

The Role of Institutions in African Development: Lessons from the Neo-Patrimonial Governance in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper attempts to look at and analyse the role of institutions within the context of three trajectories-institutions, African Development and patrimonial governance in Nigeria. The first refers to the various institutions put in place to sustain the state and the current democratic governance in Nigeria; the second refers to the functions of the state and the political elites in African Development drawing from the Nigeria's experience; and the third refers to the patrimonial governance in Nigeria across regimes and its effect on Nigeria's institutional development. Therefore, an analysis of the institutions and patrimonial governance in Nigeria's development is made; options to strengthen institutions are explored and opinions on the way forward are offered.

Keywords: Social; Sociology; Education

Introduction

The peace of Westphalia marked a victory for the sovereign state as a form of political authority, a kind of political organization where a single locus of authority, a prince or later, a junta or a people ruling through constitution is... supreme within a territory. The sovereign became virtually the only form of polity... to practice substantive or merely formal constitutional authority World Politics [1]. Since independence, the African states have yielded to the victory of the peace of Westphalia without looking at the social history of the African nation-states. As Mustapha notes it is of vital importance that Africa's own experience of state formation plays a crucial role in our theorizing of the contemporary political predicament of the continent [2]. More often than not, Eurocentric models are implicitly or explicitly deployed without any effort being made at establishing and evaluating the relevance of a specifically Africa experience on the matter. The issue is that African historical, geographic, cultural, and institutional context of state formation were not considered in the Berlin Conference in 1884/85. Consequently, African states were set up with three major missions: (1) to disorganize the existing African political economy, social systems, and their values; (2) to create an agency of the international capitalism; and (3) to create an internal police agency for the European institutions and political elites [3]. Lumumba-Kasongo further notes that in its current forms, the African state cannot and will not be able to formulate progressive policies and politics needed for the development of the continent [3].

In essence, the various institutions of government cabinet, parliament, judiciary, civil service, local councils, police, and military – may undergo relatively little modification in formal structure [4]. Indeed, in Nigeria there was no gainsay that these institutions were not modified since it was tested along side with the Nigerian political class the British handed over power to. The issue is that the British fused feudalism into capitalism since both has common ground which is the exploitation of the majority of the people by the tiny few. To the political class that emerged after independence, democracy is not an institutional process which should allow the people to have a say in electing their leaders. Rather it is an institutional process of domination by using the concept to plant into power those who will continue to protect the interest of the international and national bourgeois. In this regard, African political elites in their quest to remain afloat in power accommodated the African political economy system and the Western

liberal capitalism in the name of neo-patrimonialism, prebendalism, and clientelism as political corruption.

African states are run largely on patrimonial lines. That is a state whose energies among them are coercive, extractive, productive, allocation and distributive and has been commandeered by an oligarchy sometimes civil but more often military towards the fulfilments of its own objectives giving little or no bearing on the common will [5,6]. Neo-patrimonialism is a form of governance which seems to be closely related to the Capstone state (extraction by force or coercion) based on personalized rule. It is organized through client network of patronage, personal loyalty and coercion.

In order for leaders of neo-patrimonial states to sustain themselves, they regularly extract resources from their followers in a largely coercive and predatory manner [7,8]. Neo-patrimonialism as Medard put it, involve “any person with even a tiny parcel of authority who manages it as a private possession; and in which clientelism is but one aspect of broader syndrome of privatization of politics that includes, besides clientelism, nepotism, tribalism and corruption [9].

Neo-patrimonial systems tend to monopolise material resources, turning the political game into a zero-sum struggle for control of the state [10]. Neo-patrimonial institutions function in order to enrich political leaders and maintain their personal rule [11-15].

The neo-patrimonial system displays significant continuity overtime and with different ruler...neo-patrimonialism maintains something more persistent than just temporal leaders, namely the political organisations headed by these leaders [10]. Institutional abuse by patrimonial leaders in Nigeria is not new. But its current manifestations and trends in the fourth republic debilitate democratic governance that hampers development in Nigeria. We argue that

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the institutional arrangements are not the problem of Nigeria's development, but patrimonial rulers. We therefore, contend that for any meaningful development to be achieved patrimonial political manipulation which, erode the effective functioning of public institutions should be discouraged for good governance.

Neo-Patrimonialism in Governance in Nigeria: An Overview

Nigeria state evolved from a predatory political class that was concerned with power struggle, consolidation, alignment and re-alignment in the context of hegemonic control [16,17]. Since independence, the Nigerian political class has constituted mainly an opportunity seeking office, but the military elevated it to the greater height [18]. The dream of the nationalist leaders of the first republic never is, for a series of avoidable circumstances. Thus, by poor leadership, subjugation of national interest to sectional interest, thievery and internal colonialism (patrimonialism), Nigeria became a colossus with feet of clay [19].

In forty-six (46) years of independence, governments in Nigeria have been overthrown by military coups six times, namely on 15th January 1966, 29th July 1966, on 29th July 1975, on 31st December 1983, on 27th August 1985 and on November 17, 1993. In five of these coups, the coup-makers claimed to seize power in order to save the nation and bring about major improvements in the lives of the people. The military coup of 15th January 1966, for instance, was hailed as a revolution by many radicals and socialists. In the euphoria of the overthrow of a very corrupt and decrepit regime, many failed to see that the underlying economic and social structures and processes, and the external control of the state were not touched by the coup at all. They also failed to see the real nature of the Nigerian Army and its role in the structures which generated the corruption of the civilian regime it had overthrown [20]. Indeed, the underlying structures and processes which generated the corruption and institutional collapse, which brought down the First Republic were not addressed.

Painful as it is, we must begin by admitting one glaring fact. This fact is that the most fundamental factor which has prevented the emergence of a democratic political system in this country is the institutional crisis. This is what Bako contextualized as "garrison democracy". Garrison democracy is only democratic in form and appellation, but in essence and reality, it actually trivializes and even repudiates the minimum conditions for democratic processes, laws, values and institutions, leading to the unprecedented contribution of the democratic space in Nigeria during the past eight years [21]. Another element and consequences of garrison democracy is the usurpation of powers of the organs of state and institutions of democracy in Nigeria. In this view, Hodgkin observed that the central concept of "democracy" has normally been understood in its classic sense as meaning, essentially the transfer of political and other forms of power from a small ruling European class to the mass of the African people ... the African demos [4]. The democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquired the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote. Schumpeter, Macpherson also notes the essence of the liberal state as being the system of alternate or multiple parties whereby governments could be held responsible to different sections of the class or classes that had a political voice ... The job of the competitive party system was to uphold the competitive market society by keeping the government responsive to the shifting majority interests of those who were running the market society [22,23].

Nigeria is a "rentier state" that runs on oil revenues from a foreign-dominated enclave. Those who hold political power command vast patronage resources from the oil. The overthrow of Murtala government was engineered by the foreign interest who were not comfortable with the radical policies of the regime which might deny them access to the vast oil resources. Obasanjo as one of their own was drafted to power in order to sustain dominance of the foreign interest and domestic cronies of the West. Power relations in this regard, in Nigeria become a relay race from one political class (military or civilian) to another with the common programme of acquiring the state as private property for primitive accumulation. As Madunagu observed "A class in power will not hand over power to another through elections", but through imposition of patrimonial leaders for continuity [24].

That the transition to the civil rule in the Second Republic that the Obasanjo -Yar'Adua junta saw in Shehu Shagari and his (NPN) National Party of Nigeria henchmen the ideal successor to their patrimonial governance. That is why the junta spared no efforts – and even broke the very rules it had itself laid down-in its rabid desire to ensure that the NPN succeeded it. The departing military junta thus set the stage for the subversion of laid down rules in the bitter intra-ruling class struggle for the capturing and/or retention of political power and control over government [20].

The problem with this however, is that bad habits once learned, are very difficult to discard. The Shagari administration throughout the country was to deploy similar improper, illegal and even unconstitutional measures not only to capture or retain control over governments but also to "punish" harass and intimidate political adversaries [20]. The fall of the Second Republic was further hastened by the incredible lust for personal comfort and private fortunes by the bulk of the politicians of the Second Republic. Seeing the occupation of public office not as a privilege to diligently and honourably serve the people who put them there, but rather as a golden opportunity to amass wealth, the politicians wasted no time on assumption of office, in building private fortunes.

In this vein, Lewis stated that the nebulous party system (in Nigeria) has little to do with a distinct ideology programs, or sectional appeals [25]. The major parties are relatively diverse in their leadership and constituencies, but remain focused on elite contention and patronage... personalities and clientelist networks predominate: internal discipline is weak: internecine battles are common. Politics to them is "Winner-take-all" because public office is still a high road to personal enrichment by dubious means. Bribery, manipulation, and even violence are common tools in the ceaseless struggle for spoils and their frequent use makes plain the abject weakness of democratic norms. The military regimes in Nigeria were not left out in this political corruption in a patrimonial manner. The military lacks mass following, in place of these patrons and clients were recruited from a small group of the rich and powerful contractors, traditional rulers, top civil servants, top military and police officers, big foreign and local businessmen and their managers and bankers.

Buhari in his short rulership regarded military intervention in politics on purely redemptive but also catalytic grounds, while Babangida regarded the military, particularly in Nigeria as a full-fledged actor in the struggle for power, as against their prescribed role as custodians of national defense under a democratic authority. As an actor, Babangida sees the military in Africa as legitimate contenders for power, and Nigeria as merely Epicurean, if not hedonistic, the essence of whose activities is to have a bite at the national cake. In this manner

he combined abashing use of state resources and coercion what political observers called “settlement” “cooperation” and “force”.

For Babangida, Nigerian politics is mainly revolving on concept of politics the authoritative allocation of values and; with him at the helms, the surest way to legitimizing himself was to regulate at best as he could, the authority to determining who gets what and how much of the (material) values abundant in country. This “gate-keeping” power business in distributing of state resources was a significant feature of his legitimacy project [26]. Under General Babangida as much as Buhari regime, the military used power to continue building upon an existing authoritarian state established through years of colonial rule on behalf of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie. And authoritarianism by its very nature and logic is demarcated by the concentration, indeed monopolization of power in the Head of State through his kith and kin, friend and associates and, the concomitant access to resources by the same group through large scale corruption. All these combined leads to heightened competition for political power.

The state as the vehicle for access to resources which enables the leader and his cohorts to claim to have the capacity to satisfy the needs and wants of the citizenry resulted to the neo-patrimonial state [9]. In order for the neo-patrimonial leaders to function in kleptocratic manner the institutions that sustain the state for the interest of all becomes the casualty. In Nigeria, under the military rule, the executive, the legislative and the judiciary functions are combined and handed to the commander-in-chief. The constitution which is the legal instrument that protects the interest of all is suspended and replaced by Decrees.

In the case of Abacha’s regime, the nation was at its lowest point. The military conquered every facet of our national life and control the affairs of the state directly or by proxy. Hence, General Jeremiah Useni, headed the Traditional Rulers Forum. Government appointed officials to oversee the affairs of the labour union. The apex arm of the Judiciary, the Supreme Court of Nigeria was crippled by the refusal of the military government to make up the shortfall in the statutory size of its membership by appointment of new Justices [19]. Abacha as Head of State personalized the state and matrimonially shared the state’s resources to his acolytes, family members and clients, while the disloyal citizens were brutally oppressed, using the state institutions. He made history as the patrimonial leader who made the political class to surrender the contest of the presidency to him as sole candidate for the 5 five political parties his regime formed.

The Fourth Republic Politics in Nigeria

The hang-over of military rule is also being demonstrated in the politics of the Fourth Republic in Nigeria. Political corruption played in a patrimonial manner dominated the electoral process and which affected the institutions of the state in the post-election governance. Elections were handed over to patrons at the state or regional levels to determine who will occupy any elective position. The condition for occupying any elective positions is loyalty to the patron and the powers that be, at the national level. So instead of elections we had selections of loyalists to the patrimonial leaders. And when their loyalty is questionable especially in making returns to patrons, the national patrons makes available the institutions of the state-police, the legislative arm and the judiciary to deal with disloyal clients. So our experience is that institutions of the state functions in a selective manner. The rules are used against disloyal clients while the law is abused to protect the loyal clients. The abduction of Governor Chris Ngige, and the anarchy that followed was as a result of massive electoral fraudulent practices committed against the people of the poor state by few individuals at

the Federal and State level during April 2003 elections. The irony was that the police institution that is suppose to protect the Governor was used against him by a private citizen in the patrimonial state business.

Haruna [27] described the actions of the police and Chief Ubah as a coup’ etat and grave threat to the survival of the nation’s nascent democracy, which should be dealt with constitutionally;

“As a student of political science I simply call it a coup. It cannot but be... arrest a governor? Whatever anybody wants to think, it is what I think about it, the due process of removing a governor is there, in the constitution, impeachment, you cannot accomplish it one day. It is beyond party matter. It is a major national crisis... the development in Anambra State had shown that some people are still treated as sacred cows in the country... that unless the so-called sacred cows are demystified, there would be no safe place for anybody in the country”[27].

He added:

“Some people feel they are above the law. Unless certain elements are demystified into believing that they are not special species, then there is plenty of problems in this country. Where you make a private citizen running about with more than 60 to 70 police men remains a matter to be investigated” [27].

In the presidential system of government under Obasanjo, has revealed political corruption built around patrimonialism and patronage politics, whereby the constitution is put aside in crucial state issues to protect the interest of patrimonial leaders. The profound deficits of governance that trouble Nigerian’s Fourth Republic stem from feeble, unsteady institutions; squabbling among political leaders and factions, and an elite that most Nigerians see as distant, selfish and, lacking in integrity [25].

Institutions and Patrimonial Abuses in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic

The patrimonial politics of the Fourth Republic in Nigeria cannot be completed without looking at the character of the man at the helms of affairs in state power. Obasanjo had a stinch of radicalism under the influence of Gen. Murtala Mohammed regime. Immediately Obasanjo left office with the euphoria of Murtala–Obasanjo regime, he became apostle of one party system, locating his love for one party system in the African traditional political system where kings do not have oppositions, yet they administered their various domains/kingdoms. In this manner Obasanjo stated;

In essence my present suggestion that we adopt a one-party system is very much in consonance with a possible and logical outcome of our political development. All I am saying is that we should give nature and history a gentle push in the right direction... The one party system like a knife is a technique. I am sure we will all agree that a knife is a knife, whether in the hand of a butcher, carver or farmer. It is a technique for achieving a set goal. It is the use to which we put it that matters. Too much opposition that is pushed to the extremes will tear the political system apart [28].

Ajayi after observing the Fourth Republic politics noted that “... Nigerians should take it as a transition from Nigerian cultural set up to the new Nigerian political system. ...We are familiar with the “power” bestowed on the traditional rulers in Africa, especially in Nigeria [29]. In Yorubaland we call the kings “Igbakeji” Orisa” second to lesser gods”. Nigerians, before the advent of the modern state introduced by Europeans, believed in some deities, which we call by different names depending on where you come from. However, we still believe that

there is a mighty God somewhere that lesser gods report to, and the kings are their servants on earth. In that way people tend not to go against the kings or traditional rulers because of the belief that they are second to lesser gods whom we have to obey. It also follows that we have some individuals or clans that have been designated as kingmakers, whose family lineage has been traditionally endowed in choosing the kings after a king passes on. The kingmakers are believed to possess some power from the lesser gods that people could not challenge. In the current day Nigeria, we could consider such belief to be crude Ajayi but that is what exist in the patrimonial politics of the Fourth Republic [29]. Here we can demonstrate that Obasanjo is the “Igbakeji” Orisa” while the patrons and governors are the kingmakers. But once the king has been selected, normally, the king has to go back and pay homage to the kingmakers, from that point on the kingmakers must publicly and traditionally respect the king [29].

In the case of the kingmaker(s) or patron(s) refusing to acknowledge the domineering position of the king, for the sustenance of the system, the kingmaker or patron must be sacrificed. Take for instance, what happened in Bayelsa, Oyo, Plateau, Ekiti and Anambra States. In all the impeachment saga only Oyo and Anambra states governors were not induced by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) who indicted them. As the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) observed “while we continue to applaud the diligent work of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission in exposing and prosecuting corruption in Nigeria, CDD is concerned about the new political role they have defined for themselves as an institution that is actively planning and implementing the removal of governors CDD, unconstitutionally [30].

In Bayelsa State, the EFCC induced the State House of Assembly to impeach Governor Alamiyeseigha, in Plateau State, the declaration of state emergency in the state was one of the illegality adopted by the patrimonial leaders to checkmate governors. In the same Plateau State, the Governor was impeached by six of twenty-four members of the House of Assembly despite the fact that the two-third quorum was not formed. In Anambra State Governor Peter Obi was impeached at about 5.30am by less than two-third of the House of Assembly members. The allegation against these governors was corruption, whereas, other corrupt governors are still in power untouched. Political analysts and commentators, however, observed that the offence of the impeached governors was that they offended the king (Obasanjo). In Ekiti State as CDD also stated that the state of emergency was declared by Mr. President has far-reaching consequences on the future of Nigeria’s democracy. It described the action as a serious compromise on the spirit and operation of federalism and devolution of powers. The group accused the Federal Government of aiding and abetting the impeachment of a governor, allowing the installation of an acting governor and facilitating the declaration of the deputy governor as acting governor. Agbaje a constitutional lawyer also argued that Mr. President complied with section 305 of the constitution in declaring emergency rule in Ekiti State [31]. He however expressed fears about the concentration of both executive and judicial powers in the hands of one man. The implication as he further noted is that the rule of law will collapse. In the case of Oyo State, it was not the issue of constitutional matters it was the issue of respecting the king. As Adedibu stated “he (Ladoja) deserves what he got. The President sent for the two of us (Adedibu and Ladoja) and when I got there and having waited for hours when it was 3 pm, President Obasanjo called him on phone and he told the President he was at a function that he cannot come Adedibu.

Ladoja’s answer to Obasanjo was a sacrilege that a kingmaker

should not accept from a client before the king. Adedibu in order to be relevant demanded that there must be respect for the patron and the king and since Governor Ladoja lacks the decorum, he must leave office. In this direction Adedibu stated that he ... deserves some level of respect from Ladoja and he has refused to give it. The issue is that despite the common front the king, patrons and clients may have, there are always political casualties to sustain the system, and that was what happened to Governor Ladoja.

Beyond Obasanjo’s Patrimonial Governance: Yar’Adua, Jonathan and Buhari Administrations, the struggle by the civil society to enthrone democracy in Nigeria under the military regimes was on the assumptions that it will bring good governance. Therefore, it is good governance that sustains democracy which strengthens democratic institutions. But as we reflected under Obasanjo’s administration, what we got was patrimonial governance because institutions that sustain good governance in a democracy was and are still, weak. Political parties in Nigeria as very important democratic institutions have diminished in meaning and purpose they are meant to serve.

Ibrahim [32] notes;

The practice in Nigeria is that political barons and Godfathers take decisions on behalf of party members who have no say in the running of party affairs. It is actually an aberration to talk of party members in Nigeria. Membership cards are given to barons and godfathers who keep them until the need to use them arises, usually for a party convention. At that point the godfathers would bus their “members” or “clients” to the venue and give them the cards with instructions (under Oath) on who to vote for and payments for their services. It is therefore a straightforward patron-client relationship which the patron pays for the services of his clients.

This the picture of political parties in Nigeria since the fourth republic began in 1999. Obasanjo’s victory in the people’s Democratic Party (PDP) primary election and the general election was made possible by the political Barons, and retired but not tired Military General in Nigeria. In this regards, their political investment must yield dividend by turning the state through the leader they brought to power into patrimonial governance.

The Nigerian Elite know that both wealth and power come from access to the state. In our political system there is no autonomy between the hegemonic classes and the state apparatus. Controlling the state is therefore serious business that pushes the elite to all sorts of extremists’ tactics to secure access to power. In advanced capitalist societies there is a major difference between the politics of the bourgeoisie and that of the political elites in Nigeria. The interests of the bourgeoisie are the maintenance of law and order, and the dispositions which regulate economic life and ensure the production of the exploitation relationship vis-à-vis the productive class. On the other hand, the interests of the political elites are to preserve their privileged positions at the summit of organization against rival elites [32].

Indeed, political elites in Nigeria and the so called lumpen bourgeoisie are made by the state and still rely on the state for patronage. This makes the contest and keeping power in Nigerian state a do-or-die-affair. Patrimonial arrangements become part of access to power and also keeping power away from increasing number of political elites who seek power. This accounted for the Obasanjo transferring power in patrimonial connection to President Yar’Adua by default to Good luck Jonathan. Why patrimonialism? Many nation states in Africa in the post military rule adopted presidential system of government, because the power of Executive President which is equivalent to the

power of a junta and a king. In this regard, the leaders and many of the citizens still maintain the mindset of kingship and feudalism (a ruler should be in the position for life) [33].

This could explain the reason Obasanjo anointed Musa Yar'Adua, the younger brother to his family friend, the late General Shehu Yar'Adua a member of the military political Barons in Nigeria politics, and a vice president that will be loyal to the political machine when his third term bid failed. To them, political success is defined as the capacity to explore and exploit every available option to access the state through ethnic, home town, family and clan connections, the military gangsterism, trade unionism, professional Associations, and Personal Connection are also used to leap frog their way to access [32].

The Musa Yar'Adua Administration was not eventful to measure the level of patrimonial governance because it was short lived due to his death. But First Ladyism played out when there was power vacuum, due to the President ill health. His wife Hajiya Turai Yar'Adua, the first lady whose office was listed as the third in order of protocol on the official website of the State House was so powerful. It was a common knowledge that the first lady was fully in charge of many of the decisions in the presidency. She is the president's closest adviser and does not hide it. She played a key role in the emergency of key federal government appointees. Even State governors desirous of closer relationship with the President, court the office of the First Lady [34]. These advantages of power made her the de facto President. The First Lady with her patrimonial appointees almost executed a civilian coup for her to take over power when her husband died because of constitutional lapses. It was the intervention of legislature that saved the situation which led to the vice President assuming the position of President. Because the new president was a child of patrimonial governance, he was made the vice president by the patrimonial leaders on the credential of being loyal deputy governor and will also likely to be a loyal vice President to the late President Yar'Adua. Therefore, President Good luck could not have done otherwise, since he is a product from the patrimonial leaders.

The state therefore was turned to oil the wheel of governance to sustain this power bloc, through corruption. Evidence from high profile political appointees under Good luck administration arrested by EFCC and the money recovered says it all.

Ibrahim [32] in this vein states;

Today after ten Months in power we are in-undated on a daily basis by numerous revelations about mega corruption and what is clear is that corruption under the Jonathan Good luck Administration was carried out with such recklessness. A few hundred persons were stealing billions of Naira and making governance impossible. More seriously is the massive allocations for arming our troops was simply diverted to private pockets, thereby strengthening the Boko Haram insurgency.

This happened because government is run based on family, friends, patrons, sons and daughters of political Barons, and loyal party members. In this regard there is no boundary between state resources and private use so long you are part of the patrimony.

Though, Buhari concept of power is cleansing the political arena of the corrupt elite and self-serving persons who tend to dominate, and replacing their dirty politics with a return to providing for public good. Nigerians voted for Buhari precisely because that was the change they wanted, because they saw the zeal in him when he came into power as a Military General on 1st January, 1984. However, his charisma is known nationally, but politics reduced his charisma to the northern dominate

Muslims geo-political zone by the press, who accused him of religious bigotry. He then needed a bridge to the south to have access to state power. This was made available for his victory by the southern patrons, who also funded his election. To this end he has to serve two masters. The northern dominate Muslims who mobilized and gave him votes, and the southern patrons who funded his election and mobilized votes for him in the south. The corrupt politicians who never gave him a chance in other elections, even as military leader all of a sudden worked for him in the election victory. Under this situation, with his good intentions to change the patrimonial governance in Nigeria, it has been difficult for him. He is the only man standing in the change party (All Progressive Congress), while all others in his party and cabinet are for business as usual. As a politician, he has to please his geo-political zone in Nigerian tradition and the patrons that funded his election victory.

Ibrahim [32] observed;

The Buhari Administration is making appointments that are skewed towards the North in General and towards Muslims in particular. One of the most talked about is the leadership of security agencies in which only three out of seventeen positions are filled with people from the south. The other is the board of NNPC, which is said to be skewed against the presumptive owners of petroleum, the Niger Delta.

There was no denial of the observation made above; rather government officials justified it on the ground that the Buhari administration has been allocating more top jobs to the North, just as the Jonathan Good luck Administration gave more to the South-South and South-East, Nigeria. On the other hand, the clients of the patrons that funded his election were given the juicy ministerial positions like Works, Power and Housing, Finance, Communication, Transport and Information in order to offset the funds provided by their patrons in 2015 elections and to be in the position to fund the next election in 2019. The understanding of the political elites in Nigeria is that access to state power is to serve private interest as against public good. In this regard, who ever manipulate the election through religion, ethnic, family connection, patron-client ties and geo-politics to gain power deploys it to serve these primordial interests

Conclusion

Many African states (including Nigeria) are headed by patrimonial regimes that have vest interest in resisting popular participation. African rulers have proven to be crafty and innovative within state governance centered on elite domination. For instance, many governments implement democracy within a context of ongoing violence, intimidation, corruption and a general lack of transparency and accountability. In other words corruption is maintained behind the façade of democratization. Such a context allows for continued plundering of natural resources, misuse of state institutions and of private armies. This has led certain commentators to conclude that such "features of public life in Africa suggest that the state itself is becoming a vehicle for organised criminal activity [35]. The system does not represent significant institutional pressure aimed at holding the governing elite accountable to the people and is not a serious threat to their monopoly on power. Essentially, the process of democratic opening that represents progress is being manipulated and undermined through political corruption built on patronage politics so as to ensure regime survival and avoid the peaceful handing over of power to non-patrimonial leader.

The experience of Nigerians in state governance shows that the erosion of public institutions, as a result of corruption, autocratic rule

and the political manipulation of patrimonialism of ethnicity and religion has not abated. Without a fundamental, indeed, revolutionary transformation of governance in Africa (Nigeria) in both private and public sectors and at local, provisional and national levels, the woes of the continent will deepen.

The way forward is to lay emphasis on “quality democracy” an approach that will serve to strengthen democracy and popular belief in the democratic system of governance. This is a process which seeks to develop appropriate relationship between African states and their citizens, one in which the state ceases to function as a vehicle for personal enrichment [6,36-39]. That is, African states must actively seek to deepen democracy through reconstructing the relationship between state and society. All groups, sectors and individuals should be incorporated as citizens not subjects within the state [40-43]. Institutions that sustain democracy as outlined in the constitutions of African states should be allowed to function. African leaders must learn that the first step toward a self-reliant future and the restoration, material and non-material, of the continent’s situation is the establishment of governmental and institutional legitimacy and accountability [36].

Entrenched political corruption has become one element of a broader phenomenon that can be called catastrophic governance and endemic practices that steadily undermine Nigeria’s capacity to increase the supply of public goods and development [44]. The crux of the matter boils down to the absence of the appropriate formal institutions or their systemic perversion by the forces of neo-patrimonialism who engage the state in kleptocracy in the name of governance in Nigeria. In conclusion, our debate is that if the government corrupts the institutions of governance, where will the development come from? Where is democracy?

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