

Corruption and Insecurity in Nigeria: A Psychosocial Insight

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Abstract

The paper examined the incidence of corruption and insecurity in Nigeria: A psychosocial insight. Corruption has been institutionalized in the Nigerian society and this has affected the psychological wellbeing of Nigerians with people's doubt whether corruption is way of life as it has been exemplified, with daily feedbacks of bribery and corruption and the reckless show of wealth that have become the order of the day in both government and private establishments in the country. Some relevant psychological theories reviewed created a theoretical base for further explanation of why corruption and insecurity remain uncurbed in the Nigerian Society. Paramount to the reason of corruption and insecurity is the high rate of unemployment and economic recession. In lieu of this subject matter, if concerted efforts are made in equitable management of economy, it will go a long way in reducing the high rate of corruption and insecurity in Nigerian Society.

Keywords: Corruption; Insecurity; Nigeria; Psychosocial insight

Introduction

Corruption is dishonest or illegal behavior especially of people in authority, allegation of bribery and corruption in private, public and governmental establishment. Corruption has been institutionalized in the Nigerian polity, and it has eaten deep into the fabrics of Nigerian society. A thorough study of Nigeria's history reveals at a glance, that past leaders molded Nigeria with great zeal for success. This was based on the way and manner they collectively taught and achieved political independence for Nigeria [1]. While insecurity, is a feeling of being insecure in ones environment. If you are insecure, you lack confidence because you think that you are not good enough or are not loved. Insecurity could also be referred as an unsafe feeling, a state of mind characterized by self- doubt and vulnerability. It is a feeling of being a target for hurt or harm, insecurity in its true meaning is just plain fear, the fear that we are not safe in immediate environment. Globally some countries of the world, especially the third world countries is currently experiencing political, economic and social insecurity, and these insecurities is orchestrated by the current leadership of these countries which is a deviation of the wishes and aspirations of the colonial fathers and leaders of these countries [2]. However, it is a truism to say that these type of leaders exhibited leadership qualities and moral degree as well as professionalism that is lacking in current politicians and leaders. Consequently the result of their tested trusted and sincere leadership styles gave birth to a peaceful "one Nigeria" and this was celebrated as the Nigeria flag of green white – green was hoisted and the Union Jack lowered appropriately to the admiration of all Nigerians.

In the turn of events, the Nigerian leaders defended the emotional integrity of Nigeria with full restoration and preservation of cultural values to the best of their ability, agility and professionalism. It is on the annals of history that these skillful or adept politicians maintained absolute self-respect and genuinely protected the oneness of this country through good governance. To this end, there is the need for our current politicians and leaders to emulate their ideas, desist from corrupt practices, and shun ethnic tendencies that are capable of scuttling the peaceful co-existence of this nation.

It is flabbergasting that in the 21st century where there are a large number of leadership models to emulate; politicians and administrators continue to settle scores in the old fashioned, Stone Age way [1]. Toward this direction, our leader made Nigeria a laughing stock of the other nations. Nation that is regarded as the giant of Africa still cannot

provide effective leadership. All Nigerians should be concerned about the ugly happenings in the polity, which clearly have showed signs of ineptitude, ineffectiveness, idiocy, tribalism, nepotism, favoritism and finally, the emergence of political godfathers and godmothers, mismanagement, misdirection, misappropriations, corruption, lack of planning, policy inconsistencies and many others have become the trade mark of every administration that has ruled the Nigeria nation.

It is very clear that democracy is the best form of government everywhere in the globe. To this end therefore, Nigeria cannot be an exemption. Whatever the case may be, we cannot totally write off the leadership of this country. We think and believe we all need to bring our ideas towards national development; this is basically because no man has a monopoly of knowledge, we must not relent in contributing our quota, so as to move the nation forward. According to the ex-chairman of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (I.C.P.C), Justice Emmanuel Ayoola; while lamenting the nation's monumental losses to corruption since independence, said that Nigeria has lost the sum of \$300 billion to corruption [3]. The said sum would have been sufficient to build many standard public schools with good facilities. But as a result of infrastructural decay in public schools and tertiary institutions, most affluent parents send their children to private schools and Universities. In his book, "The Trouble with Nigeria" Professor Chinua Achebe, a renowned Novelist, poet and critic, strongly argued that Nigeria has not yet achieved nationhood. He posited that Nigeria is a country, where citizens are ethnic conscious and indulge in all manner of cutting corners to make money at the expense of the country that has not arrived.

It is obvious that corruption enrichment has made many Nigerians to display shocking callousness and sadism in their actions, gross indiscipline and selfishness, thereby bringing misfortune to some

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families because man's inhumanity to man makes countless people mourn. It beats our imagination when drum and dance to the high heavens for those who corruptly enrich themselves, including ex-convicts who were jailed for corrupt practices to access many chieftaincy "chief-thief" titles. Based on this promise one can say that quality leadership had fled Nigeria, corrupt and inept leaders have taken over. In a paper entitled: Leadership and Governance in Nigeria. A critique, Professor Fawole of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, said after more than half and century of independence, the country has been far from progress and prosperity, because of toxic leadership style. He described this type of leadership style as one in which the leader deployed state apparatus to abuse the leader-follower relationship for self benefit. Personal aggrandizement and leave the nation in worse condition than the leaders met it.

It is sad and disheartening that 52 years after, Nigeria is still held in thralldom, it's citizenry Pine away in the vice-like grip of political intolerance, unbridled but violent outburst of ethno-religious and primordial sentiments across the nation and for which the security forces remain clueless; unsolved politically motivated serial murders, general lawlessness and banditry, unbridled official corruption and outright state robbery. No wonder the prediction of an American Intelligence Report (AIR) that the country might vanish from the world map soon, is abundantly clear because of the grim indicators of the sad situation in the country, despite the downplaying of the warning by the political class. At full at forty is a full forever, they said; but at 52 which is 12 years over 40 years, security of lives and property are no longer guaranteed in Nigeria. The image of lawlessness is seen everywhere through bombings maiming and killings by disgruntled groups in Nigeria. Some years ago, Dele Giwa; the editor of Newswatch magazine; Rear Admiral Onigbinde, Rewane and Funsho Williams were gruesomely murdered by unknown assailants. Before the 2003 Senatorial election, John Monoria Agbatutu of Agbarno in Delta State was brutally killed before the primaries. The Asipa of Oyo was clubbed to death. On the 21st of December 2001, Odunayo Olagbaju, member of Osun State House of Assembly was shot to death by gunmen in Ile Ife. On the 23rd of December 2001, Bola Ige (Siddon Look), the late Justice Minister, was murdered in his room at Ibadan. The killings and maiming are too numerous to mention. At the moment Nigeria as a nation is being terrorized by a fanatical religious sect called Boko-Haram. The Boko Haram sect is protagonist of western education. They believe that western education is evil and moral. In their quest to achieve their wishes and aspiration they resorted to act of terrorism, bombing, maiming and killing innocent citizens in Nigeria. Several attempts by the Federal Government through Joint Task Force to crackdown this terrorist group called Boko-Haram proves abortive. As a result most people in Nigeria, especially the Southern Nigerian, working and residing in core Northern Nigeria are living in greater numbers to their various states for fear of insecurity.

In the recent past, not less than ten National Youth Corp members were brutally killed in the Northern Nigeria during the last president election for discharging their primary assignment. Bombing and killings of innocent people is now the order of the day in some Northern part of the country. Who is fooling who? must note that the killings and maiming have invaded the nation as a plague. Without mincing words, Nigeria needs to take security very seriously.

Perhaps a psychosocial insight will help to explain the state of corruption and insecurity in the Nigerian polity. Many psychological theories explain crime as behaviour and corruption as an integral part of crime committed against a state. When the political class are corrupt in a country the citizens become insecure. Insecurity is of different

types; for instance have political, economic, social and food insecurity in present day Nigeria.

In this paper only four theories will be examined. They are (a) Frustration theory of corruption and insecurity (b) Psychoanalytic theory of corruption and insecurity (c) Ethnological theory of corruption and insecurity and (d) Social learning theory of crime and corruption.

Frustration theory of corruption and insecurity

According to Davis [4], frustration is a direct blockade of a person's movement toward a defined goal; it produces irritable and uneasy feelings within the individual. When it persists, the victim is aggressively pushed to seek substitute goal. Interpreting frustration theory of corruption from Nigeria perspective; it could be put that due to frustration resulting from goal blockade. Nigerians who take to corruption use it as substitute means to goal attainment, because they feel highly insecure in the prevalence economic predicament in the country [5].

Psychoanalytic theory of corruption

The psychoanalytic theory was propounded by Sigmund Freud. He postulates that human life is controlled by two categories of instincts – the life instinct is associated with creativity, achievement and other positive things of life. On the other hand, death instinct is associated with aggression, hostility, destruction, deceit and even war.

Going by Freud, crime resides in the instinctual drive of an individual. Therefore corruption resides in the id as a component of human personality. The irrational impulses of the id propel humans to engage in corruption because at this point they may feel highly insecure in the prevalence economic situation in a country. Only individual with strong superego can minimize their rate of corrupt practices in an entrusted government and private establishments. On the other hand when people feel insecure as a result of their inability to meet their financial and social obligation, they may become frustrated, aggressive and hostile [6]. People who find themselves in this situation may resort to criminal behavior, such as deceit, duping, armed robbery, kidnapping and killing.

Ethnological theory of corruption and insecurity

Another theory that explains criminal behavior is that of the ethnologists. Ethnologists are those who study behavior of animals to ensure their survival. Projecting this to human situation, they ascertained that within man is intraspecific aggression that has survival value. Against this background, Andrey [7] posited that "man is a predator whose natural instinct is to kill with a weapon" going by the ethnological theory, it can be concluded that corruption is an impulsive drive in man aimed at ensuring his survival. This survival believes is an attempt to fill the vacuum of insecurity in man's life.

Social learning theory of man

The Social learning theory by Bandura [8] also explains criminal behavior by claiming that crime evoking stimuli are ever present in the environment and the man merely learns to respond to them. To back this up, Bandura and McDonald [9] found that children who watch aggressive models tend to be aggressive later in life. The reality of the first theory "frustration theory of crime" is not in doubt [10]. Analyzing the last three theories explain above, the rational questions which may agitate one's mind are; which of the four theories explain corruption and insecurity in our society? Which of the theories should discard or uphold? Or could one possibly locate a point of convergence among them.

These questions are better answered if agreed that all behavior has biological basis and that man is an instinctual animal, then may be compelled to accept that there are certain things in man that predisposes him to criminal behavior, such as corrupt practices in both government and private organization, hence it is possible to describe a person as being criminally minded. Again, if agree that the precipitating factors must come from the external social environment in forms of cues and stimuli; then the three theories have relevance in corruption and insecurity. The analogy then can be that man has corrupt tendencies which are brought into the fore by external stimuli, that is criminal behavior (CB) is a function of person (P) and his environment (E), while (F) is the propelling force.

$$CB = F (P+E) \text{ (Tables 1 and 2).}$$

Discussion

There are several factors present in our environment that are capable of evoking or inducing corruption and insecurity. Unemployment, official alienation, political instability, inordinate ambition, hopelessness, inaccessibility to national cake, Inequality in National cake sharing, official infantile witch-hunting. Others are absence of infrastructural facilities, lack of concern for inordinate wealth accumulation, recycled corruption and reckless flaunting of wealth.

In the late 90's, it was the federal government that set the retrenchment ball rolling. Initially it was meant to consume about 4.5 million workers. From the data released by the federal office of statistics and published in guardian of 10th September, 1996, it has reached 6 million workers and in 2010 it has reached 8 million workers. This is a case of idle hand becoming the devils workshop. It is being noticed that government is gradually withdrawing from her official responsibility thereby leaving the masses more improvised and frustrated.

Perhaps the behavioral manifestation of such frustration is the upsurge in corruption and insecurity we are witnessing today. The relationship between a citizen and his country should be symbiotic. She makes you live and you make her live. But if it is the other way

round, the tendency is for you to devise an unorthodox means of making things to be in your favor, and it may lead to the upsurge of corruption in our society. When people are unemployed and they cannot provide the basic necessities of life, there is every tendency that they will be insecure, and when they have a little chance to be in helm of affairs in government and private establishment, they are every tendency for them to be corrupt. In contemporary Nigeria, people just make money unjustly and they are hailed and respected for ill-gotten wealth. The way and manner people make money in Nigeria are not actually verified, and this has made so many people to criminally look for money, and they tend to get away with it. This has a reinforcing effect on people's tendency to look for money at all costs. Hence there is a geometric increased in corruption in the country. People who are noticeable corrupt have a way of coming back into the main stream of national polity, using no other tool than money corruptly acquired. Political conscious Nigerians will always want to get into power because they feel insecure. This is why so many politicians in Nigerians will always want to be in the position of authority, so that they can have access to public funds with the mindset of looting the government treasury, because outside power such people may feel high insecure. There is a high inequality in National cake sharing in Nigeria. Therefore Adams [11] postulates that perception of inequality is followed by behavior that will change the inequality to equity. There is no doubt that those who perceive inequality in national cake sharing could have devised dubious means of attaining equity. In their efforts to attain a balance, they may involve themselves in all manners of corruption in order to attain an enviable social status that is highly secured. This explains the reason why most people who are opportune to be in elective positions involved themselves in all manners of governmental corruptions ranging from embezzlement of government funds, rigging of election and enthronement of godfatherism in the Nigerian body politics. These corrupt political gladiators of our time have used their ill-gotten wealth to perpetuate themselves in power by obstructing the political climate of this Nation. The activities of these corrupt political contractors have improvised the state and subjected the masses into an untold hardship. This political scenario orchestrated by corruption has made the country crisis ridden. The high rate of corruption in our

Get-rich-quick syndrome	Percentage	Revenge	Cover-up	Psychological
Corporate fraud	15%	Assassination	Axon	Untimely deaths
Ritual killings	5%	Murder	Assassination	Poverty
Bunkering	12%	Human sacrifice	"	greed
Smuggling	13%	"	"	Killings
Drug-trafficking	20%	"	"	
Duping	8%	"	"	Economic sabotage
Official Corruption	25%	"	"	"
Pick pocketing	2%	"	"	Frustration
Total	100%	"	"	"

Table 1: Prevalent Crimes classified into groups with different percentages.

Killings by:	Percentage	Cover-up	Psychological
Terrorism	40%	Boko- Haram	Insecurity/Genocide
Ethnic militias	15%	Resource control	Killing of significant others
Boundary disputes	10%	Economic power	Displacement
Tribal wars	10%	Economic power	"
Religious bigotry	15%	Protection of faith	Insecurity
Political motivated killings	10%	Ambition/Aspirations	Identity crisis
Total	100%	"	"

Source: These classifications were based on extractions from newspaper and magazines in Nigerian from 2000 to 2012. The analysis above showed that crime and insecurity has taken the lead among other environmental stressors in Nigeria. The percentage score showed in the two tables above that official corruption and terrorism is the greatest problems Nigerians are facing today among others.

Table 2: Prevalent insecurity classified into groups with different percentages.

society has adversely affected the economy of this nation and this has led to high rate of unemployment. The prevailing circumstances of unemployment have brought about different degrees of social vices among Nigerian youths. Paramount among the social vices are the criminal activities such as armed robbery, cyber-crimes, corporate fraud, political motivated killings, kidnapping, ritual killings, human and drug trafficking, smuggling, duping, pick-pocketing, prostitution to mention but a few. Others are terrorism, ethnic militias, boundary disputes, tribal wars, religious bigotry and political motivated killings. These human problems abound as a result of economic frustration among the Nigerian youths. Nigeria is blessed with both human and natural resources that are under tapped. Therefore the problem of this country is basically on the mismanagement of her economic resources. It is therefore our notion that, if the economy of this country is managed equitably, there will be a drastic reduction in corruption and insecurity [12].

Conclusion

This paper critically examined corruption and insecurity within the Nigerian society, purely from literature and personal observation perspective. In the process corruption and insecurity was characteristically explained. Also explained were the theories of corruption and insecurity. Corruption and insecurity should be the concern of every citizen in Nigeria because it has eaten deep into the fabrics of our nascent democracy to the extent that it has started to affect the economic, social and political climate of our dear nation. Finally the individuals, organizations especially the police, communities and government have important role to play to minimize the rate of corruption and insecurity in Nigeria. The youths as the leaders of tomorrow must learn to shun all manners of corruption as much as practicable, so that the security of Nigerian citizens will be highly assured. To tolerate corruption is to debase the social, economic and political security of Nigerian citizens.

Recommendations

The following recommendations arise from this paper;

1. Organization must endeavor to realistically compensate their workers so that there will be no need on the part of the workers to supplement their remuneration by stealing or defrauding the organizations they are working for.
2. The worker in both private and governmental establishments should be provided with sense of job security, so that they can enjoy permanence in their job. The fear of premature termination or retrenchment precipitates a lot of criminal behavior in organization,

especially the organization or corporate fraud. Sense of security should go a long way to reduce corruption in private and governmental establishment.

3. Organizations have social responsibilities towards the society in which it is located. There is no doubt that adequate attention to social responsibilities on the part of organization could remove some of the corruption precipitating factors and thereby reduce corruption, insecurity and crime. But rather people should be handsomely remunerated in their places of work. If this is done it will minimize the rate of corruption in Nigeria.

4. If the government is deliberately turning her citizens to idle hand and devil workshop, then it is a sure way of increasing corruption, insecurity and crime. The government must therefore address unemployment problems to reduce corruption and insecurity.

5. Any citizen confirmed to have corruptly enriched him or herself should not only be made to regurgitate such ill-gotten wealth but should permanently remove from such an organization.

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