in Nigeria, in particular, and Africa in general due to bad leadership entanglement with corruption. This has resulted in diminishing dividends of democracy with its attendant negative effects on human security and unsustainable development. The study aimed at examining leaders that have subjected themselves to diverse forms of corruption have been responsible for the crisis of development and underdevelopment of Nigeria between 1999 and 2022. It adopted the two public theories as theoretical framework, and applied a combination of survey and desktop methods of data collection. It found that vested interest of political leaders have promoted different forms and types of corruption to manipulate instruments and institutions of government to become ineffective. In consequences, the electorates have not experienced dividends of democracy and clamoring for another forms of government. The study concluded that the crisis of governance is instigated by the political leadership subjecting themselves to corruption, and recommended capital punishment as crime for those found guilty of corruption charges to serve as deterrence.

Keywords: Corruption, democracy, development, good governance, and leadership

INTRODUCTION

(1) Background of the study

Nigeria has an abundance of natural and human resources. Nigeria's state governors would have placed among the top 20 most developed nations in the world between 1999 and 2022 if the political leaders, or heads of state and government (HOSG), had properly utilized the country's resources. Nevertheless, Nigeria is still regarded as an underdeveloped nation by the international community. Made themselves susceptible to all diverse forms of corruption that have impacted on hunger, poverty, decay in social infrastructure and insecurity of lives and property (Table 2).

Being conscious of the negative impact of corruption on Nigeria's development, and her international image, the Nigerian 1999 Constitution, stated in Sections 15(5) that: "government must eradicate all corrupt practices and abuse of power." And to give effect to

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this provision, the administration of former President Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007), enacted three anti-corruption legislations, i.e, Independent Corrupt Practices and (Other Related Offences) Commission Act (ICPC) on 29th September 2000, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Act on 12th December 2002 and Money Laundering Prohibition Act of 2003. The agencies prosecuted and convicted several high-ranking public officials (Table 2), Furthermore, subsequent administrations reformed the civil service and banking sectors, embarked on massive privatization and commercialization of public enterprises to curb corruption, but to no avail (Etekpe, 2019). Thus, Ogundiya (2019), considered corruption as the core of the crisis in public governance, responsible for poor dividends of democracy in Nigeria. This is where a committed, patriotic and disciplined leadership with a vision to avert corruption comes in and the study has examined the relationship between ineffective leadership and its acceptability to susceptibility to corrupt practices in Nigeria. The study further examined the forms and types of corruption and how lack of political will by the political leaders because of their involvement has made corruption to flourish in Nigeria.

(2) Statement of the Problem

There was high enthusiasm that with the emergence of an indigenous political leader (HOSG), Nigeria shall develop from 3rd world to 2nd world states at independence in 1960. Unfortunately, the this was (and still) not so mainly because of diverse types and forms of corruption of the political leaders, especially at the 4th Republic, 199-2022. In Table 2, we have highlighted selected cases of panels of inquiries, ICPC, EFCC and court system where some of the leaders were convicted and made to forfeit some of the proceeds of corrupt practice beginning in 1956. Although the military withdraw from the civilian administration in 1967 due to widespread corruption, the records throughout that time, particularly in 1985, did not improve. In 1985, Public Officials embezzled about Two Hundred and Twelve Billion (₦212, 000,000,000) of the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). As there was literally no action, the rate went up in the Fourth Republic with the then governor's involvement in money laundering of different magnitude in 2004. This rose further siemens AG and Italliburton (SAGA) of Five hundred and seventy-nine Million (₦579,000,000) in 2019 and former Chairman of EFCC of Five Hundred and Fifty Billion (₦550, 000,000,000) in 2000.

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These corrupt practices have impacted negatively on good governance where the country was behind the millennium development goals (MDGs), and now sustainable development goals (SDGs) of the world. The foregoing analysis showed that weak and ineffective governance give room for susceptibility to corruption thus, there seems to be a relationship between leadership and corruption, especially in Nigeria. Be that as may, there is a lack of national consensus against poor leadership and its susceptibility to corruption, and how corruption has been largely responsible for the country's underdevelopment. That informed the immediate past president of Nigeria, Muhammedu Buhari (2015-2023) to declare that "if we do not kill corruption, corruption shall kill us as a nation". To seemly support it, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2017) alerted that "54 percent of Nigerian youths are unemployed be taken as a time bomb for explosive in the Fourth Republic". This has four (4) major questions.

(3) Research Questions

The research questions were,

- 1) Was there a nexus between leadership and corruption in Nigeria between 1999 and 2022;
- 2) Was leadership responsible for the corruption in Nigeria?
- 3) Who were corrupt leaders and the values (amount) involved? and
- 4) What were the types and nature of corruption in Nigeria?

(4) Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study was to examine the impact of leadership on corruption, and its consequence on governance in Nigeria, between 199 and 2022. The specific objectives were;

- 1) To establish a strong relationship between poor leadership and corruption in Nigeria,
- 2) To examine how poor leadership was responsible for corruption in Nigeria within the study period;
- 3) To identify corrupt leaders and the value (amount) of resources involved; and
- 4) To identify the types and nature of corruption in the country.

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(5) Scope of the study

The scope of the study was on the 4th Republic between 1999 and 2022. The period is important because it witnessed the federal government's renewed vigor against corruption with the establishment of three institution ICPC, EFCC, Money laundry Act. The other variable were identifiable corrupt leaders, types and nature of corruption, etc. It concentrated mainly on the public sectors and its official.

REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Literature review

(1) Conceptual Review

(a) Leadership

The study's definition of leadership is the capacity to transparently influence people in order to accomplish shared objectives. This is comparable to Terry's definition of leadership, which is the "activity of influencing people to strive willingly for a group objective" (cited in Dimowo et al., 2005:187). In addition, Anazodo et al. (2012:126) define leadership as "a process of influencing, directing and co-coordinating the activities of organized groups towards goal setting, goal achievement, and problem solving; it is imperatively a function of the situational variable and the leader and requires taking initiative or initiating new structures and procedures." In this study, we have identified six variables for effective leadership to engender good governance in Nigeria, in particular, and Africa in general; and they are: provision of social infrastructure; sustainable development (SD); food and human security; peace, safety and security; participatory rural appraisal (PRA), and feedback mechanism, along with the outcome in Table 1. Where a political leader is pre-occupied with theses variables, he/she shall abhor corruption.

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Table 1: Leadership and its outcome in Nigeria

S/N	Variables	Dividend & (outcome)	Consequences
1	Provision of social infrastructure	Water, housing, electricity, rural development programmes/projects, etc.	Appoint aids on merit to avoid their tendency for corruption to bring about underdevelopment, poverty, insecurity of lives and property, high infant and adult mortality rates and falling standard of education, etc.
2	Sustainable development	Feeder/rural road; primary health care facilities; quality and quantity of primary, secondary and tertiary institutions; reduction of mortality rates.	
3	Food and human security	Affordable food items; good quality of live; dignity of human life; unimpeded economic activities, etc.	
4	Peace, safety and general security	Peaceful co-existence; safety of lives and property; free movement of goods and people, etc.	
5	Participatory rural appraisal (PRA)	Regular interactive town hall meetings for feedback; community involvement in planning, budgetary and implementation of policies, etc.	
6	Feedback mechanism	Political will power to implement components of participatory rural appraisal (PRA).	

Source: Authors Design, 2023.

It has been noted that because the majority of political leaders lacked these qualities before to taking office as HOSG, they were seduced by the power and engaged in unethical behavior. They enable this in cases where their appointment was not based on merit.

Corruption

Etymologically, the word “corruption” originates from the Greek word “*corruptus*” meaning an aberration or a misnomer. However, in Nigeria, corruption has become so common a word in the public sector that its actual meaning no longer needs scientific explanation. Waziri (2010) defines corruption as "abuse of public power for private gain," citing the United Nations Global Programme against Corruption (GPAC) as support. It is further described as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain” by Transparency International (2013). Gboyega (1996) defined corruption as "any decision, act, or conduct that undermines the credibility of those in positions of authority or organizations tasked with advancing, protecting, or maintaining the democratic process, consequently diminishing their ability to carry out their designated tasks and fostering good governance in a nation such as Nigeria." According to Lodge (1998: 157–187), "it involves acts which are intentionally dishonest," such as money laundering, bribery, embezzlement, mishandling of funds, and abuse of official positions. etc.

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These forms and types flourish in Nigeria because accountability is generally weak, laws and principles of ethics in government are poorly developed and the legal instruments charged, such as ICPC, EFCC, etc with enforcing them are ill- prepared (Shehu, 2006). In view of this, corruption has become the principal means of primitive accumulation of wealth.

CLEEN Foundation (2010), concentrated that corruption has been responsible for the lack development, infrastructural decay, poverty, unemployment and low productivity in Nigeria. This has greatly ever widened the gap between the rich and poor people as the leaders could not pursue attainment of the variables in Table1. At the international level, corruption has tarnished the image of the country that has cautioned foreign nationals doing business in Nigerian.

Etekpe, et al (2015) traced corruption of our political leaders to Colonial era in 1956 when Nnamdi Azikiwe – the then Premier of Eastern Nigeria was charged with abuse of office. The Colonial government then set up Justice Stafford Foster Sutton Commission of enquiry and found him guilty on 6th January 1957. This was followed by Obafemi Awolowo, then Premier of Western Region, charged for “abuse of office, bribery and corruption” on 26th June 1962. He, too, was found guilty and obliged to transfer the investment property (NIPC) to Western Nigeria government.

As table 2, we have highlighted selected cases of corruption-period, names of persons/institutions and nature between 1956 and 2000. The Table 2 is devastating as Ibrahim Magu, former Chairman of EFCC, alone, alleged and ‘unable to account for Five hundred and fifty billion Naira (N550b) interest generated from banks of recovered monies deposited in 2015- 2020’. The Table 2 is not exhaustive.

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Table 2: Selected Corruption Case Diary in Nigeria 1956-2020

S/ N	Date	Name/Institution	Nature	Remark
1.	24/07/1956	Nnamdi Azikiwe, Premier, Defunct Eastern Region	- Abuse of office, bribery, and corruption - Justice Stafor Foster- Sutton Commission of Enquiry	- Found guilty and he transferred his rights in African Continental Bank (ACB) to Eastern Nigerian government on 06/01/1957
2.	26/06/1962	Obafemi Awolowo, Premier, Defunct Western Region	- Abuse of office, bribery, and corruption in relation to private investment in National Investment and Property Company (NIPC). - Justice GB Coker Commission of Enquiry was set up for it.	- Indicted and he transferred NIPC to Western Nigerian government
3	1967	15 Public officers in Midwest region	- Public officers corruptly enriched themselves	- Assets were forfeited and transferred to Midwest regional government
4	1985	Nigeria National Petroleum Company (NNPC)	- Embezzlement - Could not account for missing N212 billion	- No action as alleged were politically express persons (PEPs) and case abandoned.
5	09/09/2004	Joshua Deriye, former Governor of Plateau state	- Money Laundering (90,000)	- British authorities arrested him in London - He jump bail - Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) re- arrested and charged him for 14 counts. - In April 2007, an English Court convicted/sentenced him to 3years in prison for laundering about US \$1.4 Million public fund. - He refunded ₦ 90m
6	2005	Tafar Balongun (fmr. Inspector general of police- IGP)	- Embezzlement of about US \$121m - Fined US \$30,000 and property worth US \$150m seized	- Convicted/sentenced for 6 counts
7	03/05/2006	Diepreye Solomon Peter Alamieyeseigha (fmr. Governor, Bayelsa state)	- Money laundering	- Convicted on 26/07/2007 after pleading guilty - Arrested in London in September 2015 over corruption allegation but jumped bail and returned to Nigeria. - Forfeiture of assets - Pardoned by former President Goodluck Jonathan.
8	03/06/2007	Dr. Peter Odili (Fmr Governor, Rivers State)	- Abuse of office corruption	- He secured an order of Justice Ibrahim Buba for perpetual injunction from investigation
9	04/09/2007	Onyema Ugochukwu (fmr Chairman, Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)	- Embezzlement of N10.2 Billion, making false statements in respect of N9.3 billion allegedly trapped in society General Bank, contract inflation of 150 Kilometer road from N250,260m to N880,000m	- PEP and abandoned

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			and another road in Umuahia (Abia state) from N180m to N462m.	
10	08/2009	Olabode George (fmr. Chairman, Nigeria Ports Authority-NPA, 199-2003)	- Illegal practices/contract related offences and misappropriation of NPA fund of about ₦85 Billion	- Convicted and sentenced to concurrent terms of 2½ years imprisonment - He was, however, released by Supreme Court order in February, 2011
11	04/2011	James Onanefe Ibori (fmr Governor, Delta State)	- Money laundering, forgery and fraud, - Obtaining properties by deception amount to about US \$70million	- Arrested in United Arab Emirate (UAE) and extradited to United Kingdom (UK) for 5 counts on money laundering. - Pleaded guilty of 10 counts. - Convicted and sentenced to 13 years jail term
12	05/2013	Mrs. Cecilia Ibru (fmr Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer – MD/CEO, Oceanic Bank Plc)	- Corruptly amassed wealth and recklessly granted credit facilities without sufficient security and due process	- Prosecuted
13	03/2013	Ndudi Emunelu (fmr. Chairman house of Rep on Power)	- Fraud and abuse of office, etc, to about ₦5.20 Billion	- EFCC charged to court, but Justice Garba Umar ruled that he 'has no case to answer'
14	04/2015	Nusilia Obamikoro (Fmr Senator/Minister); Godswill Akpabio (fmr, Governor of Akwa-Ibom state), President 10 th Senate); Martins Elechi (fmr, Governor of Ebonyi State).	- Abuse of office, bribery and corruption	- PEPs and abandoned
15	25/02/2016	Olise Metu Investment	- Fraudulently received ₦400 Million from office of National Security Adviser (ONSA), Sambo Dasuki	- Justice Abang, Federal High court (FHC), Abuja found him guilty and was sentenced to 7years imprisonment. - Appeal court on 17/12/2016 ordered a re-trial - EFCC Appealed to Supreme Court. - Status of case not clear.
16	12/04/2017	Ikoyi Gat - Wife of fmr Director General (DG), National Intelligent Agency (NIA), Mrs Ayo Oke Folashade, Choba Venture Ltd Vanguard (2019)	- US \$43,449,947, 27, 800 and N23,218,000 kept in iron cabinet and jute basin in an apartment in Flat 7B, Osborn Towers, Ikoyi. - Earlier made payment of US\$1.658 Million between 25/08 and 03/09/2015. - Money converted to N360 Million and paid to fine and country for purchase of the property at Ikoyi.	- Whistle blower reported the case - FHC, Ikoyi, Lagos ordered forfeiture of the property of Flat 7B, Osborn Towers, Ikoyi, Lagos. - Fmr Governor Ezeibunwo Nyesom Wike later stated that the said money belonged to Rivers State Government (RSG) as the apartment was owned by Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi (fmr Governor, RSG and Minister of Transportation) from the state.

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17	06/2018	Senator Abdullahi Adamu	- Fmr Chairman, Northern Senators forum (NSF) couldn't account for the N7 Million of the 7th Assembly. - Financial Mismanagement	- He was removed - Senator Dino Melaye (then spokesman stated that it was investigated and found to be true) - Abandoned as PEP
18.	12/12/2018	Doyin Okukpe, Value Trust Investment and Abrahams Telecoms.	- Fraudulently received N702 Million from ONSA	- Released on administrative bail - Abandoned as PEP
19.	25/05/2018	Jolly Trever Nyame (fmr Governor, Taraba state) and Joshua Dariye (fmr Governor of Plateau state).	- Abuse of office, Bribery, and corruptions	- Prosecuted for 11years and both decamped from People's Democratic Party (PDP) to All Progressive Congress (APC-ruling party) - Convicted and sentenced to 14 years imprisonment - Joshua Dariye was pardoned by fmr President Goodluck E. Jonathan
20.	03/2019	Finance officer, Kano Zoological Garden	- N6.8 Million was swallowed by Gorilla during Salah celebration	- Umar Kobo, MD along with Abdullah Haruna (Investigation Police Officer-IPO) confirmed of the missing money. - Abandoned as PEP
21.	30/09/2019	Abdulrasheed Maina, Pension Reform Task Force Team	- Fraud, abuse of office and corruption to about N100 Billion, using fictitious accounts	- He jumped bail - Case abandoned as PEP
22.	25/11/2019	Mohammed Agoke, Aliyu Abubaka and six (6) others	- Fraudulent enrichment of US \$1.10 Billion Malabu Oil deal	- Prosecuted but charges were later dropped. - Abandoned as PEPs
23.	25/11/2019	- Seimens AG and Halliburton (SAGH)	- Kellog Brown Root (KBR) inc entered into a guilty plea bargain US \$579bMillion fine for payment of bribes to secure Nigeria Liquified Gas (NLG) contracts in Nigeria.	- While company ws prosecuted expediently, investigation of Nigeria senior Government Officials that received the bribe of US \$18 Million was abandoned.
24.	03/2020	Ibrahim Magu, fmr Chairman EFCC	- - Unable to account for N550 billion interest generated from banks of recovered monies deposited in 2015-2020 - - Unable to give proper accounts of N332, out of N836, recovered properties in March 2018.	- Investigated and prosecuted.

Sources: Etekpe et al (2015), and Gonee et al (2023).

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(b) Governance

The concept of governance along with the constituents (outcome) in the study is referred to six (6) characteristics already outlined in Table 1. For Adamolekun (2006) governance is the “process of exercising political power to manage the affairs of a nation.” leaders’ realization of collective goals. In collaborating with Adamolekun position, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2011) referred to governance as “the exercise of economic, political and administrative authorities to manage a country’s affairs at all levels” by the political leader who in turn, appoints technocrats as aids to advise them engender good governance. Good governance is characterized as the leader encouraging general participation, accountability, transparency, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and rule of law in such a way that detest corruption.

In his public lecture on “The role of civil servants in the advancement of democratic process in Nigeria” at the 2nd annual Lecture/Award night of Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUCN). In the lecture, Etekpe (2023:13-14), unravel 13 principles, attributes and outcomes of good governance’ for the sustainable development (SD) of Nigeria. Among them, three (3) are relevant here and outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Principles/Attributes and outcomes of good governance in Nigeria

S/N.	Principles	Attributes	Outcomes
1.	Participation	(1) Involvement of people in policy formulation and implementation. (2) Regular interaction to meeting the needs of the people. (3) Accommodation of opponents, divers’ opinions and seek for feedback.	(1) Massive turn out for public programmes (2) Tolerance (3) Less dissident opinions voices.
2.	Transparency	(1) Adherence to laid down practices and procedures of the laws on public procurement Act, 2007. (2) Keeping accurate and reliable records of income and expenditures, and activities for public scrutiny without hinderance (3) Regular rendering of account to stakeholders/publics	(1) Reduction of corruption to the barest minimum. (2) Honest/hard working citizens (3) Positive role models. (4) Reduction of poverty.
3.	Political Empowerment	(1) Even distribution of social amenities/services. (2) Healthy political culture. (3) Preparation of office holders for exit	(1) Minimal opposition (2) High moral value (3) Stability (4) Citizenship commitment

Source: Etekpe (2023:13-14)

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(2) Theoretical Review

(a) The Causes of Corruption in Nigeria

There are several causes of corruption in the public sector, highlighted as follows;

(i) Weak institution for enforcement of anti-corruption laws: The institutions like ICPC, EFCC, etc are weak as a result of the 1999 constitution (as amended) that assigned 68 items affecting the national life of the country to the Presidency as exclusive legislative list (ELL) and another 34 as concurrent legislature list (CLL), making the presidency to control the entire 'critical factors of production', including the institutions in Nigerian. Incidentally, the high-profile corruption cases (Table 2) are traceable to the presidency. Thus, there is need for devolutionary power for the institution to be independent.

(ii) Greed: Greed is the ferocity of an egotistical desire for material prosperity, status, and authority. The proliferation of corruption in Nigeria can be attributed to the politicians' inordinate concern in obtaining material wealth (Joda, 2010). Waziri, the former chairperson of the EFCC, has referred to this material preoccupation as a psychiatric condition in which a person will steal money that exceeds their needs for future generations. The EFCC has claimed that between 1960 and 2005, government employees stole almost US \$20 trillion from the Nigerian treasury.

(iii) Poverty: World Bank (2017) describes poverty as being in hunger, lack of shelter, and sick without medical care, etc, and went further to state that about 90 million Nigerians are living below the poverty line of earning less than US \$1.9 per day. The perceived fear of poverty has led to the cases in Table 2.

(ii) Foreign collaboration: Corruption is encouraged by multinational corporations, (Table 2). Gen. Sani Abacha, former (HOSG), for example corruptly enriched himself of about US \$510 billion and kept it in foreign banks in European countries (Iroan, 2006).

1.1 Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the "two public theory" propounded by Ekeh, Peter (1975), The theory of two public is essentially the understanding of the state and its predicaments in Africa and

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provides important explanations for the poor leadership that leads to corruption and bad governance among African countries.

According to Ekeh (1975), the theory is traced to the colonial formation and argued that one of the most prominent impacts of colonialism, was the emergence of “two public realms”, primordial and civic public realms in Nigeria and other African countries. The theory emphasized that while the citizens expect the political leaders to address their welfare and fundamental rights, they owe the leaders the responsibilities to obey law and orders. A "moral primordial public realm" is based on the latter, and a "amoral civic public realm" is based on the former. This meant that the civic public sphere had no moral connections to the private sphere and was instead linked to illegal and exploitative colonial control. It was an immoral public sphere where manipulating the system was seen as an obligation of patriotism (Ifidon, 1996).

As a result, since the same players function in both domains, corruption in the civic public is tolerated since the state machinery is used to feed the nest of the primordial public (Osaghae, 1988). A decent citizen of the primordial public provides to others without expecting anything in return, according to Ekeh (1975); a member of the civic public benefits from the civic but prefers to avoid giving anything in return if possible. Leaders are driven to believe that it is OK to plunder the civic public in order to fortify the primal public by the logic of dialectics.

According to Ezeani (in Okpata et al., 2019), internal and external surroundings make up every system or organization. As a result, it is imperative that the two environments—as well as the other components that comprise the organization—be perceived as working together to achieve the stated goals. Every system interacts with its environment (political, social, economic, ethical, technological, etc.) and is affected by it, and it also influences its surroundings. "The system receives inputs from the environment (citizen) in the form of: The citizens' demands for the maintenance of law and order and the provision of goods and services," according to Ezeani (2004). However, instead of reciprocating the inputs received from the environment, they are answerable to their godfathers and members of their family and close ally thereby abandoning the populace.

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Because of dishonest behavior, these fundamental necessities that every member of the community should have is neglected. Because of corruption, the leaders overlook their basic duty by projecting personal demands. Osaghae (1994) claims that political leaders' materialistic view of the state has driven them to want power primarily in order to continue corruption and enrich themselves and other members of their organizations. Political leaders essentially want power for themselves, not for the benefit of the people or the society.

The ideas are relevant to the study because they have given rise to a framework that helps explain the stark differences between the civic public (led by leaders) and the primal public (followed by followers). Corruption is a result of this division between the people and the leaders. The emerging trend is that such officials are no longer accountable to the people. Instead the corrupt official remains a good man as long as he/she channels part of the stolen money, to satisfy ephemeral yearnings of a few.

2.3 Methodology

The desktop approach of data collecting was used in the study, and sources included government gazettes, EFCC and ICPC documents, court hearings pertaining to convicted cases, and technical journals. Because the lead author is an experienced Nigerian Police Investigator and prosecutor who has kept up with the subject over the years, participant observation was used to supplement it.

2. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

(1) **Corruption and Good Governance:** We have in Table 2 shown selected cases of corruption in Nigeria, and its consequences (outcomes) on good governance in Table 1. The Table 1 and 2 demonstrate strong correlation between leadership and the propensity for corruption in Nigeria. Nigeria leadership failure and its attendant decay of social rising poverty level, unemployment, etc are traced to corruption and the weakness of institutions to deal with it due to legislative powers assigned to the presidency by the 1999 constitution (Ocheni et al 2012).

Lawal et al. (2012:2) claim that most leaders who have held positions of authority since independence have been mired in political squabbling and corruption, and that their character has generally lacked vision. These have also resulted in the mishandling and abuse of public

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resources, which has caused Nigeria's economy to suffer and its people to live in extreme poverty.

According to Bach (2004) as cited by Uzodike et al. (2011), the military heads of state and government (HOSG) Abdusalam Abubakar, Sani Abacha, Ibrahim Babangida, and General Muhammadu Buhari gradually led Nigeria backward. This period was marked by financial recklessness, tyrannical, and voracious leadership and governance. Abdullahi (2012) connected corruption and bad governance, which in turn showed up as underdevelopment.

Despite the lessons to be learnt from the failure of the earlier three (3) republics, the Fourth Republic democratic practice has not been too different as it is also characterized by corruption. (Odusanya, 2013).

(2) **Bad Leadership:** Bad leadership has manifested in promoting corruption that eventually impeded good governance in several ways;

(a) The public's alienation from the government: There is currently a great divide between the rich and the poor, leaders and followers, etc. The public feels that those in charge of affairs were thrust upon them, while those in positions of authority think that their loyalty is limited to their godfather and those who assisted them in gaining power. Nigerians are not proud of their government and country because of the leadership propensity to corruption.

(b) Increased in the cost of governance: In discussing the issue, Salihu Lukman, (2013: 51) asked to know “Where is the dividends of democracy when the reward to citizens for living in a country in spite of increased revenue from crude oil is the same...” This became necessary for the inability of government officials to relate in increased annual budgets at all tiers of government to good quality of life (QQL) in Nigeria. The issue is that bad leadership has breed corruption which are responsible for the poor state of the Nigerian refineries and social infrastructures.

(c) Hard Work and the Spirit of Patriotism are discouraged: Several Nigerians have lost hope in the country and is shown in the readiness of an average Nigeria to travel out of the country.

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- (d) High rate of Insecurity: Nigeria is presently bedeviled with perennial cases of kidnapping, armed robbery and recently and herders/farmers clash. A typical example is the decline in oil production in the Niger Delta region (Umoh, 2003).
- (e) Corruption Perception Index: In corroborating with Table 2, the Transparency International (2019) stated that Nigeria was the 144th corrupt country, out of 180 countries, that were assessed, in 2018 (Table 4). This was a steady deterioration from 130, out of 180 countries in 2009 to a peak of 148, out of 180, countries in 2017. It improved marginally to 144, out of 180 in 2018, an improvement that was very insignificant in global rating (Table 4).

Table 4: Corruption Perception Index Ranking (2009 – 2018).

Year	Ranking
2009	130 out of 180
2010	134 out of 178
2011	143 out of 183
2012	139 out of 176
2013	144 out of 177
2014	136 out of 175
2015	136 out of 167
2016	136 out of 176
2017	148 out of 180
2018	144 out of 180

Sources: Transparency International (2019) cited in Dialoke et al (2020).

It should be emphasized that the Corruption Perceptions Index ranks countries based on how corrupt their political leadership and public sector operate. A country rank indicates its position relative to the other countries and territories in the index for a particular year. While other countries, even in Africa, are fighting improving their ranking, Nigeria is sinking more and more, especially in the 4th Republic.

- (f) Negative impact on human rights index: Political leaders in Nigeria show no respect for the fundamental rights of their constituents, as protected by the constitution (Table 1). Thus,

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it undermines the legitimacy and credibility of constitutions by going against the rule of law and changing the entire decision-making process.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study assessed the character of political leaders and how susceptible they are to corruption in Nigeria. It noticed that several of Nigerian HOSG do not have strong character to abhor corruption. Thus, they and their aides have been engrossed in corruption cases (Table 2). The effect is primitive accumulation of natural wealth at the expense of social infrastructural development, etc. Future political leaders must be instilled with a sense of national awareness and a nationalistic lifestyle. In this sense, candidates with a stronger purchasing power of the electorate's conscience need to lose out to reputable, astute individuals with a track record of honesty and integrity.

Based on the discussion and results, the study recommended that:

- (1) Law enforcement institutions be strengthened to deal decisively with cases of corruption in Nigeria. For this purpose, there is the need for economic and political restructuring (EPR) to develop power so that the institutions shall be independent in discharging their duties without interference from the executive arm of the federal government.
- (2) The political leadership recruitment processes be improved upon by political parties under the supervision of INEC compelling them to adhere strictly to their guidelines on internal democracy.
- (3) All allegations of corrupt practices of the past HOSG should be duly investigated and affected political leaders be made to face the wrath of the law.
- (4) The National Orientation Agency should embark on routine crusade against corruption in local, state and federal governments. This should lead to value re-orientation.

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