



An Analyzation of Nigerian Democratic Government and Corruption Reflection : Elected Between 2019 and 2024

Ajiteru,S.A.R ¹, Sulaiman T.H ², Abalaka, J.N ³

¹ Department of Political Science & International Relations Achievers University,
Owo, P.M.B.1030 Owo Ondo State Nigeria, Nigeria

^{2,3} Crown University Intl Chartered Inc. Faculty of Social Science, in USA, Official
Partners' Constituent Campuses at Government Regulated Universities
Worldwide and Online Operation Amerika Serikat

Email: ajiterudr.sheriffdeen@gmail.com staiwohassan99@yahoo.com
abalaka.james@yahoo.com

Abstract This paper's goal is to undertake a critical evaluation of Nigerian democracy's speed, practices, patterns, priorities, issues, and future. Although Nigeria is still run by democratically elected officials, after a century as a political entity, Nigeria has yet to institutionalize democracy at the federal and state levels. After more than 50 years of political independence, the study examines some of the challenges Nigeria faces in institutionalizing democracy. These include the nation's colonial past mixed with the whims of deeply ingrained ethnicity; a smug and extravagant leadership; the military's constant meddling in the democratic process; electoral fraud; widespread poverty; and a high rate of illiteracy. According to the publication, corruption is the main cause of most of the aforementioned issues and has essentially taken on a life of its own in Nigeria. However, the study argues that despite the aforementioned, there is still hope for a politically secure and democratically viable People's enthusiasm to vote, the multi-party system's relative stability and sustainability, and the widespread recognition that the only legitimate and well-liked path to gaining political power is through the voting booth are what define the nation. The historical approach of data analysis—simple descriptive collation and analysis of historical data—is used in this paper, which draws its data from primary and secondary source materials.

Keywords: Corruption, Democracy, Governance, National Development, Theoretical Viewpoint.

1. INTRODUCTION

Because of the widespread corruption in the nation, Nigerians have experienced more deficits than benefits from democracy. Therefore, according to Sulaiman (2024), corruption is no more a hidden but rather an open illness of Nigerian democracy. Nigeria is among the richest countries in the world countries having a wealth of natural and human resources. According to Abalaka (2024), every state in the federation has almost all of the essential natural resources in commercial amounts, including everything from crude oil to gold, cocoa to coal, uranium to gypsum, palm oil to rubber, coffee to timber, cattle to fish. Nigeria, on the other hand, is still one of the world's developing but underdeveloped countries. Since Nigeria joined the ranks of the world's industrialized nations, the country has been under-industrialized. The corrupt behavior of those in charge of the country's affairs (public office holders) may have contributed to civil rule in May 1999. These individuals had mismanaged the country's economy for their own personal gain. Consequently, Ogundiya (2019b, p.281) acknowledged that Nigeria's democracy is definitely more severely and catastrophically affected by corruption because of its weak economic

foundation, brittle political institutions, and insufficient control systems. He also acknowledged that the nation is experiencing a serious crisis in its political, social, and economic development, which is closely related to the issue of pandemic corruption. Accordingly, this presented a significant risk to Nigeria's democracy's ability to endure and grow (Abalaka, 2024).

Hence, the open disease of terrible governance has thwarted the country's democracy, as evidenced by, among other things, low levels of governmental legitimacy, election crises, political assassinations, extreme poverty, and political, economic, and sociocultural insecurity (Sulaiman, 2021). One could argue that it is necessary to ask whether corruption in Nigeria is an open disease or diseases. In responding to this query, a brief examination of Nigeria's traumatic political and socioeconomic history may aid in our comprehension and analysis of the persistent problems with corruption as an open illness of democracy in the nation. In this regard, the study looks at the theoretical stances on democracy, the extent of corruption (its causes and consequences), the different anti-corruption initiatives and reforms implemented by Nigeria's successive governments, and, lastly, the setbacks (failures) of anti-corruption initiatives in Nigeria (Ajiteru, 2024).

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

2.1 The corruption

Despite experts' inability to agree on a definition, corruption is nevertheless a pervasive concept that is worthy of negative behavior. Building a definition of corruption is challenging due to its pervasiveness because, like many other types of behavior, it is a complicated and mysterious phenomenon (Khan, 2016). Accordingly, determining what constitutes corruption depends on factors such as individual benefit, rule violations, frequency, and the value of presents (Lawton, 2018:26). However, this norm-based definition has tended to permit discussion at the expense of excluding some significant activities that are ordinarily regarded as corrupt. In the majority of social science discussions, scholars define corruption in terms of deviations from legal norms themselves. Sulaiman (2024). The act of directing the public interest or public good for one's own benefit is the most common definition of corruption in administrative studies, and the diversion fits with this discourse. Abalaka (2024).

Similarly, giving, promising, or providing unlawful satisfaction or remuneration is likewise considered corruption, Abalaka, (2024). Due to its complexity, it is comparable to an iceberg, of

which only the tip can be seen and only known facts can be taken into account. Sulaiman (2024). Different interests might be represented by corruption, and discussing corruption alone is not enough; one must also discuss the political system's or state institutions' attitudes and actions regarding corruption (Lou, 2015:122). According to this study, corruption includes actions that go against established norms, sabotage of accountability for a hidden agenda, and any other nefarious deed intended to undermine the system for financial benefit in violation of accepted legal and moral standards. Ajiteru (2024).

This is especially true given the fragmented views that have developed around national values and the leadership ethos, according to Abalaka (2024). For instance, what is considered corruption and what is excluded from it differs depending on the system or culture. Naturally, corruption is viewed as natural in some cultures and political systems, but in others, the opposite is true. This is where Nigeria's unique situation comes in, supporting the idea that corruption varies depending on the conventions and prevailing political culture in each place. Ajiteru (2024). However, the experience of democracy has revealed the hidden essence of corruption, despite the various definitions that have been ascribed to it in order to represent regional characteristics. It is now simpler to identify the signs of corruption, its effects on progress, and the worldwide issues around it (Sulaiman, 2024).

2.2. Democratic Governance, Democratic Practice, and Democracy in many ways.

To put it another way, there is a great deal of debate over it. Democracy comes from two Greek terms, *demos*, which means people, and *kratos*, which means rule, according to its etymological roots (Ludwig, 2017). In a nutshell, democracy is "rule by the people," commonly known as "popular sovereignty," and can refer to direct, representative, and participatory systems of popular government. This viewpoint supports Abraham Lincoln's definition of democracy as "government of the people, by the people, and for the people" (Sulaiman, 2024). In other words, democracy is a form of government where the people themselves hold the ultimate power, which they may exercise directly in small communities or through elected representatives in larger societies.

It seems that the idea of democracy the International IDEA supports the previous perspective, according to which democracy is a political system founded on political equality and popular control (Bekaj, 2017). It is the exercise of popular authority over public decision-making and decision-makers, as well as political equality among citizens. Sulaiman (2024). The way

regular elections are held to legitimately install leaders, how the process allows voters to freely choose their leaders, how the system purposefully institutionalizes mechanisms that ensure unimpeded socialization across party lines, and how the institutions guarantee inclusivity in participation in all electoral and decision-making processes are the true essence of democracy. Furthermore, democratic governance assesses the degree of adherence to fundamental rights, the responsiveness of the government to the needs of the populace, accountability and openness, and the separation of power, the rule of law, and checks and balances (Abalaka, 2024).

The aforementioned characteristics of democratic practice lead to the classification of democracy into forms such as liberal democracy (Chou, Pan & Poole, 2017), social democracy, participatory democracy, and electoral democracy (Behrend & Whitehead, 2016; Skaaning & Jiménez, 2017). Therefore, democracy is a long-standing system that guarantees access to sound governance and is free from a culture of dictatorship. Divergent scholarly perspectives and conceptualizations of democracy provide a crucial insight into the fact that democracy and democratic practice are not interchangeable. It is a cross between dichotomy and Abalaka (2024). Despite the fact that democracy is generally accepted to include the many definitions put forth by academics and practitioners, its application across political boundaries is a dynamic system that seldom yields to any even among the industrialized nations that fostered the political heritage to its current state, consistency or agreement Sulaiman (2024).

The main tenet of democracy is the way that the ruling class and each political system institutionalize, domesticate, absorb, and uphold its core values before combining them with democratic practices. Accordingly, Sulaiman (2024) contended that the reason why several definitions of democracy emerge is due of the discrepancy between the true or fundamental meaning of democracy and its actual practice, which gives rise to operational and nominal definitions. The true, philosophical, ideal, or fundamental meaning of democracy does not change, but the way democracy is actually practiced is subjective, according to Abalaka (2024). Democracy is therefore a system of governance that is based on a representative institutional framework, whereas democratic practice is applying democratic principles to the real-world administrative setting (Ajiteru, 2024). Therefore, the goal of democratic government is to involve the majority of the population in national initiatives, such as policymaking, rule enforcement, rule adjudication, and cooperative development efforts (Sulaiman, 2024).

2.3. National Development and Development

According to Abalaka (2024), the idea of progress is nearly as old as civilization. Scholars' conceptions of development have been widely divergent since its inception. The divisions show varying perspectives on what progress means in various contexts. Ajiteru (2024). While some academics describe it in terms of economic indices and only consider it to be an economic phrase, others view it as an all-encompassing idea that depicts a number of diverse changes that take place in human civilization, including those that are technological, political, sociocultural, and economic. In support of a similar idea, Sulaiman (2024) argued that development entails not only economic growth but also the provision of healthcare, education, housing, and other basic services, as well as some idea of equitable distribution, all with the goal of enhancing the quality of life for both individuals and society as a whole. Jair & Quintella (2018:105) noted that the concept's widespread use in western societies, from Greco-Roman civilizations to the late 19th century, as a general construct that denotes the widest range of elements pertaining to human well-being, brought it closer to the status of a doctrine.

According to Abalaka (2024), the United Nations Development Programme, development entails "Increasing the population's options to enable more democratic and participatory development, income access, decision-making participation, and enjoyment of human, economic, and political liberties." The ability to choose is very crucial when determining the form of development (Sen, 2018:16). Similarly, this study adheres to the notion of development, which was thought to include:

According to Sulaiman (2024), a process through which a society's members develop their institutional and personal capacities to organize and manage resources to create equitable and sustainable improvements in their quality of life that align with their own goals.

When "development" is conceptualized specifically, facts are better illustrated and speech ambiguity is reduced. Its diversity makes it even more so character and connection to national development that evokes a variety of interpretations and expressions, spanning a wide range of typologies, including human, behavioral, social-cultural, political, economic, physical, scientific, technological, institutional, and many more. In light of this, Abalaka (2024) defines national development as the total growth or collective social, political, and religious advancement of a nation. Indeed, Nosiri (2019) used a similar varied term that encompassed all types of growth and improvement in human society, including significant positive life improvements and changes in

the political, economic, and social domains. They are, at their core, the powerful metrics for gauging a system's performance (Ajiteru, 2024).

However, the areas of concern include welfare, security, employment, healthcare, education, and basic utilities like water and electricity which, in spite of the annual budget portfolio that clearly allows for the development of these sectors, are allegedly egregiously inadequate in Nigeria. National development is considered to be catalyzed by any government policies and actions that address and respond to these national imperatives by effectively eliminating systemic stagnation (Ajiteru, 2024). When the system fails to implement policies and measures that address these fundamental needs for socioeconomic and political life, the opposite occurs (Sulaiman, 2024).

3. THE STUDY'S THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

In drawing conclusions on how Africa as a continent originated from colonial creations and was tainted by corrupt legacies of colonial administrations, the study took a cue from the synthesis of post-colonial thesis-antithesis premises (Sulaiman, 2024). The nations that comprise the African continent have changed over time from a combination of blatantly incompatible ethnic and cultural groups that had previously lived apart and managed their own affairs without the help of their new partners. Due to the combination, the colonial government was focused on its financial interests and operated with the covert goal of taking advantage of the local economy and redistributing the profits without making any effort to support the growth of the host nation. It was an authoritarian government that excluded people from decision-making processes and lacked the actual democracy that was advocated and implemented around the world. Abalaka (2024). Each colonial territory's government operations lacked accountability and transparency, which allowed corruption and other vices to infiltrate the system through their cunning policies that ignored native concerns in favor of colonial goals. According to Page (2017), the unhealthy development created the groundwork for corruption and systemic sabotage, Ajiteru (2024).

To undermine the white man who would not leave Nigerians alone was patriotic, and stealing began as a form of resistance against the British colonial oppressors! It became trendy for government workers to take little office supplies, demand handouts or handovers under the table, or even steal large sums of money and hide in a remote location until the white man returned home.

Unfortunately, many British colonized natives in Africa continued to steal once the white man returned home (Page, 2018).

As a result, the post-colonial African republics adopted the ridiculous customs and could readily adopt the colonial forms of government in their own contemporary administrations. The main worry of African leaders, who come from diverse backgrounds, involves the seizure of national assets among themselves, struggle for national wealth, and the use of ethno-religious propaganda fireworks (Abalaka, 2024). At the expense of the general public, these resources are illegally turned into personal riches, devaluing the needs of national growth. Due to exposure to these vices and adoption of the original colonial authoritarian system, which relied on repression as a tactic to keep the populace silent, postcolonial leaderships in Africa lacked self-control and boundaries in their acts, which are indicative of opacity and undemocratic government. In almost every post-colonial African state, corruption is the main underlying cause that has a significant impact on socioeconomic, political, human empowerment, and infrastructure growth (Sulaiman, 2024).

Following Nigeria's 1960 declaration of independence, the fight for political dominance, control of the various ethno-religious groups have been actively appropriating the nation's resources and institutions. In actuality, the nation's unifying emblem has seldom ever gone beyond the governing class's agreement to share the commonwealth, frequently disproportionately, with the ensuing calls for restructuring (Ajiteru, 2024). It gives background information on the economic factors that justify the nation's ongoing calls for the establishment of state and local governments. It's possible that the administrative structures act as conduits through which governmental officials shamelessly steal or misappropriate funds intended for human empowerment and development initiatives from yearly budgets (Sulaiman, 2024).

These colonial legacies of individualism through capitalism-driven materialism and autocracy fostered by exclusion are highlighted by post-colonial philosophy in making decisions, insensitivity to the suffering of the populace, and a callous disregard for national integration or using diversity to unite people in order to combat corruption and advance national progress. Undemocratic governance, opaqueness, corruption, and a deterioration in national development are still trademarks of the colonial causes that have prolonged the regime of misaligned objectives in African leadership. The use of the post-colonial state nexus for the research Sulaiman (2024) is explained and justified by the background information mentioned above.

3.1 Democracy: A Conceptual View

There is no commonly accepted definition of democracy, making it a relative and elusive term. Scholars' individual perceptions influence how it is conceptualized. In fact, one could contend that one of the key issues frequently raised by academics is not just the challenge of reaching an agreement regarding the precise conceptualization of democracy, but also acknowledging that the phrase has been susceptible to several biases due to the fact that the creative concept itself has undergone a number of deliberate interpolations over time. Its use has turned into a convenience issue, happily allowing for constant extensions, strange interpretations, and complete distortions. According to Umar (2017, p. 3), citing Abalaka (2024), the term "democracy" has been divided into three categories: social democracy, economic democracy, and political democracy. The latter includes a variety of institutional arrangements that allow citizens to influence public policy regarding the holding of elections in specific ways, the central, national decision-making organs, and the preservation of certain fundamental political liberties. Sulaiman (2024).

It seems that Democracy is practiced differently in each nation and is determined by the values, beliefs, orientations, peculiarities, and customs that each state holds sacred. Abalaka (2024). Notwithstanding these factors, Ajiteru (2024) contended that experts generally agree on how to run society such that power truly belongs to everyone. Therefore, in order to improve our intellectual capacity, we must place the thought in its appropriate theoretical framework as follows:

According to Ajiteru (2024), the liberal school of thought holds that democracy is a public struggle for power and that the establishment of opposition parties allows for competitive politics in a particular culture. Consequently, democracy, as defined by Schumpeter (2020, p.26), is a free market economy, a two or multi-party system (plural party system) where each party has an equal chance of winning power through regular elections, an independent judiciary, a bill of fundamental human rights, and an institutional framework for making political decisions where individuals obtain the vote of the people (Sulaiman, 2024).

According to Abalaka (2024), cited in Sadeeq (2018, p. 250), in order for democracy to be institutionalized, there must be sufficient citizen participation in determining who rules and how decisions are made, equality for all citizens as implied by the rule of law, citizen accountability and responsiveness, freedom of speech and association, and social justice, which entails treating people and groups fairly and justly. In other words, Jackman (1988) notes that Abalaka (2024)

identifies three characteristics of liberal democracies: the protection of individual, group, and organization rights; the encouragement of egalitarianism and universal suffrage; and the freedom to organize and take part in collective actions based on societal norms and values.

Two, the socialist and Marxist schools of thought contended that democracy is a notion that the people own the means of production and that the bourgeoisie cannot have any authority until the people jointly own and control them. Marxist scientists like Karl Marx and Lenin also maintained that in capitalist democracies, the minority capitalists who control the means of production rule, despite the false belief that they are capable of doing a lot the truth is that it is merely a lie (Sadeeq, 2018, p.25G). According to Marxist theorists, this kind of democracy is known as capitalist democracy.

According to Lenin's argument, which Sadeeq (2018) cites, bourgeois democracy refers to the bourgeoisie's institutionalized repression of the working class. It concludes that true democracy can only be achieved when class dominance (minority capitalists) is eradicated. In conclusion, democracy as a value, process, and practice is the foundation of democracy according to the aforementioned schools of thought. Abalaka (2024). Democracy is the most popular form of governance, according to a careful examination, because it guarantees both public engagement and rigorous adherence to the rule of law and citizens' rights basic human rights as well as a government that functions and operates in the best interests of everyone, i.e., a government that is transparent and accountable to the people (Sulaiman, 2024).

3.2 The extent of Nigerian corruption.

In Nigeria, corruption has become ingrained in society. Abalaka (2024) describes it as a cankerworm that has gnawed deeply into the social, political, and economic structures of the Nigerian state. The police, the military, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and most importantly, the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government are all corrupt (Interview: Rigachuku, 2017). This highlighted the necessity of examining and talking about the extent of corruption in Nigeria under the heading of "causes and effects of corruption Sulaiman (2024).

3.3 Nigerian Corruption Causes

One of the many explanations offered for Nigeria's corruption is the abrupt decline in morality and ethical principles. Nigeria is one of the few nations in the world, according to Nwaobi (2016), where a man's source of income is unimportant to his neighbors, the general public, or the

government. This is due to the fact that communities, religious institutions, social groups, and private organizations frequently solicit and honor wealthy individuals who are known to be corrupt. Due to the abrupt decline in morals and ethical principles, the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) Chairman has argued that Ajiteru (2024):

Many Nigerians use celebration to purposefully and artificially promote corruption in their country. For example, when In a short time, I become a billionaire Sulaiman (2024) after you perceive me as a poor man who receives a governmental appointment (portfolio). The citizens who surround me are more interested in greeting me, hailing me, and occasionally making a donation than they are in how I acquire the money. As a result, erroneous values are harming society (Interview: Dundaye, 2021).

The Chairman went on to say that he simply must hold everyone in the state of Nigeria accountable because public officials and office holders who embezzle or loot public funds are praised by the populace in one way or another, which encourages more corrupt activities in the nation (Abalaka, 2024). Thus, this suggests that those who gain from the generosity (largeness) of Seldom do these dishonest persons pose inquiries. Because of this, Okanlawon (2017) confirmed that:

Only in Nigeria will a public official live above his means without drawing attention to himself. Instead, traditional leaders would be vying for chieftaincy titles as he was heralded as having arrived (Abalaka, 2024).

Two, another significant factor contributing to corruption in Nigeria is a weak enforcement system, which includes a lack of legislative and executive independence (Ajiteru, 2024). Since some, if not all, of the law enforcement agencies are corrupt, anticorruption organizations like the ICPC, EFCC, Code of Conduct, and others that the FGN has approved to prevent corruption are frequently ineffective (Abalaka, 2024). For instance, the EFCC didn't really try to look into any reliable claims alleged presidential officials tried to buy off NA members to support Obasanjo's failed bid to amend the constitution to grant him a third term in office (Ogundiya, 2019a, p.159). Additionally, the NA authorizes all expenditures from the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) on behalf of the President under Sections 80 and 81 of the 1999 Constitution, giving the representative body the chance to thoroughly discuss and rationalize the budget. As a result, one of The Guardian's political correspondents stated in an interview that Ajiteru (2024):

The Nigerian media and other anti-corruption organizations are unable to publicize or label corrupt individuals because of judicial involvement on corrupt acts through the issuance of court injunctions. Because of the judiciary's legalistic formality, it impedes the process of exposing dishonest public officials.

Unfortunately, because NA members have occasionally engaged in bribery and corruption as a means of obtaining appropriation bills, the legislature's performance has fallen far short of expectations (Oyelowo, 2017, p.21). Professional groups might not be able to discipline their members due to the high level of corruption among leaders, legislators, and civil workers. According to Maduegbuna (2015), cited in Sulaiman (2024), there are more advantages to corruption than there are to being discovered and punished.

Third, the Nigerian state was characterized by a high danger of insecurity and fear, which can result from a number of factors other than the breakdown of rules and order Ajiteru, (2020). Here, the connections include political insatiability, conflicts, a hostile national climate, a high level of criminality, etc. (Okeshola, 2019, p.342). Reports of capital flight in Nigeria to foreign banks abroad have been made by the International Police (Interpol) and the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States (CIA) about the money that was embezzled by unsuspecting individuals like Joshua Dariye, the former governor of Plateau State, and Dieprieve Alamiyeseigha, the former governor of Bayelsa State (Abalaka, 2024).

The funds that were embezzled were intended to help their states grow by giving their residents the amenities they needed to raise their level of living. Unfortunately, the funds were transferred to personal accounts and placed in foreign banks overseas rather than being used wisely. Dundaye (2021) and Folarin (2017) claimed in an interview that According to Sulaiman (2024), the majority of leaders seek to gain wealth or property through corruption and the fast syndrome motive. They (leaders) go for office in order to illegally amass fortune, compete with one another in the construction of mansions, purchase of pricey vehicles, and send their kids to study overseas. As a result, give little to no effort to enhance the country's economic development areas, including housing, education, and health Ajiteru (2024).

Four, cultural and/or sociological elements, including traditions, family dynamics, health, education, housing, transportation, etc. Ethnicity and government officials are two possible sources of corruption. The custom of presenting gifts and paying respect to leaders in Nigeria frequently results in what Brownsberger (2018) refers to as genteel corruption, but it is not very widespread.

Conversely, revealed Sulaiman (2024) that only powerful individuals of society who have achieved success in politics or the economy are eligible to hold traditional chieftaincy titles and serve on the boards of directors of government-owned corporations. In light of this, the NTA News Manager believed that:

[...] corruption is a stigma and has been a part of Nigerians' everyday life for a long time. Nigeria is among the world's most corrupt countries, according to Abalaka (2024). As a result, many Nigerians have succeeded in defrauding themselves while yet receiving praise and respect from the public (Interview: Saidu, 2021).

According to Sowunmi et al. (2019), the most vexing aspect is that the public does not hold honest and devoted public servants who have not amassed illicit money in high regard. These viewpoints help to foster a unscrupulous practices by a new type of governmental employees.

Five, one of the reasons for corruption in Nigeria is the high rate of poverty, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (2015). The Commission's estimate of the high poverty rate of 54.1% had a significant role in Nigerians' desperate attempts to make money through any means. According to Sulaiman (2024), unemployment is high while the few employed earn low earnings. The majority of unemployed people are young people who are involved in antisocial activities for quick cash, including prostitution, drug sales, cybercrime, political thuggery, paid assassinations, oil bunkering, kidnapping, militancy (Niger Delta), Boko Haram (Northern regions), and prostitution. In 2017, Folarin said that:

In Nigeria, corruption is growing at an alarming rate. No activities are taking place (public or private) devoid of any aspect of unethical behavior. Exam malpractice, election tampering, currency/money laundering, child trafficking, 419 business, bribery and collection, misappropriation of public funds, contract inflation, and professional misconduct are some of the ways it shows up. (Folarin, 2017 interview). According to Abalaka (2024), the majority of public employees' low pay levels have not increased in line with inflation, which has reduced their purchasing power. It is also evident that either the use of force or the influence of money are the two main methods used in Nigeria to acquire power (Sulaiman, 2024).

3.4 Nigeria's Corruption Impact

Nigeria's development has been negatively impacted by corruption. This explains why Nigeria was listed as one of the world's most corrupt countries by the TI (2018) the world. Therefore, according to Maduegbuna (2015), corruption in Nigeria has the following effects: a

decline in government revenue, a bad reputation, bad governance, brain drain, election malpractice, a bad investment climate, company failure, the elimination of subsidies for products and services, unemployment, and poverty.

According to Sulaiman (2024), corruption is thought to be Nigeria's biggest obstacle to progress. It has had a significant role in the nation's slowed economic development and the widespread poverty that pervades Nigeria. Because to corruption, the standard of public services and infrastructure has remained low. Poor roads, an unstable electrical grid, a shortage of drinkable water, and an inability to purchase housing have long plagued Nigerians. Every day, preventable accidents occur on the highways, mostly as a result of poor Consequently, a lot of manufacturers and businesses have shut down or closed their doors because of the poor power supply from the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), which has led to increased overhead expenditures. The lack of housing designs for the public in Abalaka (2024), has resulted in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and the majority of the nation's cosmopolitan cities becoming glorified slums (2019).

Regarding the aforementioned, Ajiteru (2024) believed that a lack of political will and patriotism on the side of the country's leadership, which results in poor governance, is one of the causes and impacts of corruption in Nigeria. He added that in order to benefit themselves, the leaders obtained wealth unlawfully, leaving the masses in utter destitution. They transform the general populace into vote sellers both prior to and throughout the election season, according to Sulaiman (2024). In a different development, Ribadu (2016) made the case that corruption is the reason behind the recurrent inability of democracy to establish itself in Africa, the endemic poverty in Africa, and the ongoing collapse of institutions and infrastructure. Compared to terrorism, corruption is worse. Corrupt public officials ought to be treated with more severity than terrorists Ajiteru (2024).

According to Abalaka (2024), corruption has negative social, economic, and political repercussions on any country. Since gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria has struggled with severe social and political instability, which has been attributed to corruption. Additionally, Ogundiya (2019a) emphasized that politics in Nigeria is about money, and money is politics. The 'inner elites' are adamant on holding onto power through force, while the 'outside elites' are constantly striving to push them out of the corridor of power (Ajiteru, 2024). Because of this, political assassinations and contract killings have become ingrained in Nigerian politics. Above

all, corruption has been cited by numerous academics as a powerful explanation for Nigeria's backwardness and development catastrophe. Corruption leads to slums, rural and urban violence, a severe lack of standards of living, widespread poverty, preventable airborne and waterborne diseases and epidemics, and infrastructure deterioration (Sulaiman, 2024).

By enriching a select few at the expense of other residents, the causes and consequences of corruption in Nigeria contribute to a widening wealth disparity and increased poverty corrupt system Abalaka, (2024). The minority holds a larger share of the wealth than the majority. A distorted consumption pattern aimed at satisfying the opulent lifestyle of the urban elites arises as a result, and income distribution becomes extremely skewed. This is closely linked to the concentration of wealth in the hands of a small number of people who are unwilling to inject it (resources) into the nation's economy for the benefit of others. Governments in Nigeria implement a variety of anti-corruption reforms and initiatives in response to these causes and consequences (Sulaiman, 2024).

3.5 Nigerian Anti-Corruption Initiatives: Historical and Current

Generally speaking, both governments recognize the detrimental effects of corruption on the lives of countries worldwide and Nigeria specifically and the populace. Therefore, successive Nigerian administrations have used a variety of anti-corruption policies and strategies to end corruption (Sulaiman, 2024). According to Ogundiya (2019a, p. 153), these strategies and tactics include the use of political education and propaganda, constitutional engineering or legal techniques, institutional approaches, and the vigorous pursuit of institutional and economic reforms.

Furthermore, a number of administrative reforms were started and implemented, including judicial reforms, structural organizational reforms, privatization and commercialization reforms, and wage reforms, to name a few (Abalaka, 2024). According to Ajiteru (2024), these reforms are formally intended to increase worker productivity, efficiency, and professionalism while lowering corruption and waste in the public sector. However, at the moment, because corruption is so prevalent in Nigeria, President Olusegun Obasanjo on assumption Nigeria's government collaborated with the United Nations Office of Drug Control and Crime Prevention to arrange an international conference on crime and corruption in May 1999, following his election as a democratic president (Okeshola, 2019). The only purpose of the conference, which took place in

Abuja from May 7–11, 2000, was to examine the nature, locations, impacts, and implications of corruption as well as suggested countermeasures (Sulaiman, 2024).

The ICPC in September 2000, the Economic and Financial Crimes Act in December 2002, the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Acts in June 2000, the EFCC in 2003, and the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act of 2004 were some of the countermeasures that the conference adopted. Additionally, Nigeria's 1999 constitution mandates that the government must end all forms of corruption and power abuse in order to promote good governance, which is backed by the judiciary anti-corruption laws were strengthened in the fight against corruption by the affirmation of accountability and transparency (FGN, 1999). As a result, the Public Complaints Commission, the Code of Conduct Bureau, and the Judicial Commissions of Enquiry were established (Ajiteru, 2024).

Tujuan dan tugas yang diberikan kepada masing-masing komisi mencakup beberapa aspek penting, yaitu penguatan institusi anti-korupsi dan kejahatan ekonomi lainnya untuk memastikan kebijakan dan penegakan hukum yang efisien, penuntutan serta hukuman bagi pejabat pemerintah dan publik yang terlibat dalam tindak pidana, serta pelacakan, pengumpulan, dan penyitaan semua hasil kejahatan. Selain itu, ditetapkan pula prosedur yang sesuai untuk pengadaan di sektor publik, deregulasi atau privatisasi lembaga publik yang tidak berfungsi, serta penciptaan kondisi yang mendukung keberhasilan kerja sama antara sektor publik dan swasta. Transparansi juga menjadi fokus utama dengan mewajibkan publikasi pendapatan yang dapat didistribusikan dari rekening Federal ke berbagai tingkat pemerintahan setiap bulan, serta pembentukan organisasi transparansi di industri minyak dan gas melalui Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI). Lebih lanjut, kebijakan monetisasi bagi pegawai negeri sipil dan perubahan administratif lainnya turut dimasukkan sebagai bagian dari reformasi yang diusulkan (Ogundiya, 2019a, pp. 154-155). In fact, Obasanjo's administration and other past administrations' zero tolerance for corruption campaign is a front for real initiatives to advance accountability, transparency, and good governance by eliminating power abuse and corrupt practices in the nation (Abalaka, 2024). Notwithstanding all of these steps, corruption persists and has a negative impact on the country's economy. According to Sulaiman (2024), this could be due to the character of the Nigerian State responsible for implementing and carrying out those reforms or to the agencies' (architects' and designers') shortcomings.

3.6 Reversals in Anti-Corruption Initiatives in Nigeria

According to Ajiteru (2024), Nigeria's ongoing rise in corruption at all governmental levels is proof that all anti-corruption initiatives put in place by succeeding administrations since the country's independence in 1960 have failed. Numerous variables, including the nature and character of the Nigerian State, its elites, its inhabitants, and even corruption itself, may be held responsible for these failings in one way or another. Therefore, theories that have aided in comprehending African predicaments and, more crucially, the problem of endemic corruption are the foundation of the type and character of a particular state or states that are supposed to adopt anti-corruption policies or measures. Prebendalism, patrimonialism, neopatrimonialism, clientelism, the soft state thesis, and the theory of two publics are all included in the theory (Sulaiman, 2024).

Simply put, the theories and analytical frameworks around the question of "political will" in the fight against corruption in Africa—specifically in Nigeria—are viewed as an integral component of the extraction and rent-seeking practices of the dominant class (Sulaiman, 2021). According to these beliefs, the main beneficiaries of pervasive corruption are the elites, who also lack the political will to implement reform. Therefore, it may be unlikely that institutional and administrative improvements will have any long-term consequences. Such reforms may even be intended to protect the ruling elites' economic and political dominance in this situation. For Nigeria's political elites, this act of political will amounts to "do or die politics" (Abalaka, 2024).

For example, President Olusegun Obasanjo swiftly issued a state pardon for Senators Salisu Buhari, Chuba Okadigbo, and Adolphus Patricia Olubunmi Etteh and Wabara, who were exempt from the laws' wrath for the "big atrocities" they (the Senators) committed. The 1999 Constitution's Section 308 immunity provisions, which prohibit the establishment of civil or criminal procedures against the President, Vice-President, Governor, and Deputy Governor, are the most important in this regard (FGN, 2019). The Nigerian Code of Conduct Tribunal has successfully used this constitutional provision against it (Abalaka, 2024).

Furthermore, those accused of corruption have used the Due Process and Fair Hearing sections of the constitution to "blanket" their conduct by asserting their constitutional right to silence and to avoid self-incrimination (Oyelowo, 2017). The Federal Government's anti-corruption initiatives, including those of the ICPC and EFCC Particularly following President Olusegun Obasanjo's postponed third term ambition, the EFCC was viewed as a tool in the executive branch's toolbox to witch hunt specific actual or alleged political opponents during this

democratic era. Governor Alamaesiagha, Governor Ayo Fayose, Senator Chimaroke Nnamani, and numerous others were urged by the President to appear in court and face the full force of the law, for instance, because they were not members of Mr. President's cabals (Sulaiman, 2024).

The financial difficulties and extreme poverty are additional setbacks. Given that corruption is both a sign of and a result of poverty, this has made efforts to stop the spread of anti-corruption initiatives challenging (Ajiteru, 2024). Consequently, corruption breeds Poverty and poverty encourage corruption Sulaiman (2024). According to statistics, more than 60% of Nigerians are below the poverty level. Poverty hinders anti-corruption efforts by making agencies and employees more susceptible to political influence (Abalaka, 2024).

Furthermore, Nigeria's anti-corruption initiatives have seen significant policy discontinuity as a result of ongoing political and governmental upheaval. As a result, the fight against corruption has not been sustained. More significantly, anti-corruption initiatives in Nigeria are merely political fronts intended to purchase the public's allegiance and political support (Ajiteru, 2024). Party financing is another important element that may contribute to the explanation of why anti-corruption initiatives in Nigeria have failed. According to Vifredo Pareto, there are two primary drivers behind political and party funding: the first is idealistic or ideological, the second is social, that seeks access or social honors; and third, financial pursuit of tangible gains (Sulaiman, 2024).

The relationship between the citizenship issue, ethnicity, and the Nigerian State's character is another element that has made anti-corruption efforts in Nigeria a precarious undertaking. Oguniye (2019a: 161) made the following argument in this regard:

Nonetheless, political corruption is linked to the organizations set up to uphold the law and prevent corrupt behavior. Regarding political corruption, there is a wealth of evidence showing that INEC officials conspired to commit acts of violence and to rig or manipulate election results, often with financial gain (Abalaka, 2024). Anti-corruption measures are therefore crucial for law enforcement, the State Security Service (SSS), and the National Intelligence Agency (Sulaiman, 2021). Policies in Nigeria, a weapon used by the ruling class to subdue their rivals.

4. CONCLUSION

Indeed, corruption in every sector of the Nigerian economy has been posing serious and often overwhelming problems to the country's democracy. According to Abalaka (2024), corruption is unquestionably more severe and destructive when there is a weak economic

foundation, brittle political institutions, and insufficient control mechanisms. This makes sense given that, despite numerous institutionalized measures to combat corruption in the nation, corruption has grown to be a political thorn in Nigeria. Accordingly, all attempts by Nigeria's succeeding governments to eradicate or reduce the corruption virus or disease were unsuccessful (Sulaiman, 2024). These resulted from a shortage of public officials and leaders with vision, that is, the lack of leaders who prioritize integrity and character before wealth, whose word is their bond, and who lack values and will. Because of godfather politics and the supplementary nature of political corruption, among other things, the Nigerian State lacked institutions with sufficient autonomy and power to prevent corruption as well as other abuses of power. Accordingly, corruption is no longer a secret but rather an open affliction of Nigerian democracy (Ajiteru, 2024).

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