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Corruption and the Challenge of Accountability in the Post-Colonial African States: A Discourse

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Abstract

Scholars and commentators have described the African state in different forms and versions based on their assessments, rightly or wrongly, of the development's strides. Reports by international and local developmental agencies often present gloomy descriptions of a continent suffering from the resource curse. The scorecards of most of the African leaders seem to confirm the assertions of failures in the midst of abundant resources. The corruption pandemic in Africa has rendered the societies as the exporter of potential human resources needed for developments and innovation to the countries of the West. While the continent's deplorable social and economic situations worsened, the leadership cadres exploit their power to widen the inequality gaps through unethical conduct. This paper interrogates the leadership-accountability nexus in some countries in Africa with a view to understanding the nature of the pervasiveness of governance crisis. The paper argues that African leaders are more of political predators than freedom fighters against the legacies of colonialism. Rather than explore the state's power to promote the public interest, African leaders are more concerned with their personal welfare, exploiting the vulnerability of the

citizens. Cases of leadership corruption and malfeasances are swept away thereby engendering the unprecedented culture of leadership deficiency with impunity. This paper submits that the crisis of governance in Africa could be dealt with only if the citizens are liberated from the grip of leadership insensitivity and the rhetoric of colonialism.

Keywords: Governance, Poverty, Corruption, Unemployment, Leadership, Autocracy

Introduction

Corruption is ubiquitous. Recent developments across the globe attest to the fact that abuse of power and office with impunity is not restricted to any part of the world system. Nevertheless, its consequences in the post-colonial African states are pervasive. There is no doubt that ‘corruption reduces growth, restricts trade, and increases poverty’ (Altamirano 2007:488). This explains why the African continent has remained stunted in growth with a huge deficit in human development.

While organizational approaches to combat corruption have been successful in other parts of the world, leadership involvement in the abuse of office in Africa has remained an obstacle to continental anti-corruption mechanisms. In 1996, for instance, members of the Organisation of American States (OAS) adopted the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption (IACAC), the first international legal framework on corruption (Altamirano, 2007). Similarly, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), established the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions, in 1997, to deal with the consequences of corrupt practices in international business activities (OECD, 2011). The Council of Europe (COE) also approved the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption (CLCC) and the Civil Law Convention on Corruption (CLCC) in 1999 (CLCC, 1999a; 1999b). Other legal instruments for the similar purpose include the European Union’s Civil Law Convention on Corruption (1999), and the United Nations’ Convention against Corruption (2003).

The above shows that corruption is a global phenomenon that drew the attention of the political leadership. It also depicts the

commitment of the political elites towards anti-corruption measures in the developed economies. There were commitments to safeguard the domestic environment against the adverse consequences of economic retrogression. Thus, their domestic political environment often mitigates the adverse effect of corrupt practices on the society because of the commitment of their leaders to the core values of a democratic process. In other words, the value systems enshrined in their domestic political process usually provide self-correcting measures and rules capable of preventing the development of a culture of corruption in the political process.

Unfortunately, this is different from what is obtainable in Africa. African leaders lack the political will to exterminate corruption, despite the existence of similar protocols: the Southern African Development Community's Protocol Against Corruption (2001) and the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC), 2003. Nevertheless, they have not been able to stimulate the culture of accountability and transparency in governance. Rather, corruption has become a norm rather than a vice in the government of most African countries (Fagbadebo, 2007; Frahm, 2018). Barney Warf has conceived corruption as 'an entrenched part of [the] African political culture' (Warf 2017:20).

This paper presents an analysis of the consequences of the deficiencies in the African leadership that have facilitated the development of a culture of corruption. Aside from this introduction, the rest of the paper includes a discussion on the nexus between democracy, corruption, and accountability. This is followed by a survey of corruption and accountability in Africa. The fourth section presents an empirical analysis of the consequences of corruption in Africa. The sixth section discusses the elite's disposition towards corruption in Africa.

Democratic Process, Corruption, and Accountability: A Network of Interconnectedness

Democracy in its generic conceptualization connotes the institutionalization of a government for service delivery in a manner that would promote the general interest of the people rather than of the leaders (Amtaika, 2017; Matlosa, 2017). There are three major trending notions associated with democratic practices. The procedural

notion of the minimalists focuses on the ideation of competition and participation (Matlosa, 2017). This has to do with the nature, structure, and requirements for the electoral process as well as the role of the citizens as the custodians of legitimate political power (Amtaika, 2017).

This perspective, to the liberalists, was an idea that could only be functional within an institutional framework. In other words, democratic principles and process found functional expression in the institutional designs that guarantee good governance through accountable and transparent government with limited powers assigned to the leaders (Matlosa, 2017; Amtaika, 2017). Citizen's representation, constitutionalism, and protection of the rights of the minority are key issues of governance. The emphasis here is the need for accountability measures that afford the citizens the power to benefit from the policies of the government.

The social-structuralist perspective conceives democracy as a process that guarantees the socio-economic rights of the people. The ultimate perception here is the democracy-development nexus indicating that the ultimate purpose of democracy is to induce development of the people. This required effective leadership committed to the procedural and institutional components of democratic process, to ensure that the people benefitted maximally from the process of the government (Ake, 2000; Landman, 2006; Amtaika, 2017; Matlosa, 2017).

The central assumption of these perspectives is the emergence of leaders, delegated with power by the people, whose concern is the exercise of government authority for the promotion of the public good. Thus, there is a network of a relationship among democratic process, accountability, and corruption; wherein the latter is antithetical to the primary objective of democracy: promotion of good governance. Governance has to do with the ability of the government to make provisions for the socio, economic and political goods that the citizens are entitled to and expect from the state (MO Ibrahim Foundation, 2017). Nevertheless, in countries with autocratic leadership, as witnessed during military rule in most of the African states, accountability was a rarity while corruption was a norm.

Corrupt practices occur within the society, mostly among the stakeholders, the leaders, and the led, with its consequential outcomes on the public (Jiang, 2017). Generically, corruption is an anti-social

conduct unacceptable in the society. Beyond this, however, corruption is unconstitutional, illegal, and illegitimate. Scholars have different perspectives of what corruption denotes. As Jiang (2017) has noted, some scholars viewed it from the behavioural perspectives while others tend to concentrate on the cultural aspect of corruption.

Lapalombara (1994:328) defines corruption as behavior that deviates from the formal duties of a public servant 'because of reasons of personal gain to himself or herself or to other private persons with whom the public servant is associated'. This behavioural perspective broadly incorporates the active and the passive actions of public servants beyond material inducements. Similar to this perception, Bardhan (1997:1321) calls it use of an entrusted power of public office for private gains. Here, the breach of trust of the principal (the public) by the agent (the public officer) involved engagement 'in some sort of malfeasance [by the agent] for private enrichment which is difficult to monitor for the principal' (Bardhan (1997:1321). Associating corruption with a deviation from the formal duties means that there are established norms and rules that guide the principal-agent relationships within the state.

Transparency International (TI) defines it as 'the abuse of entrusted power for private gain' (TI, 2009). To the World Bank, corruption simply means abuse of public office for private gain (Rose-Ackerman and Palifke, 2016). The abuse includes bribery, embezzlement, conflict of interest, extortion, cronyism, nepotism, among other social vices that undermine effective service delivery. The central assumption here is that the entrusted power has been designed to achieve a particular purpose or purposes that are generally known to the public; and, as such, it is easier to detect when there is a breach in the exercise of that power. It connotes the existence of a patterned relationship between the public that entrusted the power to govern to the leaders.

The definition of corruption by the Council of Europe (COE) sheds more light on this assumption by incorporating the action and its consequences. It defines corruption as

requesting, offering, giving or accepting, directly or indirectly, a bribe or any other undue advantage or prospect thereof, which distorts the proper performance of any duty or behaviour required of the recipient of the bribe, the undue advantage or the prospect thereof (Article 2, Civil Law Convention on Corruption, 1999).

Thus, an action becomes corrupt when its outcomes distort or diminish the expected values of the services and performance. These principal-agent conceptions of corruption are broad, incorporating a variety of behaviours, attitudes, and conduct. Nevertheless, they are restrictive in terms of the actors; restricting such behaviours to the public officers entrusted with the public interests. Although Bardhan (1997:1321) recognizes ‘many everyday cases of other kinds of corruption’ that mostly take place in the private sector, they have similar pervasive consequences on the public society (Rose-Ackerman and Palifke, 2016).

The demand for accountability by the public from the leadership becomes the instrument to ensure the criminalization of corruption. Accountability here connotes that the individuals or group of individuals with entrusted public power should account or answer for their actions and activities (Rose-Ackerman and Palifke, 2016; Olsen, 2015). This involves ‘demanding, rendering, assessing, and responding to accounts’ (Olsen 2015:425). Thus, the primary responsibility of the leaders in the public is to exercise the entrusted power to attain the objectives of the state: service delivery to the public. In other words, the core of accountability is compliance with authoritative mandates with the existence of measures and mechanisms to enforce compliance and punish non-compliance. Evidently, this is lacking in most African states.

For the purpose of this paper, corruption is the totality of the actions and activities of an individual or group of individuals within a political society that constitutes injury to the collective interest or impedes service delivery, constitutionally intended for the public. This is too broad a conception but with emphasis on the consequential outcomes. Every society has rules and procedures designed to promote the interests of the collective. Adherence to these rules requires appropriate actions and sanctions from both the ruled and the rulers with expectations of certain public goods. This definition incorporates the interactive and interconnected activities of both the public and the private individuals within the political society with consequential outcomes on the general interests of the public. This definition seeks to refine the ‘two problematic assumptions’ of the public-sector bias and modernization approaches to the meaning of corruption (Sandoval-Ballesteros, 2013:5).

Corruption and Accountability in Africa

A writer has described the scourge of corruption in the African continent as a phenomenon ‘gnawing at the progress that the continent could be enjoying’ (Kufandarerwa 2017). According to her,

corruption in Africa grew from the negative colonial legacy, poor leadership, politics of the belly, omnipotent state, greed and selfishness. Clientelism and patronage nepotism, absence of popular participation of the public in government, weak institutions of governance, lack of accountability and transparency, lack of political will, weak ethical values, centralist nature of the state and concentration of state power, weak judicial system and constant insecurity and conflicts are also the causes of corruption. It is the top African echelons who are mostly the perpetrators of corruption (Kufandarerwa 2017).

This description fits into the varieties of expressions, submissions and opinions about the conduct of the African leaders in power.

States in the African continent ought not to experience governance crisis. It is the second largest continent in the world, and it has the largest number of sovereign countries. Africa has the second largest territory with abundant human and material resources. Yet, it is a continent ‘at the centre of numerous international crises and opportunities’ (Abrahamsen, 2017). In spite of its recognition in the global affairs, the dynamics of its domestic affairs, characterised by political unrest, economic stagnation, and mismanagement of the material resources, continue to weaken its power potentials. It represents a paradox of wealth and yet, ‘the poorest and least developed of the world’s continental regions’ (Kornegay and Landsberg, 2009). African states have remained the recipients of aids from the developed countries in uneven reciprocal relationships.

In 2007, the European Union announced its five-year aid to the tune of \$11.7 billion and another \$4.8 billion loan facility under the European Development Fund (EDF) to sub-Saharan African countries (Lingying, 2013). There was a rapid growth in bilateral trade relations between Europe and Africa, with over \$300 billion trading volume in 2010 with the importation of Africa’s raw materials worth over \$169.06 billion, representing 34.3% of Africa’s total exports. Japan, Russia, India, and China have also established strong bilateral

ties with countries in Africa. In 2008, Japan announced its five-year low-interest loan facility worth \$4 billion with \$1.8 billion yearly development assistance, aside from its \$2.5 billion Japanese Investment Fund.

There are several other multilateral trade agreements and aids from the Europe, Asia, America, and other international donor agencies in Africa (Thema News, 28/09/2017; eNCA, 04/12/2015; Lingying, 2013; Lucey, 2016). All these were the outcomes of the growing recognition of the importance of the continent, not necessarily as an influential independent actor in global affairs but as the re-discovered potential environment for the exploration and, mostly, exploitation, through trade and resources. Whichever way writers have viewed this trend; either from the 'developmental spin-offs' benefits or as a way of liberalizing the continent's socio-economic and political space, it has not yet produced any signal for sustainable growth. The leaders often mismanaged the proceeds of such foreign financial assistance without accomplishing the intended purposes. Hence the prevalence of the resource curse syndrome and its consequential crisis of governance in the continent.

In its May 11, 2000 edition, the *Economist* described Africa as a hopeless continent (The Economist, May 11, 2000). Apparently, the pervading crisis of governance in different African states at the time, and the dependence on donor agencies and the West for succor, informed the description. The period was characterised by the exploration in the pursuit of development strategies that suited their domestic national conditions and purposes (Lingying, 2013). Ten years after, the magazine changed its description of the continent as a rising hope. In its December 3, 2011 edition, the magazine, unlike its gloomy ascription of 2000, painted the African continent as a bastion of hope. But that 'autocracy, corruption and strife will not disappear overnight...[and] Africa's progress is a reminder of the transformative promise of growth' (The Economist, December 3, 2011). Yet, it was 'a region blighted by corruption, piracy, poverty, and disease but also home to millions of highly motivated entrepreneurs and increasingly prosperous consumers' (The Economist, December 3, 2011).

In April 2017, the World Bank acknowledged that economic growth in the continent was rebounding compared to 2016 'after registering the worst decline in more than two decades in 2016' (African Pulse, 2017). Specifically, the Bank spotted Nigeria, South

Africa, and Angola, the three largest economies in the continent, as being slowly recovering from the 2016 sharp slowdown because they could not sufficiently adjust to low commodity prices and policy uncertainty. Nevertheless, high-profile scandals relating to corruption and mismanagement of public funds and resources, against several African political leaders and top government officials have become daily routine in the political and media discourses. This is manifestation of the lack of leadership accountability, despite the various accountability measures and mechanisms in the their governing systems.

The African continent is blessed with abundant resources. Nevertheless, the economic systems were characterised by ease of business, thereby stifling all potentials for sustainable economic growth. The potentials identified by the World Bank, in the highly motivated entrepreneurs, were often suffocated by the pervading deviance culture. Consequently, capital flights and mismanagement of resources have left the continent with the highest level of unemployment and poverty. The American President, Donald Trump, attested to the resource richness of the African continent at a luncheon he hosted for African leaders in 2017 at the UN General Assembly in New York. He said:

Africa has tremendous business potential. I have so many friends going to your countries, trying to get rich. I congratulate you. They're spending a lot of money. It has a tremendous business potential and represents huge amounts of different markets. And for American firms, it's really become a place that they have to go - that they want to go (cf. Merica, 2017).

The statement, loaded with uncomplimentary expressions, depicted the vulnerability of the African economic environment to manipulation by sheer selfish desire and greed of their leaders. This 'evoked a long history of colonialism and exploitation in Africa' and as 'a reminder that foreigners, for centuries, have become wealthy on the backs of impoverished Africans' (York, 2017).

A particular case study was the \$182-Million Halliburton Bribery Scandal in Nigeria's oil and gas industry, which involved the collusion between top Nigerian government officials and a network of foreign investors (Fitzgibbon, 2015). In 2012, the American Court found Jeffrey Tesler and Wojciech Chodan guilty of the charges of

corruption and bribery; they were subsequently sentenced (Evans 2012; Evans and Batty, 2012). None of the Nigerian top government officials indicted in the bribery scandal has been prosecuted. Successive governments have been unable to muster the political will to bring the culprits to justice because of the caliber of the people indicted (Sahara Reporters, 18/05/2010; Omonobi, 2012; 2015).

This is just one out of the several scandalous dealings, in collaboration with the African political elites, to encourage expatriate investors to come to Africa 'to get rich'. The Goldenberg scandal in Arap Moi's Kenya, the personalisation of the resources of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) by Mobutu Sese Seko, the monumental corruption in the Abacha's Nigeria, are just a few of these cases. The recurring and unfolding scandals in Zuma's South Africa and the reeling corruption scandals that have become part of the Nigeria's political life since 1999 are few evidences of a continuous continental malaise.

Aside from this, most African leaders, overtly or covertly, usually convert the state to their personal properties, especially those who have the history of a long stay in power, thereby making political power a family lineage. The citizens are agonizing under excruciating governance crisis, arising, mostly from the mismanagement of public resources, while the gap between the rich and the poor keeps widening.

Proceeds from our collective patrimony were rapaciously stashed away in foreign banks in London, Switzerland, Germany and U.S. Many past and present leaders are allegedly said to own assets lying desuetude in foreign lands of South Africa, Dubai, Switzerland, London et al while critical mass of the population back home continues to languish in abject poverty (Etim, 2017).

Rather than use the state power to advance the interests of the citizens, political elites often appropriate the state for private use. Warf (2017 20:31) notes that 'corruption is a highly visible aspect of African politics,' and as such 'a pronounced feature on the African political and economic landscape'. Corruption in Africa is not only pervasive and severe but had contributed greatly to the persisting socio-economic and political instability across the continent (Fagbadebo, 2007; Lawson, 2009; Warf, 2017). It has become a widespread and entrenched phenomenon to the point of being

normalized (Warf, 2017). The Chairman of the African Union (AU) Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, had admitted that

Corruption is undoubtedly the most pressing governance and development challenge that Africa is confronted with today as its debilitating and corrosive effects reverse hard won developmental gains and threatens progress, stability, and development of the Continent (Mahamat, 2017).

In realization of this, the AU declared July 11 every year as ‘African Anti-Corruption Day’ in commemoration of the adoption of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC), a day ‘dedicated to giving prominence to the anti-corruption fight on the Continent’ (Mahamat, 2017). The AU Commission chairman reiterated the need ‘to wage an aggressive fight against those who practice corruption and the institutions that benefit from the proceeds of corruption to restore public trust in our institutions on the Continent’ (Mahamat, 2017). The African Union has also declared 2018 as the African Anti-Corruption Year with the theme: Winning the Fight Against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa’s Transformation.

Corruption and its Consequences in Africa: Empirical data and analysis

The chairperson of Transparency International (TI), Jose Ugaz, had noted that ‘in too many countries, people are deprived of their most basic needs and go to bed hungry every night because of corruption, while the powerful and corrupt enjoy lavish lifestyles with impunity’ (cf. Transparency International, 2017). He noted that this was common in countries with populist or autocratic leaders, especially those who came to power based on their anti-corruption campaign. He stressed further that in such countries,

we often see democracies in decline and a disturbing pattern of attempts to crack down on civil society, limit press freedom and weaken the independence of the judiciary. Instead of tackling crony capitalism, those leaders usually install even worse forms of corrupt systems (cf. Transparency International, 2017).

The UNDP (2016) described this phenomenon as ‘elite capture of institutions’. Ake (1996) has noted this, when he described the state in Africa as the platform for advancing the personal interests of the political elites. Thus, the state, as Ihonvbere (2000:60) has noted, became the instrument ‘used by the governing elite for accumulation as against legitimization purposes’. These assertions aptly described what is happening in most African countries.

Data from the Corruption Perception Index of Transparency International between 2008 and 2016, as shown in Table 1, indicates that African governments are categorized as the highest in the records of corruption.

Table 1: Corruption Perception Index Ranks of African States, 2008-2016

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Botswana	36	37	33	32	30	30	31	29	35	34
Cape Verde	47	46	45	41	39	41	43	40	38	48
Seychelles	55	54	49	50	51	47	44	40	NA	36
Mauritius	41	42	39	46	43	52	48	45	50	54
Rwanda	102	89	66	49	50	49	55	43	50	48
Namibia	61	56	56	57	58	57	55	45	53	53
Lesotho	92	89	78	77	64	55	55	61	83	74
Sao Tome and Principe	121	111	101	100	72	72	76	66	62	64
Senegal	85	99	105	112	94	77	69	61	64	66
South Africa	54	55	54	64	69	72	67	61	64	71
Morocco	80	89	85	80	88	91	80		90	81
Ghana	67	66	62	60	64	63	61	56	70	81
BurkinaFaso	80	79	98	100	83	83	85	76	72	74
Tunisia	62	65	59	73	75	77	79	76	75	74
Egypt	115	111	98	102	118	114	94	88	108	117
Swaziland	72	79	91	91	88		69	NA	NA	85
Zambia	115	99	101	91	88	83	85	76	87	96
Liberia	138	97	87	91	75	83	94	83	90	122
Benin	96	106	110	100	94	94	80	83	95	85
Gabon	96	106	110	100	102	106	94	98	101	117
Algeria	92	111	105	102	105	94	100	88	108	112
Niger	115	106	123	134	113	105	103	98	101	112
C. d’ Ivoire	151	154	146	154	130	136	115	106	108	103
Ethiopia	126	120	116	120	113	111	110	102	108	107
Mali	96	111	116	118	105	127	115	95	116	122
Tanzania	102	126	116	100	102	111	119	117	116	103
Togo	121	111	134	143	128	123	126	106	116	117

Malawi	115	89	85	100	88	91	110	111	120	122
Djibouti	102	111	91	100	94	94	107	98	123	122
Sierra Leone	158	146	134	134	123	119	119	119	123	130
Nigeria	121	130	134	143	139	144	136	136	136	148
Guinea	173	168	164	164	154	150	145	139	142	148
Mozambique	126	130	116	120	123	119	119	111	142	153
Mauritania	115	130	143	143	123	119	124	111	142	143
Cameroon	141	146	146	134	144	144	136	130	145	153
The Gambia	158	106	91	77	105	127	126	123	145	130
Kenya	147	146	154	154	139	136	145	139	145	143
Madagascar	85	99	123	100	118	127	133	123	145	155
Uganda	126	130	127	143	130	140	142	139	151	151
Zimbabwe	166	146	134	154	163	157	156	150	154	157
DRC	171	162	164	168	160	154	154	147	156	161
Burundi	158	168	170	172	165	157	159	150	159	157
CAR	151	158	154	154	144	144	154	145	159	156
Chad	173	175	171	168	165	163	154	147	159	165
Congo	158	162	154	154	144	154	152	146	159	161
Angola	158	162	168	168	157	153	161	163	164	167
Eritrea	126	126	123	134	150	160	166	154	164	165
E. Guinea	171	168	168	172	163	163	NA	NA	NA	171
G. Bissau	158	162	154	154	150	163	161	158	168	171
Libya	126	130	146	168	160	172	166	161	170	171
South Sudan	NA	NA	NA	NA		174	171	163	175	179
Sudan	173	176	172	177	173	174	173	165	170	175
Somali	180	180	178	182	174	175	174	167	176	180
TOTAL	180	180	178	182	176	177	174	167	176	180

Source: Compiled by the author from Corruption Perception Index (CPI) of Transparency International (TI). Available at: <https://www.transparency.org/>

Except for Botswana, Cape Verde, Seychelles, Mauritius, Rwanda, and Namibia, which oscillated among the countries with low perception of corruption, the remaining African countries have their positions among highly corrupt nations. Other data and assessments on development have confirmed this assertion.

In the 2016 Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG), only 28 out of the 54 African countries were able to reach an average score of 50 points. The IIAG is an assessment of the performance of African countries on the overall governance issues under four categories: safety and rule of law, participation and human rights, sustainable economic development and human development (MO Ibrahim Foundation, 2017). Seven out of these countries, Botswana, South Africa, Ghana, Malawi, Algeria, Mozambique, and Mali,

deteriorated in scores, compared to the previous years (MO Ibrahim Foundation, 2017). Only 37 countries showed a measure of improvement but most of them could not move upward from their ranking categories. Seychelles is the only country that moved from the Medium High to the High level while Kenya, Morocco, Rwanda, and Uganda moved from the Medium to the Medium-High level. Five other countries, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Togo, and Zimbabwe, moved from the Medium-Low level to the Medium (MO Ibrahim Foundation, 2017). The remaining countries were lacking in accountability, the core issue in the promotion of good governance. This means that a vast majority of African states were not accountable to the public. Corruption and the lack of transparency in the management of public resources characterized the operations of the governments. This indication alone has spiral consequences on the overall well-being of the citizens.

The 2017 Human Development Index (HDI) report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) showed that African states were found more in the category of countries with low human development, as shown in Table 2, with 33 countries out of 41 across the globe (UNDP, 2017). Twelve African countries among 42 across the globe were in the medium category and only 5 out of 54 across the globe were in the high category while there was none out of the 51 across the globe in the very high category. Human Development (HD) has to do with enlarging the choices and opportunities of the people to improve their well-being (UNDP, 2017). It is concerned with the richness of the quality of human life as against the richness of the economy. The HDI, therefore, measures the achievements of states in the area of the quality of life of the people in relation to health, access to knowledge and a decent living standard (UNDP, 2017). This implies that a majority of the African citizens lack the opportunities and choices to live a decent life even though their countries are very rich in natural resources. The citizens are victims of the culture of mismanagement of state resources by the political leadership, with large scale of corruption, manifested in the widespread reports of graft and looting of public funds. This explains the upsurge in the number of Africans migrating to the developed countries in Europe and America.

Table 2: Africa in the 2016 Human Development Index (HDI)

Category	Total Number of Countries	Number of African Countries
Very High	51	NIL
High	54	5
Medium	42	12
Low	41	33
TOTAL	188	50

Source: Compiled by the author from the Human Development Report 2016. Available at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2016-report>

Indeed, this is reflected in the World Bank’s data on global income assessment. In the data, as shown in Table 3, 27 African countries were categorized among those with low-income earners, 15 among lower middle-income earners, 9 with upper-middle income earners and, only one, Seychelles, with high-income earners.

Table 3: Africa by Income 2017

Low Income	Lower Middle Income	Upper Middle Income	High Income
Benin	Cape Verde	Angola	Seychelles
Burkina Faso	Cameroon	Botswana	
Burundi	Congo, Republic	Equatorial Guinea	
Central African Republic	Côte d’Ivoire	Gabon	
Chad	Ghana	Mauritius	
Comoros Island	Kenya	Namibia	
Democratic Republic of Congo	Lesotho	South Africa	
Eritrea	Mauritania	Algeria	
Ethiopia	Nigeria	Libya	
The Gambia	São Tomé and Príncipe		
Guinea	Sudan		
Guinea-Bissau	Swaziland		
Liberia	Zambia		
Madagascar	Egypt		
Malawi	Djibouti		
Mali			
Mozambique			
Niger			
Rwanda			
Senegal			

Sierra-Leone			
Somalia			
South Sudan			
Tanzania			
Togo			
Uganda			
Zimbabwe			
27	15	9	1

Source: Compiled by the author from the *Atlas of Sustainable Development Goals 2017: From World Development Indicators*. Washington, DC: World Bank. Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/217571493883555677/Atlas-of-sustainable-development-goals-2017-from-World-Development-Indicators>

In 2013, 41% of Sub-Saharan Africans (389 million people) lived in extreme poverty (less than \$1.90 per day), a record of more than 113 million increase from the 276 million in 1990 (World Bank, 2017). Thus, the Continent accounted for half of the population of people living in extreme poverty in the world. While the number in other regions fell dramatically, Sub-Saharan Africa has witnessed an increase in the number of people living in extreme poverty. For instance, East Asia and the Pacific accounted for 966 million people in 2013 but reduced to 71 million in 2013. Nigeria was on top of the list with 86 million people, followed by DRC's 55 million people living in extreme poverty. Access to good healthcare facilities, energy, clean water, as well as other social amenities by a majority of the people of Sub-Saharan Africa is very poor.

Similarly, in the 2017 report on child mortality, Sub-Saharan Africa was on top of the list as the region with the highest mortality rate in 2016, at 79 deaths per 1000 live birth (UNICEF, 2017). This translated to mean that 1 in every 13 babies born died before the age of five. This is '15 times higher than the average ratio...in high-income countries, or 20 times higher than the ratio of 1 in 250 in the region of Australia and New Zealand' (UNICEF, 2017). In the advanced countries, the rate was, 1 child, in 200 babies, died before age 5. The first four countries with the highest rate were Somali, Chad, Central African Republic, and Sierra Leone. Out of the six countries that accounted for the half of the global mortality rate, three were from Africa: Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Democratic Republic of Congo. Indeed, all the six countries whose mortality rate stood above 100 deaths per 1000 live births were in Sub-Saharan Africa. These are Nigeria, Mali, Sierra Leone, Somali, Chad, and Central African

Republic (UNICEF, 2017). These children died from preventable diseases (UNICEF, 2017).

All the above made African countries susceptible to implosion. In the Fragile States Index (FSI), as shown in Table 4, 6 countries (80%) of the 8 categorized with very high alert and 4 (50%) of the 8 in the category of high alert are from Africa. Among the 22 countries in the alert category, 17 (77%) were from Africa; 29 countries were in the high warning category, Africa has 13 (45%); out of the 40 countries in the elevated warning category only 9 (22.5%) were from Africa. Only 3 (16.5%) out of the 18 countries in the warning category were in Africa and only one country among the 14 countries in the more stable category was in Africa. There were no African countries among those categorized as very sustainable, sustainable, very stable, and stable, respectively.

The FSI measures the vulnerability of states to conflict, based on twelve indicators categorized into four groups; cohesion, economic, political and social. The cohesion indicators are security, elite, and group grievance. Economic decline and poverty, uneven development and inequality, and brain drain constitute the economic indicators while state legitimacy, public services, and human rights and rule of law constitute the political indicators. The social indicators are demographic pressures, refugees, and IDPs and external intervention (Messner and Haken, 2017). The implication of this is that a majority of African states are vulnerable to implosion because of the failure of the governments to address the critical areas of human development. This has been a trend since 2007 (Messner and Haken, 2017).

Table 4: Africa in the Fragile States Index (FSI) 2016

Category	Total Number of Countries	Number of African Countries
Very Sustainable	1	NIL
Sustainable	15	NIL
Very Stable	10	NIL
More Stable	14	1
Stable	13	NIL
Warning	18	3
Elevated Warning	40	9
High Warning	29	13
Alert	22	17
High Alert	8	4
Very High Alert	8	6

Source: Compiled by the author from the Fragile States Index 2016. Available at: www.fundforpeace.org

Conclusion

One trend in African politics is the pervasiveness of governance crisis. Corruption is not just one of the several factors that retard economic development in the continent (Warf 2017); it is a major hindrance to sustainable growth. Governance crisis in Sub-Saharan African countries is not a function of the paucity of resources but a consequence of the mismanagement of the abundant public resources by the political elites. Nevertheless, corruption is pervasive in the African countries because of the lack of effective adherence to the mechanisms for accountability and enforcement of laws, as being practiced in the advanced democracies (Moreno 2002). In most of the African countries, the governing systems incorporate the principle of separation of powers and the doctrine of checks and balances. The three major branches of government have specific constitutional powers with a view to ensuring dispersion of responsibilities to checkmate abuse of power. Unfortunately, they are merely political tools that lack the necessary effective political will and commitment to make them functional. The legislative institutions often compromised their vital constitutional oversight responsibility of executive actions.

African leaders are more concerned with their personal socio-economic and political interest rather than the public good. Messner (2017) captured this in his analysis of South Africa's drift in the Failed State Index that while 'the country's economy stagnates, inequality grows, and politicians continue to bicker and scapegoat rather than address the country's underlying problem...'

Rather than addressing the country's economic woes, crumbling education system, or the persistent racial divides, the Zuma government has instead been consumed by factional infighting – and that is apart from Zuma's pursuit of policies that have benefitted his allies, or even himself personally. When there is a recognition of the country's challenges, the ANC has remained largely united, choosing party unity over any attempt at fixing the country's ills, and instead resorting to xenophobic attacks and scapegoating against foreigners in an attempt to divert attention from the domestic causes of the country's rapid decay (Messner, 2017).

This is a characteristic feature of the disposition of African leaders; there is the need for a change in this direction. In view of this, African citizens have to demand the implementation of measures that would promote governance and reduce the sprawling powers of the leaders in the affairs of the state. In other words, the members of the public should desist from celebrating corrupt leaders but instead ensure that they are accountable through different measures. There must be a commitment to the implementation of the principles of governance, democracy, and human rights (Banoba, 2017). To this end, accountability institutions have to be strengthened in order to make governments and the leaders accountable. The electoral system has to be reformed in a manner that would discourage extension of constitutional term limit. Constitutionalism has to be enforced.

In view of the above, it is imperative for the members of the public to monitor and constitute oversight instrument over institutions of government, saddled with the responsibility of overseeing executive activities. In other words, the members of the public as well as the various civil societies should constitute formidable checks against the formal institutions of government, especially the legislature and the judiciary, to ensure their independence and adherence to the rule of laws in their conducts. Where and when these institutions fail, in their responsibilities, the members of the public should exercise their civic rights for a change through public protest and civil disobedience in order to force them to act appropriately. This is important because when the members of the public condone or indirectly induce the abuse and deviation, then it becomes a culprit in the corrupt behaviours.

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