

**Governance in deeply divided societies: isolated integrity, social cleavages and president Buhari's burden of electoral promises in Nigeria****Governança em sociedades profundamente divididas: integridade isolada, clivagens sociais e o fardo do presidente Buhari de promessas eleitorais na Nigéria**

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**ABSTRACT**

Nigeria returned to democratic governance in 1999 and has had four cycles of national and state elections thereafter. Nigeria's 2015 general elections marked a historic triumph for democracy in the Africa's most populous country despite concerns over violence and the credibility of the polls leading up to the vote. The election, no doubt, ranked among the most issue-determined contests in the history of elections in Nigeria and the result challenged traditional notions suggesting that Nigeria's problems are based primarily on divisions between north and south, or Christian and Muslim populations as entrenched in deeply divided societies. Muhammadu Buhari, often called *Mai Gaskiya* ("The Honest One") by many Nigerians in the north, now not only leads the government but also carries with him an aura of "incorruptibility". Thus, with the inauguration of the Buhari administration, the euphoria leads to a series of questions, including the following: how realistic are these high expectations for a president facing Boko Haram, rampant corruption, shrinking government revenues, and widespread poverty? Will Nigeria's leaders uncover a path to democratic stability and economic progress? Will the Nigerian 2015 elections, despite the initial positive outcomes, devolve into another prologue to the past? Or is the country on the verge of a significantly new political era? Considering the fact that the core problem of Nigeria has always been the chronic deficit of honest and effective governance, how has the President's touted integrity factored into governance in the last three years? This essay seeks to answer these questions within the personality identity/framework of President Buhari and the overall governance architecture now that it is three years into his four-year term.

**Keywords:** Integrity; Governance; Democracy; Divided Societies; Election.

**RESUMO**

A Nigéria retornou ao governo democrático em 1999 e teve quatro ciclos de eleições nacionais e estaduais depois disso. As eleições gerais de 2015 na Nigéria marcaram um triunfo histórico para a democracia no país mais populoso da África, apesar das preocupações com a violência e a

credibilidade das pesquisas que levaram à votação. Sem dúvida, a eleição ficou entre as disputas mais acirradas na história das eleições na Nigéria e o resultado desafiou as noções tradicionais que sugerem que os problemas da Nigéria se baseiam principalmente nas divisões entre o norte e o sul, ou as populações cristã e muçulmana entrincheiradas sociedades divididas. Muhammadu Buhari, muitas vezes chamado de Mai Gaskiya ("O Honesto") por muitos nigerianos no norte, agora não apenas lidera o governo, mas também carrega consigo uma aura de "inocorrupibilidade". Assim, com a inauguração do governo Buhari, a euforia leva a uma série de perguntas, incluindo as seguintes: quão realistas são essas altas expectativas para um presidente que enfrenta o Boko Haram, a corrupção desenfreada, o encolhimento das receitas do governo e a pobreza generalizada? Os líderes da Nigéria descobrirão um caminho para a estabilidade democrática e o progresso econômico? As eleições na Nigéria de 2015, apesar dos resultados positivos iniciais, serão mais um prólogo do passado? Ou o país está à beira de uma era política significativamente nova? Considerando o fato de que o problema central da Nigéria sempre foi o déficit crônico de uma governança honesta e eficaz, como a integridade do presidente é considerada fatorada na governança nos últimos três anos? Este ensaio procura responder a essas questões dentro da identidade / estrutura da personalidade do Presidente Buhari e da arquitetura geral de governança, agora que está em três anos de seu mandato de quatro anos.

**Palavras-chave:** Integridade; Governança; Democracia; Sociedades divididas; Eleição.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Every transition to new leadership implies change, and hence a challenge to political stability. Democracies minimize this challenge by holding regular and competitive elections that open genuine opportunities for emerging new leaders and through transparent power transfers that help winners and losers accept their fates (Bunce, 2010:7). Elections therefore, serve two vital functions in a democratic order. They hold government accountable to the governed, and they facilitate peaceful transfers of political power. These two effects, in turn, legitimize democracy (ibid). Nigeria is now enjoying the longest period of civilian rule since independence in 1960. The first civilian republic ended in a military coup in 1966, ushering in a devastating civil war and several more military governments. In fact, during the 33-year period from 1966 until the fourth republic came into being in 1999, civilians only governed for four short years. Historically, therefore, the dearth of democratic experience has created enormous challenges to institutionalizing democracy in the Nigerian fourth republic (USAID, 2006:1).

Nigeria returned to democratic governance in 1999 and has had five cycles of national and state elections since then (1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015). The country also had shots at democracy in the early 1960s, late 1970s, and early 1990s; all with interesting experiences. But the 2015 national elections appear to outscore all in terms of drama, tension, politicking (propaganda, protests and counter-protests, visibility of royal and religious figures), humour, international engagement, alliance of opposition parties, voter registration, technology in voter accreditation, results, acceptance of results, and the mundane (Akinyoade, 2015). Nigeria's 2015 general elections marked a historic triumph for democracy in Africa's most populous country and largest economy,

despite concerns over violence and the credibility of the polls leading up to the vote (IFES, 2015). It is perhaps a sign that Nigeria's relatively young democracy has finally matured, and that the country may finally be leaving behind its legacy of military coups and predominately authoritarian regimes once and for all (Trevitt, 2016). Buhari is the second person to get a second chance to govern Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation.

Buhari's electoral success represented a defining moment in Nigerian political history since, for the first time, an opposition party candidate transitioned to power through peaceful, democratic elections. In addition to producing the first inter-party alternation at the national level, Suberu (2015), contends that the 2015 elections represented a milestone in Nigeria's political evolution in multiple ways. First, the elections marked a tectonic realignment in the country's party system, with a previously rudderless and fractured opposition constructing an electoral alliance, the All Progressives Congress (APC). The APC victories, at federal and state levels, ended the 16-year old dominance of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Second, the electoral outcome saw the ascension to power of a driven, four-time, presidential candidate, ex-military head of state Muhammadu Buhari, in sharp contrast to the reluctant or "compromise" leaders, from Abubakar Balewa (1957 -1966) to Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2015), who have dominated Nigeria's post-independence history. Third, policy issues like corruption, insecurity, and the need for systemic "change" and governance reforms heavily shaped the APC's successful electoral campaign against Jonathan's government, significantly moderating Nigeria's traditional politics of ethnic patronage distribution.

Since May 1999, every election has been labelled by scholars and general observers as the most pivotal and most momentous in the country's history. Yet, irrespective of their outcomes, the country has hobbled along, poised, all too familiarly, between the potentiality of glory and the probability of disaster. Nigeria has not exactly flourished, but it has not disintegrated either (Obadare, 2014). Past elections frequently returned the ruling PDP which often used the power of incumbency, state funds, the police and the army to carry out massive rigging of polls in its favour. Such was the confidence of the PDP in its expansive rigging machinery that one of its past chairmen boasted that the party would rule for 60 years (DSM, 2015). What Thomas Carothers called "feckless democracy" (cited in Joseph, 2016a) and Larry Diamond "pseudo democracy", prevailed in Nigeria during the first sixteen years of the Fourth Republic, May 1999 – May 2015. This period has been characterized by excessive political turbulence, extensive civil violence, high levels of corruption, and fraudulent elections. Therefore, one could infer that Nigeria's new president was always going to have his work cut out for him. Some voters even placed him on a pedestal, hailing him as the man who would save Africa's largest but languishing economy

(Onigbinde, 2015). However, despite the initial euphoria that greeted the emergence of President Buhari, Nigeria is still “witnessing a growing divide between its population and an affluent governing minority that is seen – regardless of ethnic or religious background – as becoming out-of-touch, self-serving and corrupt once elected into political office”(Hoffmann, 2014) at all levels of government.

It is an undisputable fact that democracy, along with other important concerns such as health, development, and peace, has become one of the core and foremost preoccupations of today’s world. All over the world, millions of men and women, young and old are clamouring for it, ready to make enormous sacrifices to secure it (Ezeanyika, 2011). The 2015 Presidential election in Nigeria seems to attest to this observation. The election, no doubt, ranks among the most issue-determined contests in the history of elections in Nigeria. Buhari, often called *Mai Gaskiya* (“The Honest One”) by many Nigerians in the north, now not only leads the government after historically free and peaceful elections, but also carries with him an aura of “incorruptibility” (Amadou, 2015). Thus, with the inauguration of the Buhari administration, the euphoria leads to a series of questions, including the following: how realistic are these high expectations for a president facing Boko Haram, rampant corruption, shrinking government revenues, and widespread poverty? Will Nigeria’s new leaders uncover a path to democratic stability and economic progress? Will the Nigerian 2015 elections, despite the initial positive outcomes, devolve into another prologue to the past? Or is the country on the verge of a significantly new political era?” This essay seeks to answer these questions within the personality framework of President Buhari and overall governance architecture now that it is three years into his four-year term.

## **2 NIGERIA AS A DEEPLY DIVIDED SOCIETY: A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS**

Nigeria is the most crowded African country with a population of about 182 million by 2015 (World Population Prospects 2015:21) and one of the world’s most ethnically diverse societies, being made up of over 250 ethno-linguistic groups. Formally, these groups were agglomerated into a single political unit in 1914, but integration among them was minimal because Britain’s policy of “indirect rule” sustained and even magnified differences between them. By allying and strengthening the power of the northern Muslim aristocracy, colonial policy reduced traditional checks and balances, and severely limited access to Western education in northern Nigeria. Administrative policies and translations of the Christian Bible contributed to formation of new ethnic identities and new educated middle classes in the southern provinces of Nigeria where the modern nationalist movement was born. In 1939, the British carved out three regions, each with dominant (majority) and subordinate (minority) ethnic groups, and established commodity

marketing boards which were later used to fund the political projects and parties from each region. Religion, too, is critical for grasping the difficulty of achieving consensus in a complex state like Nigeria (USAID, 2006:3).

Contemporary Nigerian politics revolves around two main issues: the acquisition of power and the distribution of material resources. While both issues exist in all polities, they have been rendered more complex by the conjunction of Nigeria's fragmented and hierarchical social structure and the centrality of the state in the national economy. Nigeria is divided by ethnicity, language, region and religion. As such, it qualifies as a classic 'plural society'. The distinctive qualities of a plural society are twofold: (i) a high incidence of social cleavages of a non-functional type and (ii) cultural diversity (Emelifeonwu, 1999:3). Major among these ethnic groups are the mostly Muslim Hausa/Fulanis of the North-West, the Yorubas of the South-West who are an admixture of Muslims, Christians and traditional worshippers, as well as, the Igbos of the South-East who are mainly Christians. Since the civil war of 1967-70, Nigeria has continued to strive to find strength in this diversity by ingraining in the minds of the citizens the slogan "unity in diversity" (Olorunmola, 2016:5).

Nigeria is synonymous with deep divisions which cause major political issues to be vigorously and violently contested along the lines of intricate ethnic, religious and regional divisions. Issues that raise the most dust are those regarded essential for the existence and the validity of the state. Opposing and contending assemblages have a tendency to assume an exclusionary *winner-takes-all* approach. These issues include the control of state power, allocation of resources and citizenship. As a result, states with such divisions are disposed to be delicate and unstable because almost by definition, they have very little in common with regard to convergence and harmony which are necessary to reduce the centrifugal forces that rip them apart (Osaghae and Suberu 2005:4). Of all of the problems that have bedevilled Nigeria over the past 50 years, building a strong national identity amidst its extraordinary divisions of ethnicity, language, and religion has likely been the hardest. Nigerians' commitment to putting their national identity above their ethnic and religious affiliations ranks among Africa's lowest (Robinson 2014), offering a simple explanation for why its political institutions are so often swamped by identity-based conflicts. Yet just a year past the centennial of its creation, Nigeria has also demonstrated a tenacious commitment to hanging together (Kendhammer, 2014).

Nigeria has three major religious identities: Christian, Islam and traditional religions (Omorogbe and Omohan 2005:557; Osaghae and Suberu 2005:11). Traditional religions are the most politically inactive of the three groups, 'numbering several hundreds of ethnic groups and sub-

groups, villages, clans and kin groups; and, involving the worship of different gods and goddesses' (Osaghae and Suberu 2005:11). On the other hand, Christian and Muslim identities have continued to be the backbone of religious disparity and conflict (Lewis and Bratton 2000:5; Osaghae and Suberu 2005:11). This differentiation underlies the North-South cleavage. It is clear from Nigeria's electoral democracy and governance since 1999 that the country remains burdened by ethnic, regional (now zonal) religious and North-South cleavages.

According to Lijphart, a pluralistic society is divided by segmental cleavages which are manifested when political divisions follow lines of objective social differentiation, such as religious, ideological, cultural or ethnical. In such societies the political parties tend to be organised along these lines (1977:3). In Nigeria, ethnic and regional politics had been nurtured since colonial era with new trends and dimensions taking place in the contemporary era. Political parties and candidates are easily perceived as representatives of a particular ethnic or religious group and voting pattern in Nigeria largely mirrors the various cleavages in the country – North-South, Christian-Muslim, among others (Olayode, 2015). Even when Nigeria's aspirations have usually centred on how to develop a broad and universally accepted framework for crisis free and equitable transfer of power, including political participation, the political elites have always accused each other of various anti-democratic actions that have brought the political system to a state of near collapse (Ojonugwa, 2015).

Perhaps, that is why Siegle (2007:7), contends that the on-going risk of backsliding faced by democratisers underscores the reality that democratic consolidation is typically a decades' long process. A key factor for democratisers' uphill struggle is that they must overcome entrenched and overlapping autocratic political and economic interests (Siegle, 2007:7). Lacking popular support, exclusive regimes rely on strong ties to key constituencies – political party, security sector, ethnic group, geographic region – to stay in power. Regimes reward these groups through patronage – political appointments, jobs, contracts, educational opportunities and other benefits. As in other monopolistic or oligarchic relationships, the privileges that accrue to those in the network come at the expense of the rest of society who suffer from fewer opportunities, services and overall lower economic productivity. Over time, this arrangement leads to deep and widening disparities in a society (Siegle, 2012:478).

### **3 BUHARI'S TORTUOUS JOURNEY TO THE PRESIDENCY**

In 2011, a deal to forge an alliance between the two main opposition parties — the Congress for Progressive Change and the Action Congress of Nigeria (both are now defunct, having merged, along with several smaller parties to form the All Progressive Congress, or APC) - unravelled at the

last moment, enabling the ruling PDP to coast to a relatively easy victory. The last-minute collapse of the alliance was a setback for oppositional politics in the short term as it forestalled the emergence of a potential touchstone for defeating the PDP (Ochonu, 2014).

Former Head of State between 1983 and 1985, Buhari exited from partisan politics afterwards (Nwabughogu, 2015). With the return to democracy in 1999, General Buhari contested presidential elections in 2003, 2007 and 2011, but lost to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) candidates. In the 2003 elections, Buhari who was the presidential candidate of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) lost to then incumbent President Olusegun Obasanjo of the PDP. In the 2007 presidential election, Buhari contested again on the ticket of the same party, but was beaten by PDP's Umaru Yar'Adua who scored 26,638,063 to his paltry 6,605,299. In March 2010, Buhari left the ANPP and joined the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC). He contested as the CPC presidential candidate during the 2011 presidential poll, which he lost to President Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP. In that election, Buhari secured 12,214,853 votes against the President Jonathan's 22,495,187 (Onuoha et al, 2015:3).

On March 28, 2015, Nigerians went to the polls and voted decisively for change. Opposition candidate, Muhammadu Buhari, won approximately 52 percent of the vote to defeat incumbent President Goodluck Jonathon, who collected 44 percent. Across the country, the conduct of the vote took place in a civil atmosphere, largely undisturbed by violence (Sweeney, 2015). This election result challenged traditional notions suggesting that Nigeria's problems are based primarily on divisions between north and south, or Christian and Muslim populations. According to Carson (cited in Fornof and Ruder, 2015), while religious and ethnic identities remain political factors in the country's politics, the vote result suggests that, in this election, the key issues - security, corruption and the economy- prevailed over identity politics to define a national aspiration for change. Buhari won also because many Nigerian voters wanted a change in leadership to halt deep and pervasive corruption, and to reduce poverty and unemployment.

But there were other decisive factors: The successful merger of three leading opposition parties with regional strongholds to create the All Peoples Congress (APC), which then became a national opposition party; the transparent conduct of APC's presidential primary, which put forth General Buhari as the presidential candidate and then defied predictions that the merger would fall apart after the primaries; and of course, the "anybody but President Jonathan" mood of the majority (Chukwuma, 2015). The failure of the political leadership to harness Nigeria's huge potential has created several security, economic and political challenges that have prevented the country from becoming strong, stable and prosperous. The desire for genuine transformation of Nigeria partly

accounted for the thumping victory of Muhammadu Buhari in the March 28 presidential election(Onuoha et al, 2015:3).

The election was not perfect, far from it. Although it confirmed the eventual outcome of the elections, the parallel vote tabulation exposed serious vote count manipulation in one of the six geopolitical zones of the country. Pockets of serious violence and fraud did occur, especially in Nigeria's politically critical, oil-producing southern states. Yet overall, the 2015 election was the most successful democratic exercise in the country's history, building on the progress made in 2011 after a series of seriously flawed elections in the country (TIME, 2015).

Despite Nigeria being the largest economy in sub-Saharan Africa<sup>1</sup>, many Nigerian are still struggling with extreme poverty and unemployment, which is exacerbated by a lack of access to basic infrastructure and amenities. This is partly because the benefits of economic growth have not trickled down through Nigerian society, particularly to those living in rural communities(Bazley, 2015).Buhari's inaugural speech raises some hope in this regard: "At home we face enormous challenges. Insecurity, pervasive corruption, the hitherto unending and seemingly impossible fuel and power shortages are the immediate concerns. We are going to tackle them head on. Nigerians will not regret that they have entrusted national responsibility to us. We must not succumb to hopelessness and defeatism. We can fix our problems" (cited in Garba, 2016) It becomes imperative therefore, to examine how the administration is fairing in the business of governance.

#### **4 PRESIDENT BUHARI BODY LANGUAGE AND BURDEN OF GOVERNANCE**

President Buhari was given tremendous leeway and was lauded across the world upon entering office. Many observers – and even those in the human rights community – were willing to give him the benefit of the doubt, desperately wanting to believe his claim of being a "born again democrat"(Smith, 2016).Upon entering office in May 2015, Nigerian president Muhammadu Buhari faced the daunting tasks of living up to exceedingly high international expectations and meeting the needs of a nation that was clearly yearning for change. Indeed, one would be hard-pressed to recall an African head of state that came to office with more pressure, but also the amount of goodwill that President Buhari immediately assumed after his predecessor, Goodluck Jonathan, conceded

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<sup>1</sup>Africa's most populous country and one which only emerged as the continent's biggest economy three years ago, is bedeviled not only by low petroleum prices, but decreased production due to attacks by the militants in the oil-producing Niger Delta region--at one point last year, the amount of crude being pumped nearly reached the lowest point in three decades. Nigeria was declared Africa's largest economy in 2014. In 2016, a new report from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) also projected Nigeria as Africa's biggest economy, in spite of its challenges. Nigeria is placed ahead of South Africa and Egypt which are second and third respectively.

power. Buhari's main selling points were his stated commitments to ethical leadership, fairness and a consolidation of democracy (Smith, 2016).

According to Tijani (2016), "Nigerians expect President Buhari to redirect the cause of our nation's history by reinforcing the fight against corruption; freeing Nigeria from the narrow and selfish agenda of tiny elites, rebuilding our moribund institutions, bring back the abducted Chibok girls, and the total rejuvenation of our social, economic and political paralysis. Nigerians are becoming impatient and the old appetite for theatrical democratic interventions from our politicians is becoming obsolete". Ekwo (2015) in his write-up had written about the then President-elect and his historic election:

Nigeria faces a daunting task under Buhari, but the country is no stranger to doomsday predictions. He must harness the goodwill and resilience of Nigerians and the international community to usher in real change. The overwhelming embrace and reception of his administration is reminiscent of the 1983 coup, in which his military junta sacked President Shehu Shagari's corrupt administration. Thirty years on, under Buhari. Nigerian citizens used the ballot to remove yet another corrupt regime. This is Buhari's moment. He can either use it or abuse it. The choice is very clear, and Nigerians and the rest of the world are watching.

The stakes could not be greater, both for Nigeria and the world. With a population of roughly 180 million people and an economy expected to reach \$1 trillion by 2030, the country is already a regional political and economic powerhouse—and it is increasingly a global one as well. By 2050, Nigeria's population is expected to surpass that of the United States, and its total population is projected to reach 900 million by the end of this century. This means that what happens in Nigeria will have a profound impact on the future of sub-Saharan Africa and the world (Albright and Carson, 2015). Buhari inherits a colossal mess: a violent insurgency that shows no sign of going away soon; a shell of an army, with a deeply corrupt officer corps and demoralized, poorly trained foot soldiers; an economy concentrated on oil and gas, with agriculture and manufacturing in decline. Infrastructure has been neglected for years, and many households get sporadic electricity and buy water from carts in the street. Most serious of all, the price of oil, which accounts for 80% of government revenue, has been halved (Dixon, 2015).

Within two months of assumption of office, the fear of his name alone worked wonders in several areas of national affairs. Accountability rose in government departments and agencies. The nation's account was singularized for the remittance of funds by public institutions and leakages blocked in several areas. Quiet 'carrot and stick' persuasions flushed some stolen funds back into the treasury while many now sing openly on the cause and scope of the large-scale looting that reigned uncontrolled under Goodluck Jonathan (Larr, 2015). Thus, from the beginning of the present

administration, Buhari's body language was certainly perceived as a new formula for governance by many Nigerians. Abugu (2015) however, posits that the body language frenzy took a comical stage at point when the APC in its quest to prove effectiveness of the president's body language began to lay claim to achievements recorded by the immediate past administration. Nigerians were made to believe that Buhari's body language was responsible for the improved power situation across the country. Abugu explains further:

Buhari's body language was also hailed for the disappearing long queues in Petrol stations some time ago. Nigerians were equally told that the nation's refineries were operating optimally since Buhari came on board just because of his body language, and just few weeks ago we heard that looters were secretly returning stolen monies in droves for fear of Buhari's body language. If these assumptions are anything to go by, what then has happened to the body language. Why has it suddenly ceased to yield the expected results as canvassed by its proponents?

The emergence of President Buhari and his party, poured in high hopes and expectations from Nigerians considering the huge promises which the APC and its presidential flag bearer made during the campaigns. These promises embodied some radical actions that are poised to making far reaching changes in the country's polity. The main policy thrust of the administration is a re-invigorated and sustained fight against insurgency; declaration of total war against corruption; and poverty reduction through job creation (New Telegraph, 2016). However, there has been mixed reactions on whether the administration has made any significant difference in these areas as captured in the following analysis.

### *Appointments*

Notwithstanding, the constitutional provisions designed to foster greater unity, ethnic consciousness and identity is deeply entrenched. National concerns are viewed from ethnic perspectives and interests, resulting in suspicion of other ethnic groups and often leading to conflicts. The appointments made by President Muhammadu Buhari after the 2015 elections were viewed through ethnic lenses by various groups. Due to these divisions and resultant suspicion, political parties and candidates have had to reach out to ethnic groups, through their leaders, to negotiate or buy supports with money or promises of certain appointments (Olorunmola, 2016:6).

Although Buhari and his party have acknowledged the challenge of managing the public's huge expectations, their communications and public relations strategy to temper expectations has been weak at best (Usman, 2015). To make things worse, Buhari's selection of mostly "northern" (but not entirely Muslim) presidential aides raised concerns over the regional inclusiveness of his government in a society polarized by the divisive rhetoric of the elections campaigns (ibid). It took

awfully a long time -five months - to name a cabinet, Nigerians grew more impatient, and that took a toll on Buhari's image too. Along with the long delay in setting up government, came anxiety of voters, in addition to fellow politicians, who started feeling frustrated, that the reward of appointment of other political stakeholders, into political offices, like boards of parastatals etc., had become elusive (Onyibe, 2016). On the appointment, *The Punch*, in its editorial (2016) posits thus:

Among his first appointments, even while he dithered on assembling a cabinet: he recalled a retired officer to man the Department of State Services; a former army officer to head the Nigeria Customs Service; a personal acquaintance as Chief of Staff, and loaded the other security and law enforcement agencies heavily in favour of Northerners. While the DSS head is from his hometown, Daura, the others are also almost all Northerners and overwhelmingly Muslims. In spite of public opinion, he replaced the immediate past Inspector-General of Police, a Southerner, with a Northerner, an assistant inspector-general whose ascension induced the retirement in one fell swoop of 21 DIGs and AIGs who were senior to him...He removed Ibe Kachikwu as head of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation to put a Northerner; named another, Hadiza Bala-Usman, as managing director of the Nigerian Ports Authority along with three executive directors, two of whom are also Northerners. Before then, he had ring-fenced himself with appointees from his northern constituency at the Presidency, thereby deepening the long-held fears of many Southerners that he has not overcome his well-known insularity.

That trend, no doubt, angered not a few pro-democracy and gender activists across the country. But what has alarmed critics more is the apparent lack of regional balance in the appointments, a failing President Buhari has been vigorously criticised for in the past (Abdulmalik, 2015). Yet, the president's response was anything but heart-warming. In fact, during his visit to the United States in July 2015, that indifference approached something of defiance when he openly told Americans and Nigerians he should not be expected to offer equitable treatment to Nigerians who barely gave him votes.

While the idea of predicated appointments or resource allocation in general on number of votes received from constituencies or regions is quite repulsive and antithetical to the tenets of liberal democracy, perhaps, the justice Nigerians must seek, as argued by Adamu (2016), should be the 'equitable' distribution of national resources and not necessarily the 'equal' appointment of those who distribute the resources. By the way what does it matter if ethnic groups are 'equally' represented in appointments but do not get an 'equitable' share of the common resource? Or what does it matter if they are 'un-equally' represented but are 'equitably' provided for from the common resource? In any case if we are to distribute appointments 'equally' instead of sharing resources 'equitably', how do we go about it?

*Anti-Corruption Crusade*

Buhari campaigned on a promise to address alleged multibillion dollar corruption scandals, which stem largely from mismanagement of the country's oil reserves. These kinds of scandals weaken Nigeria's legitimacy both domestically and abroad (Albright and Carson, 2015). Thus, a significant building block of democracy is confronting the scourge of corruption, which has severely stunted socio-economic progress in Nigeria since its independence from the United Kingdom in 1960. A widespread concern in Nigeria that actually helped to push Buhari's predecessor out of office was the billions of dollars of oil revenue that disappeared under his administration, in addition to credible allegations of graft and runaway illicit outflows. Unsurprisingly, Buhari was elected on an anti-corruption ticket and has since cracked down on graft in various sectors of the government.

At the White House meeting with President Barack Obama, the host president praised his guest as someone with high integrity, a quality much needed at this time in Nigeria's history; a commendation that was celebrated back home by supporters of this president as if Nigerians needed any confirmation from abroad on that score (Okuofu, 2015). To fulfill his anticorruption pledges, Buhari initiated a series of reforms, including the reorganization of the notoriously opaque state oil company. Nigeria's main anticorruption agencies launched investigations into several high-profile politicians, including the Senate president and top officials from former president Goodluck Jonathan's administration (Freedom House, 2016). Although no high profile corruption conviction has been secured, certain indicators point to considerable progress. In all, as pointed out by Campbell (2016), some 140 have been prosecuted, tried, and convicted of corruption -- far more than in any previous administration. However, it is unclear how many have actually been jailed.

According to a report by Buharimetre (CDD, 2016), a civil society monitoring report tracking the implementation of the president's campaign promises, "there had been visible efforts to combat corruption since the inauguration of the present administration, naming the arrest and prosecution of some notable persons and the efforts to recover looted funds". However, the government has been accused of politics of selection in the fight against corruption. A delay in the prosecution of the accused people has been a major criticism of the government. The reports states further:

Several pundits have consistently argued that the war against corruption mainly targets the opposition with only politicians from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) singled out for prosecution in the new war against corruption. For instance, there are several claims that the armstronggate scandal popularly referred to as Dasukigate is targeting only the members of the immediate past PDP administration. This is further accentuated by the feeling that the government does not respect the rule of law and due process in handling culprits, particularly those linked to the previous administration.

It is argued that while the government has shown unmatched commitment to curbing corruption, such effort should be institutionalised. While the persona of the President as a staunch anti-corruption crusader is very important, it must be pointed out that the fight against corruption must be institutionalised for it to survive beyond the term of the present administration. Strategies that could help institutionalise the anti-corruption war include value reorientation, an effective legal and policy framework, strengthening institutions and degrading the conditions that currently make corruption attractive to the populace. Furthermore, the state governments must join in the war against corruption at the state level (CDD, 2016). For Suberu (2016), it is imperative that “Buhari goes beyond personal example to implementing some institutional reforms and building the institutions for fighting corruption.” Corruption is like water seeping into the ground; it will find any crack or crevice and make use of it. The only way to fight it is with a system of horizontal accountability that is vigorous, comprehensive, independent, and interlocking (Diamond, 2014).

Several prominent figures have been linked to the case and face prosecution. Numerous investigations into other financial scandals have been opened. But for all the hoopla, Buhari’s anti-graft war has yet to yield any convictions. In fact, there is growing fear that with the help of clever lawyers, poorly prepared prosecution cases and potentially buyable judges, the culprits might ultimately go free or receive light prison sentences (Adekoya, 2016). Thus, there are worrying indications, therefore, that this administration is not about to depart from the path of its predecessors as it has adopted the same template that took the country nowhere in the past – a spate of arrests, arraignments, bails and sloppy trials that eventually fade into oblivion.

### *Economy*

One of the critical and fundamental issues confronting the country today is the challenge of rebuilding the economy to ensure its rapid recovery and sustainable development. Nigeria’s main issues today can be traced to poorly allocated resources. Despite all Nigeria’s human and mineral resources, corruption and poor organisation have slowed economic growth and development. It is true that a myriad of problems were inherited from the previous regime, the new regime appears to have been too preoccupied with its internal challenges within the government to be able to chart a future policy path for others outside government to plug into. The euphoria that heralded President Muhammadu Buhari’s regime is giving way to rising economic policy uncertainty as the regime is not providing any holistic indication of its fiscal or broader economic policy directions that others outside government can base their planning on (Teriba, 2015). Buhari’s economic record is also wanting. It is true he inherited an economy battered by weak oil prices, but his policies have made a

bad situation worse. He has been overly statist and interventionist, reacting to downward pressures on Nigeria's currency, the naira, by imposing draconian foreign currency controls (Adekoya, 2016).

Also, the Nigerian economy plunged deeper into recession as gross domestic product (GDP) contracted 2.24 per cent (year-on-year) in real terms in the third quarter of 2016, from 2.06 per cent from the previous quarter. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (cited in Premium Times, 2016) report, real GDP for the third quarter stood at about N1.78 trillion. The contraction of the economy in the third quarter was lower by 0.18 per cent points from the preceding quarter, according to the report. The declining economic growth rates, along with inflation and the combined unemployment and underemployment rates of 17.1% and 31% respectively, as well as rising interest rates with the treasury bills reaching over 20% mean that the country's misery index is on the rise.

A 60% drop in Oil Revenue and Foreign exchange earnings is the immediate cause of the current crisis. However there has always been structural deficiencies in the system (Economy) over the years which ensured there was little or nothing by way of infrastructural development and value added production- poor Roads, epileptic Power, little human capital development by way of appropriate Health and Educational funding- nor did the country save during its years of boom to act as a buffer against the rainy days which is now pouring upon us all. The Country also lacked the technological and Managerial ability to run a decent skill-based economy, worsened by corruption and planlessness (Ishiekwe, 2016). Indeed, the adjectives that characterize the former administration are gradually creeping in for the description of the economic policies of the Buhari government. The state of the economy is very bad. Inflation, interest rates and unemployment have been on the rise since the last quarter of last year to date. A critical economic infrastructure like power supply has also been deplorable, against all promises and expectations. Cost of living has risen in the face of increased electricity and fuel prices, and living standards for the majority of the people are at the lowest.

Perhaps, the government never envisaged finding itself in this kind of hopelessness. While this is the reality the government has to contend with, the rush to see immediate tangible economic benefits by the suffering people of Nigeria is understandable, after all, they elected the president to make their lives better not worse (Enwegbara, 2016). The 2016 national budget, which is a routine record of planned income and expenditure for a designated period was bogged down in parliament, for months before it was signed into law. Worst still, the document was also dogged by accusations and counter accusations of "padding" by the executive and the legislative arms of government.

Critical to the government's effort to boost the economy, according to the Buharimeter report (2016) is the ability to boost the social sector, including education, health, water and

sanitation and housing. Within the period under review, the incumbent administration performed low in the delivery of promises made in the prelude to the 2015 general election. From all indications, the government is yet to roll out concrete and comprehensive policy frameworks to engender the development of the sector and achieve its electoral promises. For Adekoya (2016), “it seems increasingly clear that Buhari doesn’t have any clever answers to Nigeria’s current economic problems and it would thus be wise of him to seek advice from those who might have alternative solutions”.

*Security: Boko Haram Remnants and Trouble in the Creeks*

There is still a greater range of threat actors that have their own military or militant capability (Clyne, 2016 cited in Stein, 2016). Those threats include clashes between nomadic cattle herdsman and farmers. These are often the result of inter-communal grievances but have nevertheless raised tensions between the different ethnic groups and religions that make up Nigeria. In the north, Islamic Movement in Nigeria, a Shia group, is protesting against the detention of its leader, who was captured after a battle with the army in 2015 that killed more than 300 sect members (Stein, 2016). In the north east, reports from domestic and international advocacy groups indicated that government forces continued to commit gross human rights violations with impunity, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary mass arrests, illegal detentions, and torture of civilians (Freedom House, 2016). The phenomenon of armed banditry is taken huge tolls on Nigerians as hundreds are being killed, whole villages razed, increasing internal displacement of citizens and thousands of cattle rustled. This is not only a security challenge but also portend grave economic implications for the country.

Also, Nigeria is facing a resurgent uprising in the South-South Region. The Niger Delta militancy, which had relaxed for almost seven years, was revived with the emergence of a new militant group, Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) in February 2016 (CDD, 2016). The NDA is an organised militant group which has bombed several oil pipelines in the oil-producing region. Based in the western axis of the Niger delta, the group’s attacks – notably on the Forcados and Escravos trunk lines – have been relatively sophisticated and surgical, resulting in hundreds of thousands of barrels of lost production, but limited casualties (Barclay, 2016). The insurgents have since been joined by more than a dozen other groups, some of whom have claimed attacks, while others have merely threatened violence. The military has launched offensives into the creeks of the delta while government ministers have offered negotiations. The attacks have not stopped.

The renewed militancy in the Niger Delta by the Niger Delta Avengers is seriously impacting the fortunes of the country. Their continuous bombing of oil installations has not only led

to the drop in power supply but also the country's oil production has dropped (CDD, 2016). Despite the fact that the Niger Delta region provides almost 90 per cent of the nation's resources via oil, 75 per cent of its people, said to be in rural areas, are without pipe borne water, electricity, roads and health centres. The whole region is, undeniably, devastated by oil exploitation, waters polluted by almost daily oil spillage and the air poisoned by ceaseless gas flares. This, many believe, led to the people boiling in anger.

But none of these crises has had as much impact on Nigeria as Boko Haram, whose campaign to establish strict Islamic law in Nigeria's north has left more than 20,000 people dead and forced more than 2m people from their homes since 2009, according to the United Nations (Stein, 2016). The Boko Haram insurgency has led to huge losses, both in terms of human lives and economic resources. Within the first year of the Buhari administration, over 2,307 deaths were recorded following the activities of the Islamic terror group.

In his inaugural statement, President Buhari ordered the immediate relocation of the Boko Haram command and control centre to Maiduguri, Borno State as part of the strategies to fight the insurgency which had claimed several lives. It was there at the Eagle Square that he also directed the release of \$21m to the Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF) to facilitate the establishment of the headquarters of the force in N'Djamena to facilitate the prosecution of the war (New Telegraph, 2016). The government offensive against the terror group has yielded considerable positive outcomes. For instance, the capacity of the sect to hold territory has decreased and over 11,000 abducted persons, especially women and children, in March 2016 alone have been reportedly rescued (CDD, 2016). The Nigerian Army declared that the Boko Haram sect has been routed. The myth of the Sambisa Forest as the redoubt of terror might have been broken. But the war is by no means over. While it appears that Boko Haram are no longer governing key areas and cannot launch conventional military attacks, their insurgency however, remains deadly. The recent spate of suicide bombings that have left dozens dead and injured is evidence of this. The Boko Haram's strategy has always centred on hit-and-run guerrilla-warfare tactics and suicide bombings that terrorise and demoralise. Above all, what is important now is to strengthen the intelligence forces in the country to ensure that Nigerians do not have the recrudescence of a Boko Haram again in another fashion or guise.

### *Job Creation*

No doubt, unemployment remains one of the greatest challenges facing President Muhammadu Buhari's administration. Yet finding lasting and practical solutions to unemployment has continued to be a daunting task for the administration. Beyond this, there is a general belief that

government must expedite action in harmonising the best strategies on wealth creation and innovations for employment generation (Obi, 2016). Over the years, government's attempts to arrest the ugly unemployment situation in the country have not been holistic. And even agencies that have been entrusted with the responsibility of bridging the gap of joblessness in Nigeria have failed to address the challenge squarely (Obi, 2016). President Muhammadu Buhari said that job creation would remain one of the topmost priorities of his administration's economic agenda. He pledged that his administration would give the fullest possible support to all efforts to create more jobs through the reorientation of Nigerian youths towards an entrepreneurial mindset. According to him, his administration will ensure that youths in the country are gainfully employed and youth restiveness curtailed (Premium Times, 2015).

The APC federal government under the leadership of President Buhari took off very slowly, with operators of government levers not installed months after the President took office and indeed many still not in place into the second year in the life of this government. This scenario coupled with the revelations of Budget padding has meant that whatever promise was made in regard of this subject is only just beginning to take off (Idaewor, 2016). With the harsh economic situation in the country which has ushered-in hardship such as hunger, high rate of poverty, loss of jobs among other social vices, there is no doubt that many Nigerians are wondering when result-oriented action will be taken to bring to fulfilment the promises of President Buhari, during the 2015 presidential election campaign.

Nigeria like all other countries classed either as poor or developing economies have a relatively young population demographic. This by itself should be a huge advantage, except that it also means that millions of young people are out of work (Idaewor, 2016). However, with the high drop-out rate in the country, an education system that produces graduates ill-suited to the job market, and an economy growing without producing enough jobs, unemployment has been on the rise in Nigeria for many years. This has been exacerbated by the lack of deliberate job-creation programmes; a high cost of doing business that has forced the relocation of industries, and non-payment of contractors. The unemployment figure has been put at between 20 million and 24 million – about the entire combined population of Benin, Gambia, Gabon and Togo (Orija, 2015). What now needs to be done is stepping up the drive to encourage private sector growth for job creation.

## **5 OSTRACISED INTEGRITY AND ANTAGONISTIC FORCES**

Though some measure of attestable success have been recorded in areas of insecurity, anti-corruption war, and fiscal discipline in government business, (Treasury Single Account ), bailout

funds to salary indebted states, rail and roads projects among others, despite dwindling national resources, recent commentaries from some Nigerians in the media on the Buhari presidency have been quite unimpressive (Agbese, 2016). In the light of the foregoing scenario, it is unsurprising that his unprecedented foreign trips is attracting bile and ire of Nigerians, so much so that all sorts of caricatures have been made of the president in the social media and even cartoons, in mainstream newspapers. Consequently, President Buhari's media handlers are having quite an arduous task trying to restore his pre-election image without much luck (Oyibe, 2016). Suffice it to say that the public's staunch belief in the integrity of Mai *Gaskiya* has been taking a hit. As observed by Momodu (2016):

The faith Nigerians had in the abilities and incorruptibility of Buhari is mighty enough to move mountains. But unfortunately, I think the government took many things for granted once it took over the reins of power. The government mistakenly believed that the support of the people was like several blank cheques which it could cash at any point in time. The general impatience of Nigerians and their desire for progressive action were never put into consideration.. President Buhari should have moved faster once the people started grumbling about the apparent sluggishness of his administration.

The reality today is that Nigerians are deeply divided. Seventeen years of dashed hopes of progress under a democratic dispensation have reopened the deep fissures in the polity and polarised the populace into mutually suspicious camps. Sectarianism and ethnicity have been rearing their poisonous heads. The presidential election of 2015 was particularly divisive, with some major actors openly deploying base religious and regional sentiments. Add to this the terrible state of the economy that Buhari inherited, headlined by a collapse in global crude oil prices, our main export earner, and the rapacious emptying of the national treasury by previous governments, and you have a seething, discontented people (The Punch, 2016).

For so long, many Nigerians made attempts to study and decode President Muhammadu Buhari, using different lenses. Some only had a modicum of clue on who he may be, counting on the code of information they obtained from the media when he first romped into global limelight as Head of State in a military garb. During that military era, Buhari occurred to a section of expectant Nigerians as a no-nonsense dictator with brazen disposition to power. Pairing in leadership with the late Brigadier Tunde Idiagbon, adjudged as restless, hardworking and unsmiling, made the Buhari's regime almost a nightmare for Nigerians who took business as usual all through the period he reigned as Head of State (Daniel, 2016). Thus, at a time when mind boggling embezzlement of public funds by politicians in the executive arm of government and stealing of trillions of naira from civil servants pension funds by civil servants became pervasive, Nigerian voters were looking for a messiah (Oyibe, 2016).

As posited by Albright and Carson (2015), “years of experience have taught us that while successful elections are necessary, they are not by themselves sufficient for a country to achieve real long-term economic and social progress”. But the reason he personified hope for many Nigerians, according to Patrick Smith (cited in Dixon, 2015), editor of the journal *Africa Confidential*, was that his ascetic, strict persona stood in stark contrast to Jonathan's. Buhari, an indigene of Katsina state in the northwest, won plaudits for proclaiming in his May 29 inaugural speech that he belonged “to everybody and...to nobody” (Buhari 2015a). But for Ochonu (2016), “in the course of his short time in office, Buhari’s image as an ascetic and empathetic figure has disappeared, and he has shown a disturbing lack of initiative, creativity and new thinking in government, belying his inspiring pre-election rhetoric.” This essay focuses on two main unfriendly sources through which the Buhari administration seems to be entangled namely: *A Cabal in the Presidency* and *Corruption Fighting Back*.

#### *A Cabal in the Presidency*

The picture that emerges currently in the informed public is that there is an unelected shadow government at the heart of the popularly elected government of Buhari, which is the unseen-and-seen-hand running the show. Buhari is left floating and at the mercy of that shadow government. Consequently, the President has been cut off from his mass political base at the grassroots level. Some individuals, according to Ochonu (2016), lament the fact that “political exigencies, the intricacies of power, and elite manipulations have soiled Buhari’s reputation, exploded the illusion of his messianic abilities, and exposed him as a prisoner of power” – in other words, as just another politician. Apparently in dilemma of who to trust against the background of reports that, certain individuals in his Government have been working to undermine his efforts, and frustrate the fight against corruption, President Buhari seems to rely more on his informal circle of associates to run government, a development which seems to pitch the few technocrats around him against his informal counsellors (Adegbe, 2016). As noted by Anele (2015):

The greatest enemies of President Buhari are not his critics; rather, they are those praising him to high heavens, uttering sugary insipidities to gain favours from him. Also included are the shylocks who recommend revenge against groups that did not vote for him and narrow-minded Northerners gloating simply because the presidency has returned to their region.

In recent times, members of the administration have carried on with so much haughtiness and lack of decorum in their responses to the complaints of Nigerians about their pains. Many have been insensitive, self-righteous and indignant as they respond to issues demanding caution, understanding and compassion. That’s when they are not heaping all blames for their obvious

failings on the last administration, something Nigerians have become weary of hearing. Although the people's trust and goodwill provide a receptive ear and heart to its policies, this government would appear to have taken the people's loyalty for granted by the indecorous utterances of its officials (The Guardian, 2016).

Barely three months after the Senate President, Dr Bukola Saraki raised the alarm that the President Muhammadu Buhari's administration has been hijacked by some people close to him, wife of the President, Aisha, in an unusual outburst has alleged that a cabal of just two or three persons has caged her husband and driving people who should help his government away from him. In an interview aired on the BBC, Mrs Aisha Buhari stated that the cabal has created so much problems for her husband, to the point of disconnecting him from the millions of Nigerians who voted for him in the 2015 presidential elections. She vowed she may not go out to campaign for her husband in 2019 if President Buhari decides to run for a second term (Hassan and Abubakar, 2016).

Mrs. Buhari had in the interview with the BBC Hausa Service alleged that her husband's administration had been hijacked, adding that she would not campaign for his re-election in 2019 if he does not rejig his cabinet. Mrs. Buhari in the interview granted British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), in London was quoted as saying that the husband did not know 45 out of 50 people in his cabinet. She warned that if things continued the way it is, she might not go out in 2019 asking women to vote for her husband again. Aisha had further suggested that the government had been hijacked from her husband by only a "few people", while those who worked for the success of All Progressives Congress (APC) in the last general election have been sidelined. Mrs. Buhari's decision to go public with her concerns may shock many people, but it shows the level of discontent with the president's leadership, the BBC quotes its reporter Naziru Mikailu, as saying Abuja.

Aisha Buhari is not the first highly placed Nigerian to have raised the alarm over the activities of a cabal that has hijacked the President and are calling the shots in the country. The Senate President, who is officially, the number three man in this country, had raised such alarm, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu whose contributions to the making of this presidency cannot be wished off had recently implied such and there could be so many muted complaints from highly placed quarters indicating such (Onwuasoanya, 2016). One name that has been repeatedly mentioned as having a strong influence in Mr. Buhari's appointments is his cousin, Mamman Daura who holds no official position, but believed to be the most powerful man in the presidency and is said to have Buhari's ears. Aisha and some members of the All Progressives Congress are also believed to be frustrated with the influence of Abba Kyari, who is the President's Chief of Staff (Hassan and Abubakar, 2016). There may truly be a powerful mafia that has grabbed the jugular of Nigeria while the President has been practically hypnotised by them. Whatever it is, only the President can

confirm if he thinks the current mafia is what he needs to deliver on his attractive promises to Nigerians made on the soap box (Momodu, 2016).

It would be recalled that many years after he was booted out of power Buhari, in an interview with the *The News* (cited in Vanguard, 2016), attributed some of the steps he took that were inimical to democracy and good governance to ‘fifth columnists’ within his regime. The invasion of the homes of opposition politicians including revered leaders like Chief Obafemi Awolowo in the wake of the coup that ousted Shagari from power Buhari attributed to these fifth columnists. From whichever perspective it is viewed, in the meantime, the dilemma of the President remains that, as captured by Adesina (2016): On one hand, the President appears to pander to the whims of some people, members of his kitchen cabinet or some acolytes. On the other, he wants to assert himself as everyone’s man who is no one’s man.

### *When Corruption Fights Back*

Buhari campaigned on a platform of ending waste and restoring probity, efficiency, and transparency (Ochonu, 2016). It is an open fact that in spite of the establishment of anti-corruption agencies and his seeming commitment to fight the social menace, corrupt practices grossly remained an albatross in the nations’ developmental efforts. Thus, as remarked by Larr (2015), it was a ray of hope flickering through the dark tunnel in expectation of a brutally honest soul-searching before the start of processes to make amends. But traditionally, Nigeria will never be itself if (in the informal language of the country) there was no “K-leg” in the smooth sail to redemption. Nuhu Ribadu once infamously remarked that corruption fights back whenever it is fought and he nearly lost his own life in the process.

Buhari had, during the Conference on Climate Change (COP22), in Marakech, Morocco, while having a meeting with the American Secretary of State, John Kerry, bemoaned the fact that his government's war against corruption had been grueling, adding that the perpetrators of the evil against Nigeria were viciously fighting back. While assuring Kerry that Nigeria was determined to emerge victorious, Buhari stated the obvious: that corrupt Nigerians had built a formidable arsenal of illicit wealth, which they were deploying against the government on diverse fronts (The Guardian, 2016).

Aside from soiling Nigeria's corporate image in the international community, all the social, economic and political structures in the country have been ruined by corruption. Social services and infrastructure are in a shambles. The people are pauperized as the ordinary people are always the victims. While the people wallow in abject poverty and want, members of the political class and their business class associates bask in stupendous stolen wealth (The Guardian, 2016). President

Muhammadu Buhari, by contrast, values simplicity: plain dress, a private house appropriate to a retired military officer who never made money on the side, and a modest private vehicle. There is little doubt that the president's personal simplicity adds credibility to his anti-corruption campaign (Campbell, 2016).

In the process of waging war against the menace, the country's elite has learned how to use the complicated legal system, its drawn-out legal processes and overburdened courts to develop successful defences against accusations of corruption or crime. According to Falana (cited in Adetola-Kazeem, 2016), some judges are granting interlocutory or perpetual injunctions to restrain the anti-graft agencies and the police from arresting, investigation and prosecuting politically exposed persons. The ban on granting of stay of proceedings by the Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015, is not being observed by the courts. Falana notes further:

Apart from the class solidarity usually extended to politically exposed persons by judges in all capitalist societies, the situation is compounded in Nigeria by judicial corruption and professional misconduct on the part of senior lawyers involved in the defence of corruption cases. Owing to lack of coordination in the trial of politically exposed persons, corruption is fighting back (ibid)

Today, there is a hashtag doing the rounds: #BringBack-Corruption. A tongue-in-cheek repudiation of the anti-corruption drive being spearheaded by President Muhammadu Buhari, the campaign nevertheless reflects real anger at rising hardship. Never mind that the main culprit of Nigeria's woes is the price of oil: at \$40 a barrel, a big comedown for a mono-commodity state whose cronies, schemers and skimmers have grown accustomed to the \$100-a-barrel lifestyle. Not a few Nigerians, even those too poor and too removed from power to leech off the petro-economy, are blaming Mr Buhari's war on graft for their misfortune (Pilling, 2016). As rightly argued by Ochonu (2016), without realizing it, they were making an insightful comment on how corruption is paradoxically, and contrary to conventional political rhetoric and anti-corruption discourse, the fuel of the Nigerian economy, sustaining everything from major real state transactions to the patronage economies of petty retailers. In Nigeria, the trickle-down effect of governmental corruption is enormous. Corruption generates secondary and tertiary ripples and transactional economies that benefit even the pepper seller in the market.

Mr Buhari has indeed made the pursuit of corruption, along with the fight against Boko Haram terrorists, his biggest priority, though the link with rising prices or diminishing fish portions is not entirely obvious. Despite there being little if any direct correlation, many say that a whole system once lubricated by under-the-table money has simply seized up (Pilling, 2016). Put differently, in Buhari's Nigeria, the avenues of leakage are being plugged and corruption is being fought, however imperfectly, preventing the trickles that traditionally lubricate the economy. This

has trapped funds, which usually circulate to fuel the economy, at the top of the state-dominated economic food chain (Ochonu, 2016).

Another dimension to how corruption is fighting back is how senior members of the inner Bar are refusing to be part of the resolve of the Federal Government to rid the judiciary of corruption. Following the October 7 and 8 2016 raids of courts by the Department of State Services (DSS), prosecution of the judges has been stalled as the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF) is reported to be having difficulty constituting panels to handle it (The Nation, 2016). As is customary in prosecuting high profile corruption cases, the AGF had thought senior lawyers who had been part of those handling such cases as members of the National Prosecution Coordinating Council (NPCC) would readily agree to take the job but they declined on the flimsy ground that the Federal Government was persecuting judicial officers. Ironically, the lawyers feel at home with handling the defence. It would appear that their action is not unconnected with the concurrent arrest and arraignment of some other SANs. Godwin Obla and Rickey Tarfa are among those the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) is prosecuting (The Nation, 2016).

## **6 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

There is no doubt that the scale of Nigeria's problems calls for the development of good competent and courageous team of leaders to drive the business of governance. Today, improving governance is universally recognized as a priority concern of all societies. It has become even more so because of heightened economic competition and the increased risks posed by the mismanagement of government revenues. Thus, the political will to carry out the enormous task of governance, which President Buhari is not lacking though, should not be compromised in the face of antagonism from forces within and outside his government. If political will is the compelling force for sound leadership quality, the ability to do what is right, what is relevant and what is attainable within the context of patriotic nationalism, then Nigerians are not expecting anything less from him particularly when their patience is being stretched by the daily socio-economic realities in the country. The ability of the President to implement policies that have nationalistic importance and relevance to the wellbeing of the citizenry without allowing pockets of interest (or a cabal as being insinuated) to detract him, will add fillip to his agenda.

There is the need for the citizens to become active participant in the governance process. The citizens must realize that they own the democratic process and as such they are strategically positioned to demand accountability, effective and efficient governance from the political leadership. Therefore, the politically active, effective, critical and well informed followership is fundamental to making democratic governance work as they 'can successfully

challenge and contest the ownership of the democratic space with the elites. This can be in the area of agenda setting, electoral participation, de-emphasizing resort to ethnic, sectarian and religious politics and holding politicians to account for their stewardship' (Omodia and Aliu, 2013: 41). This is against the trend of citizens being frivolously instigated by an aggrieved section of the political class for a narrow and selfish interest. The political space in the country has always been a bitter struggle for power among the gladiators to satisfy their primitive wealth-accumulation tendencies and, as usual, the unsuspecting mass of the people are the pawn in their chess game. In this circumstance, the needed change might be a mirage because there is no synergy between the leadership and the followership.

In leading the change however, Buhari, as a transformational leader, will do well to be reminded that leadership is about vision, service and ability to motivate and inspire people and to influence their actions and behaviours towards the progressive attainment of a shared vision, common goal and collective aspiration. Leading change, at a time such as this when the morale of the people is low and their expectations are high is not a tea party, but a huge responsibility that comes with so much burden and enormous challenges (OluwaKayode, 2015). As noted by Chia (2015), Buhari needs to treat Nigeria like a project. The advantages of running Nigeria like a project are that it cuts out delays, focuses on value delivery and stays on budget. The stakeholders are Nigerians and these are a high interest high power group, we need to see his quality plans, risk plans, budgets, and schedules particularly for the areas which need massive reforms.

Buhari is undoubtedly aware that he has his work cut out for him. Rather than erode public trust by trying hard to deny the magnitude of the promises he made, it would be better to honestly admit that most of them are impossible to fulfil, in the short term (Onigbinde, 2015). Beyond demonstrated acts of personal transparency, Suberu (2015) contends that Buhari must implement critical reforms to strengthen and professionalize Nigeria's decrepit and dysfunctional institutions for fighting corruption. This would involve promoting legislation and reforms that guarantee the tenure of anti-corruption officials, insulate the appointment of these officials from partisan politics, and give civic organizations prominent roles in shaping the composition and direction of these institutions. Finally, Nigeria must move to the forefront in the region, in the continent, and globally in interwoven ways: building effective state institutions, advancing democracy, and democratizing development (Joseph, 2016).

As the most populous country and largest economy in Africa, Nigeria is the most important country on the continent and has the potential to influence developments not only in West Africa but, indeed, the entire continent. The challenge, according to Diamond (2014), lies with the civilian institutions and actors of democracy: parties, politicians, legislators, judges, civil servants, and civil

society. Like all other elements of the Nigerian state, security institutions—the military, police, intelligence—are in need of reform and modernization, including significant investment in training and equipment for the challenges they confront. But it is the civilian political actors who must summon the will, the strategy, the resources, and the credibility to lead this process.

It should be noted that strong and patriotic leadership precedes all strong institutional formulation, building and establishment. Strong institutions and maintenance culture are outcomes of strong leadership that also establishes good laws and enforces them no matter who is involved. For Nigeria, the political, socio-cultural and economic crisis the country is witnessing today, as observed by Usman (2016), “is borne out of a system influenced by bad or ineffective leadership and corruption. While the various policies and programmes of successive government have become the source of deprivation, frustration, poverty and hunger to the poor majority, the few ones in government leadership positions channel resources meant for the provision of basic facilities and services like good roads, water, health, education etc into their private pockets”. Tempted by massive revenues that they control, political elites in Nigeria have long resorted to large-scale theft of oil revenues- and sometimes the oil itself.

It thus appears that President Buhari is overwhelmed by the task of leading Nigeria to progress and prosperity. He often blames the current socio-economic woes of Nigeria on the maladministration of PDP. He blames PDP for the pervasive corruption and moral decay bedeviling our country (Dahiru, 2016). While this bears testimony to the ugly past, Nigerians are desperately anticipating a departure from this past and signs of new dawn in their lives. The President must realise the reason he was voted into power – the perceived and real failures of the Jonathan presidency, economically and otherwise. Though Nigerians acknowledge the personal moral integrity of the president, this, unfortunately, is not enough; it should be garnished by an understanding character. Buhari’s integrity should rise beyond particularity.

Buhari has only one clear year left in his term to achieve improvements in governance, as governance in the fourth year of a president’s term is overshadowed by politics and elections. While fighting corruption and building a better international reputation are important, ensuring that domestic governance does not suffer is fundamental to building a strong nation and long-term sustainable peace in Nigeria (Sotola, 2016). The government and the people of Nigeria must understand that change is a process and must be prepared to go through the process to bring the required change to Nigerians. For Adesina (2016), Buhari has enormous powers and even much more enormous influence, which he can use for the good of the people of Nigeria. He is in a vantage position to strengthen Nigeria’s governance by ignoring petty sentiments and by institutionalising respect for the country’s different institutions. More importantly, he has enormous

goodwill, enough moral capital, to turn deaf ears to the distracting noise of politics and put a laser-like focus on service to the people as well as a genuine fight against corruption.

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