POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND POVERTY IN NIGERIAN DEMOCRATIC STATE: ANY GROUNDS FOR JUSTIFICATION?

- ONUKWUFOR, MAXWELL EJIKEME-

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Supervisor: Prof. Göran Collste
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ABSTRACT

There is no gainsaying the fact that the “moral” problems associated with corruption in Nigeria are the cause of poverty and hunger in the country. Political and economic inequality have become the order of the day as Nigerians struggle for survival and proper means of alleviation of these precarious situations. Proper understanding of the meaning of corruption and its moral implications are important in order to find a remedy to the problems that go with corruption. The demand for clarification of corruption and basis for its justification, “if any”, calls for a nationalist approach to harness the potentialities that abound in Nigeria.
1.1 INTRODUCTION:

Many societies at one stage or another have witnessed cases of corrupt practices in one form or another in their socio-political life, and even many more are susceptible to corruption. This is because some of them have experienced the effect of poverty that is associated with corrupt practices at one stage or another in their socio-political existence, as a country or nation. It is widely acknowledged that once the political system is corrupt, it will surely manifest in different sectors of the society, thereby causing poverty and drastic reduction of pace of development. However, there is no gain in saying that corruption exists in the socio political institutions in Nigeria, both in her past and present existence as a nation.

According to the 1996 study of corruption by the Transparency International and the Goettingen University; Nigeria ranked as the most corrupt nation, among fifty four nations listed in the study, with Pakistan as the second highest. As events went further in 1998, Transparency International corruption perception index of eighty five countries, saw Nigeria come eighty one out of the eighty five countries ranked as most corrupt countries in the world. Again in 2001 Transparency International corruption perception index, Nigeria went further downwards by ranking ninety out of ninety one countries, with a second position as most corrupt nation, with Bangladesh coming first.

This statement by the chairman of Transparency International United Kingdom, Laurence Cockcroft, in London, buttresses this claim that corruption exists in the country and consequent to that, the country is on the high scale amongst the most corrupt countries in the world:

Today’s Corruption Perception Index demonstrates that it is not only poor countries, where corruption thrives, levels of corruption are worryingly high in European countries…and in potentially rich oil countries, such as Nigeria, Angola, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Kazakhstan,

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1 Available at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_corruption](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_corruption) visited on 24th May 2006
2 Transparency International, is a non-governmental organisation devoted to the combating of corruption, and brings civil society, business, and governments together in a powerful global coalition. They work at both national and international level, to curb both the supply and demand of corruption and in their effort to make long-term gains against corruption, Transparency International focuses on prevention and reforming systems
Libya, Venezuela and Iraq.

The question then is, why so much corruption in these countries and which institutions in the society are the highest rate of corrupt practices witnessed?

In response to this question, in 2005, the Global Corruption Barometer report, by the Transparency international, saw the political systems and their political parties as most corrupt institutions in society. In forty five out of the sixty nine countries surveyed, political parties were ranked as the institution most affected by corruption, especially with cases of bribery, which demonstrates an increase from 2004’s results, where thirty six out of sixty two countries listed their party systems as the most corrupt institutions.

Basing my arguments on the reality of these results, garnered from the reports of the Transparency International, in the corruption perception index and the global corruption barometer, from 1996 to 2005, I came to the realization that there are “moral problems” associated with corruption in general and bribery in particular, a form of corruption that is prevalent in the political structure of most countries of Africa. This aspect of corruption affects the electoral system of many developing countries of Africa, like Nigeria.

Thus, the problems encountered with corrupt practices as it concern bribery, in the electoral system in Nigeria have continued, nowadays, in the Transparency International’s reports on Corruption. In fact amongst the several reasons given for incessant change of government officials in political offices in the country is the issue of bribery.

A lot of Nigerian politicians have deviated from their public role into making wrong choices for their private ends; violating rules against political activities, which have had over years a consequences on the country’s developmental process, and have, led the country into state of poverty.

What is then, the meaning of corruption? The meaning of corruption seems elusive as many scholars in politics and ethics have disputed amongst themselves as to what meaning should be given to it, because of the various forms, corrupt practices have been manifesting in societies and being exhibited by government officials in various societies. Up until now it seems that a widely acceptable and encompassing definition that covers all its features is yet to be announced. As the World Bank’s notion of corruption as an abuse of public office for

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5 Available at [http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/gcb](http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/gcb) visited on 9th May.
personal gain err on the side of over simplification according to Quinones,\textsuperscript{7} Heidenheimer, A.J’s, attempt at a definition of corruption, is too simple as well, when he posited claims regarding the calculations affecting the gravity of corrupt actions taking place in any given society. He argues that, “a corrupt civil servant often in this case a government official regards his office as a business venture, the income of which he will seek to maximize profitably to his own advantage. The office will then become a maximizing unit for him. The size of his income will depend upon the market situation and his talents for finding the point of maximal gain on the public’s demand curve”.\textsuperscript{8} To think of it, this definition by Heidenheimer is more an affirmation of calculations affecting the rate or extent of corruption existing in a defined environment and the ability of the office holder in finding areas of his jurisdiction to exploit for his optimal financial benefit. It does not put into consideration, “the moral environment”, “the moral state of the individual” and “the motivation for his corrupt actions” and all other types of benefits (ends) outside financial benefits that may accrue from corrupt practices, like quest for honour and fame, witnessed in abuse of power by public authorities.

Nye, J.S, in his own definition gives a public office centered definition of corruption by proposing that:

\begin{quote}
Corruption is behaviours which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private-regarding pecuniary or status gains; or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence.\textsuperscript{9}
\end{quote}

In Nye’s definition, we perceive a problem that lies in a “proper understanding of public role” as he postulates it. The problem lies in deciding what a “private benefit entails and encompasses”, judging by the differences in choices, actions and environment in which such corrupt behaviour might occur. Not forgetting the fact that laws and the way they are practiced in one society may not be the same or identical with those laws that exists in another society, plus the way they are practiced. Consequently, there exist more often than not dissimilarities of conditions under which corrupt practices take place.


However, notwithstanding what we understand as meaning of corruption, and its constituents which vary from country to country as a result of the differences in ways norms and moral principles that guide and regulate societies are practiced amongst and within societies; and putting into consideration the apparent differences in political institutions that abound in given societies; the obvious fact is that corruption exists and they are not only illegal behaviours, considering the extent the laws are contravened as they occur, but they also have moral implications, which are more often, unfavourable to societies when they occur. We shall discuss this moral aspect of corrupt practices when we look at the moral implications of political corruption in chapter three.

At this point, let me note to the reader that a moral understanding and analysis of the meaning of corruption is shown, as an ethics student, for a good grasping of the content of this work, which will be looking at the possibility of pin-pointing the grounds for justification of corrupt practices like bribery in a legitimate or “illegitimate” political structure, with emphasis on Nigeria. This discussion is important to show the possibility of finding good justifying grounds for giving foreign assistance to some countries of Africa, like Nigeria, where corruption is manifest, in this era of globalization and quest for global justice. Worthy also to be noted in this work is the claim by the nationalists, that developing countries as communities have special duties and obligations of distributive justice towards members of their community, in order to improve their living standard. This implies that these developing countries have the capacity and the natural resources at their disposal, with which to use for the building up of their “problematic” political structure and economic situation, for eradication of poverty, and alleviation of sufferings of their people.

The question then is? Is there any moral basis to justify corruption in developing countries of Africa, especially Nigeria? And, if we cannot morally justify corrupt practices, as I consistently argued in this work, why would we then, justify the need and quest for foreign assistance in form of aid, by developing countries of Africa, and the giving of aid by developed countries in the name of global redistributive justice? Considering the fact that aids have been given in the past and aids have been mis-managed with time. This can be deduced taking a closer look at the brief statistics of aid in chapter four; the apparent level of hunger; the poor state of environment and poverty that pervade Africa in general and Nigeria in particular.

Let me now look at the three ethical issues that underlie this work as I embark in this discussion to find adequate justifying grounds for my position and claims that corruption,
especially bribery that pervade the political system cannot be rationalized and justified at any point in time. And that the nationalists’ position and emphasis for special obligation of distributive justice amongst co-nationals could be a workable remedy for an eradication of poverty in Nigeria caused by corrupt practices.

1.2 ETHICAL QUESTIONS:

To achieve this aim I set out by asking these questions and answering them in the various chapters and sections of this work.

1. **What is the meaning of corruption? And what are the moral implications underlying the meaning of corruption?** I will try to analyse the various meanings of corruption by some authors in chapter one and argue in chapter three that different forms of corrupt practices especially bribery, have moral implications. I will show that Bribery, which is the most prevalent form of corruption, especially in Nigeria, has a moral significance, and is capable of hindering the legitimate political structure of the country. I will do this by first analysing in section 2.1 and 2.2, the nature and purpose of any given political system, which is building Trust and ensuring Transparency in purpose and in dealings with the members of the society. Trust and Transparency are necessary for the smooth running of any political system and within the society in relation to those who have been entrusted the power to rule the affairs of the people. I will further pinpoint the problems with the Nigerian Electoral process as it involves gift giving and bribery in chapter four. And the various conditions that necessitate these factors to pervade the political structure in Nigeria in line with the conditions and arguments of Seumas Miller, Peter Roberts and Edward Spence, in their book entitled, Corruption and Anti-Corruption: An Applied Philosophical Approach.

2. **Is there any moral ground to justify corruption?** In chapter one, as I examined the different conceptions of corruption to understand the concept better, I will try in chapter three to find means of justifying corrupt practices. I argued that corrupt practices cannot be justified in any way, following the consequentialist type of arguments posited by Seuma Miller et al, that corrupt practices not only bring about poverty, but are also illegal acts and morally wrong behaeviours that lead to the despoiling of the character of those indulging in them and even those that support and
are in favour of them. No matter how we may rationalise or try to justify them, corrupt practices have a consequentialist effect, as it undermines the legitimate process of any political system, and have a bad effect on a nation as they cause poverty. I will also use three important ethical theories as my analytic tool in chapter three for this justification process.

3. Is there any Moral Justification for Foreign Aid to Nigeria? In chapter four I will try to examine the possibility of any moral justification for foreign assistance in form of aid to Nigeria, a country whose economy is constantly crippled by corruption. This examination is important after being able to analyze; the different conceptions of corruption in chapter one; the proper understanding of a legitimate political process which corruption tends to undermine in chapter two, and the moral problems associated with corruption in chapter three. I will look at the question whether Nigeria is entitled to foreign aid in the face of incessant corrupt practices in government, especially that constituted by bribery which is an index of corruption that pervades the system? Is she entitled to foreign aid in the face of rich natural and human resources? I will therefore try to analyze this in section 4.4 of chapter four, and see the possibility of such justification, considering the conditions on ground so far. I will do this by postulating the Nationalist claim.

1.3 EXPLICATION OF CONCEPTS:

POLITICS:

The definition of politics is highly contested. This is because a lot of aspects of social life are so difficult to be identified under the political sphere, and it is often deliberated which sphere of public activity, politics can be associated with. Therefore, it seems politics affects and associates with all aspect of human life as there is dispute on what and what really constitute the best approach to the definition of politics. For this reason, politics has assumed array of titles that are associated with it. Titles like Government, Politics, Political structure and political institutions. All these are umbrellas protecting politics as an area of administering public good and welfare.10 In a descriptive definition, Politics will be defined as the practise

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of the art of science of directing and administering states or other political units. It is often assumed that it exists at the level of government and the state and must involve party competition. Thus, this idea of politics is very limited in time and space to certain kinds of relatively liberal, pluralistic societies, which allow relatively open debate. This is because the definition offers no constraint on its “application on all spheres of life”, in those confined societies where politics exists and manifests openly. A modern view applies politics only to human beings who are able to communicate symbolically and make statements; those who are able to invoke principles, argue and disagree with each other. The view holds that it occurs where people try to disagree about the distribution of reasons and have at least some procedures for the resolution of such disagreement. It cannot exist in a state of nature, like the state in Hobbes theory, where there is disorder and no proper “rights” to do things for oneself and for others. Here, politics encompasses all activities through which people make, preserve and amend the laws; and the norms and moral principles under which they live. It is inextricably related to the “phenomena of conflict and co-operation.” It brings to mind the existence of conflicting opinions, different wants, competing needs and opposing interests that guarantees disagreement about the rules under which people live. People by recognising the need to influence these rules or ensure that they are upheld, must therefore work together with others. This is why it is often shown that within the heart of politics is a process of conflict resolution, in which conflicting ideas or competing interests are reconciled with one another for there to be stability.

Andrew Heywood in his book, Key Concepts in Politics, postulates four different notions of politics, which will help us understand my task as we proceed, since governments which do not fulfil these requirements are considered illegitimate.

Firstly, Heywood identifies Politics as specifically the art of government and the activities of the state. In this view, he sees politics essentially as an activity bound on the state, which means that most people, institutions and social activities would be left out of the political sphere, or regarded as being outside politics or not actively involved in politics.

Secondly, he views politics specifically a “public” activity that is associated with the correct conduct and management of the community’s affairs rather than with the activities that involve the “private” concerns of the individual. He believes, in line with Plato and Aristotle that only within a political community can human beings live the “good life.”

The third notion is that he sees politics as a particular means of resolving conflict, which could take the form of compromise and negotiation, rather than with force or naked power. Politics here is portrayed as “the art of the possible”, which suggests a distinction between political solutions to problems involving peaceful debate and arbitration or military force. Finally, he associates politics with the production and distribution of resources in the course of social existence. In this view, politics is about power, which is the ability to achieve a desired outcome. Definitions, such as one and three, that relate politics to the art of government, public affairs or peaceful compromise are based upon an essentially consensus model of society, which portrays government as essentially benign, and emphasises the common interest of the community. Whereas, those that emphasise distribution of power and resources tend to be based upon conflict models of society that stress structural inequalities and injustices.

However, for the purpose of this study, I will always refer to the second and fourth definition, that stress the need for distribution of power and resources, that tend to focus on conflict models of society, that emphasize inequalities and injustices. They describe so well the understanding of politics as it’s supposed to be practiced in any legitimate political structure, according to John Rawls in his two books entitled; The Law of Peoples and A Theory of people. Any deviation from this purpose makes the political structure illegitimate and unpopular amongst the people.

CORRUPTION:

The actual meaning of corruption has been widely disputed. This could be as a result of different forms of corruption and their features that vary from country to country in the way they are practiced, and in the way which they consistently evolve in different political contexts. Therefore to locate the basis of corrupt practices in any given political system is not a straightforward task. We shall see this in sections 2.4 of chapter two, as I look at the general conditions for corrupt practices according to Seumas Miller et al, and in 4.3 of chapter four, where I will look at the conditions seen in the case of Nigeria.

In a definition by the Economic and financial crimes commission Act in Nigeria, corrupt actions are those that involve, the non-violent criminal and illicit activity committed with the

15 Heywood,A.,Key Concepts in politics, ,p.35-37
objective of earning wealth illegally either individually or in a group or organized manner, thereby violating existing legislations governing the economic activities of government and its administration and would include, bribery, fraud…money laundering, …and so on.16 This definition emphasize the implication of corrupt practices as they violate the laws and norms governing the society, and further identifies the motivation and end for corrupt action which is wealth. Again an analysis of the Etymological meaning of the word corruption, which comes from the Latin word “corrumpere”, interpreted as; to taint, or destroy the purity of someone or an institution; to pervert ,to debase, or to spoil someone; or the quality of being corrupt or exhibiting of corrupt beheaviour17; and the definition of corruption given by the BBC English Dictionary as, dishonesty and illegal beheaviour by people in position of authority or power, the corruption of someone being the process of making them behave in a way that is morally wrong,18 brings us to the realization that the definitions recognise a fact that, certain features are implicitly significant in corrupt behaviours, for instance that people are often engaged in acts of corruption, which violate the laws of society and harm the socio economic life of the people. They all recognise also the fact that the goal of corrupt actions are always for monetary benefit. But then in a wider sense, we are led to understand through Seuma Miller et al’s analysis of corruption, that through proper moral analysis of incidence of corrupt practices, we can understand the moral significance of corrupt behaviours, say for instance, an individual can comfortably engage in an act of corruption without involving other people, by luring people into certain wrong practices, without himself having any urge for financial benefits. Other benefits, such as desire for fame and quest for honour can motivate a person for such corrupt behaviours. Miller et al further stipulate that benefits as such do not always flow to the one engaging in it, as often implied by most definitions of corruption; benefits can flow to other people related to the person engaged in acts of corruption, in one way or the other. In their book entitled Corruption and Anti-corruption, an applied philosophical Approach, Seuma Miller et al enunciates the fact that, to understand morally the concept of corruption, as it affects the political system, we have to properly organise the political institutions, and the laws and moral principles, to be well understood, specified and clarified. Then emphasis has to be laid “on the people”, “their moral convictions” and “the moral status of the people around them”. Then, finally “the ethics and moral principles that guide the society” where they function. This claim implies that there is no point, to limit our

understanding of corruption, to the definitions that restrict it to “abuse of entrusted power, for personal benefits, based on self-interest”, as most definitions imply. We need therefore to give corruption a wider ethical reach which will enable us to interpret better the meaning and occasions of corrupt practices. This process will go a long way to identify such wrong practices as they manifest in societies if they need to be dealt with appropriately.

Now, the question is what is corruption according to the moral perspective? And, when can it be said that an act of corruption has taken place? Senturia postulates in a bid to answer the question that the best opinion and morality of the time should be able to examine the intent and setting of an act and should be able to judge it to represent a sacrifice of public good for private benefit, it is only then that an act can be held corrupt.19 For Senturia, a corrupt practice like bribery will occur when an authority is charged with certain practice based on some moral principles; involving monetary or other forms of rewards not legally or officially provided him, induced to take actions which favour the giver and thereby damaging the public interest.20 Friedrich in giving this definition retained an important moral aspect of corruption, which is harm to the public.21 Another understanding of Corruption is that given by Tarkowski. He argues that corrupt practices are not as a result of outcome of actions, but a deeper problem with the structure of politics, and in the way power and authority are exhibited in the society. For him corruption is however seen as an abuse, judging by the social standards and moral principles guiding the societal system of public order, role and resource allocation. For Tarkowski, corruption is any activity motivated by private interest, which violates the binding rules of distribution which refers not only to the letter of the law, but also to norms recognized as binding by society or to the system’s official norms and operational codes. For him, corrupt activities are also those activities regarded by society as illegitimate or seen by the power elite as contradictory to the logic of the system.22 Tarkowski refers not only to patterns of behaviour, but also to institutions in which corrupt practices take place. Emphasis, therefore, is on the political institutions and environment that help to encourage corrupt practices. The focus of this definition is not on specific actions, but on the standard of ethical values of the political system of the society. If the institution is corrupt in the society, corrupt practices will be facilitated in the environment, and assumed as a way of life by the people. Further explicating these views the ethicists, I Seumas Miller et al elucidates that

corruption is a highly immoral activity, but for them all immoral activities would not be included in corrupt practices. They specify that, the act of killing someone for instance is a moral wrong, but is not corruption. They affirm that:

At the core of different acts of corruption, corrupt actions have something in common, namely that they consist of the performance of a typically habitual act that is a despoiling of moral character or undermining of an otherwise morally legitimate institutional process or purpose.\(^{23}\)

Miller et al argue that a corrupt action will be performance of a typically habitual acts that would go a long way to violate the moral character of an individual that engage in it as well as undermining the morally legitimate political institution in which the action take place. Emphasis should be laid on the fact that corrupt actions (a) consist of performance of wrong acts that are habitual (b) Have a consequence of being able to despoil the moral character of the person engaged in them (c) and being able to undermine the morally legitimate institutional processes; whether political or economic.

If these three features are implied in corrupt actions, therefore, will corruption be morally justified at any point? Is bribery which pervades many political systems be always blameworthy? If we consider the legitimacy of institutions of which corrupt practices tend to undermine and what constitutes legitimate or illegitimate political structure, one might argue that there can be “good” that accrue from corrupt actions in some cases, if we put some conditions that exist in some societies into consideration. Actions such as bribery given to a public office holder who has no morally legitimate basis for his assumption of the role will not be seen as morally bad, for it will be clearly overridden by so many claims, of which one could be that of defending the right to life of the person who offered the bribe, since he knows that the office holder has no moral basis for his existence in that position. (Refer to chapter three)

Huntington affirms the need for some level of corruption as he posits that when we consider growth in economy, the next thing worse than a society with dishonest government is one with a rigid, over-centralized and honest government.\(^{24}\) In Huntington’s view, there should not be a strict moral environment, since a form of corrupt practice, like bribery would help break obstacles and improve governmental efficiency. But then, is this always the case?

\(^{24}\) Huntington, S.P., Political Order in Changing Societies, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1968, p.69
Since, in some developing countries of Africa, the stages of development have not reached a point where such distinctions between harmful effects that constitute corruption and less harmful ones can be made. These developing countries often categorise all forms of corruption as morally wrong as they all lead to the undermining of their legitimate political system and economy. To rationalize or speculate corruption the way Huntington puts it is therefore, immoral and problematic because, perpetrators would find every means available to evade detection, even when common sense tells them that it is morally wrong to indulge in them, and that corrupt practices often have devastating effects on the economy. Corrupt practices, therefore, no matter what form it takes will keep on lingering, if any form of it is condoned within the social life of these developing countries. This is because there are no adequate institutional mechanism for control, such as transparency and accountability in those environments. The corrupt practices inherent to unsupervised financial systems have contributed to the recent political and financial crisis in developing countries of Africa. The bribery breaking obstacles in governance argument by Huntington in this context therefore is insidious since bribes will serve to override institutional regulations and harm social aims and institutional legitimacy. (Refer to my arguments in Chapter three) This argument by Huntington is morally wrong because, by focusing on bribery, it fails to take into account that bribery represents a theft of public resources for private end. These bribes end up being diverted from treasury revenues, which impair stability. And the politician who receives the bribe tends to siphon the funds to oversea accounts, without using them for productivity in the country.

With our discussion so far, we understand that corruption exists and that the meaning of corruption is identified in different ways, they are practiced and seen in the society; like a community offering a bribe to a government official to influence his decisions to favour them; a party member giving money to the party or to the people who are the electorate to be nominated for political position and so on. These are all different ways corruption in the form of bribery can manifest in any given environment, and through which we can identify bribery.

I will now try to give the definition and analysis of bribery, in order to show it’s implication on the society and how it exists in the political system. What is bribery? John.T.Noonan defines bribery as a morally deficient action, offered as an inducement improperly influencing the performance of a public function, which is made to be gratuitously exercised.\footnote{Noonan,J.T, Bribes,Macmillan,New York,1984,p.11}
is the payment in money or in kind taken or given in a morally wrong way. He elucidates that bribery is a crime; a form of political corruption, which is considered unethical; implying a sum or gift given which alters the behaviour of the person in ways not consistent with the duties of that person. This definition, by the Wikipedia, sees bribe as a gift given with the intent to influence a person to act in an “unofficial capacity”. It may come in different varieties, like money, good, right in action, privilege, object of value, any promise or undertaking to induce or influence the action, vote, or influence of a person in a public office. This means that corruption in the political sphere that has to do with bribery is a failure to comply with minimum moral standards, rules and norms enshrined in laws or regulations, and loss of this innocence by a political office holder will be a process of corruption relative to an ideal moral state of the system. If we claim that the case of bribes are morally wrong, we put into consideration the fact that they corrupt the institutional process, making them illegitimate; they have a corrupting effect on the moral character of the bribe taker, and on the moral character of the bribe giver. We may conclude that the action of a bribe given will be the expression of a corrupt moral character. Note that emphasis is on the moral status of the individual who engages in bribery. Summarily, the act of bribery will be wrong because it has a corrupting effect on one who engages in it, since the violation of his moral character will lead to the undermining of the institutional processes and roles.

1.3.1 WHAT IS POLITICAL CORRUPTION:

Political Corruption is defined as the misuse of public or governmental power for illegitimate purposes which are, usually secret and for private gain. The kind of political system any given society operates would be a major factor that will determine the occasions of corrupt practices, depending on how weak or strong such institution is found to be, and goals it seeks to achieve for the welfare of the people.

In Nigeria for instance, since May 1999 when she went back to civilian rule, the structure of governance, and the democratic institution, which is supposed to be the government of the people by the people and for the people, has become so weak, that the level of corruption has

28 Seuma, M, Peter, R and Edward, S., Corruption and Anti-Corruption: An Applied Philosophical Approach,p.4
29 Seuma, M, Peter, R and Edward, S., Corruption and Anti-Corruption: An Applied Philosophical Approach,p.6
risen tremendously.\textsuperscript{31} In political corruption, Government officials that are supposed to be trustees of the common wealth turn into wolves enriching their private interest. They do not only undermine their obligation, but also misuse the power delegated to them, for their own private gain. A relevant question should be, does political corruption have any moral implication? And in line with the moral analysis discussed in this work, I will say that political corruption are morally wrong actions, like an act of bribery manifested by a political office holder to undermine a legitimate political role, held by him. This is because bribery represents a theft of public resources for private end. And the politician who receives the bribe abuses his political office; since he tends to siphon the funds into overseas accounts, without using them for any public good in the country. He exhibits a morally corrupt character to undermine a legitimate political process.\textsuperscript{32} Here those in political office misuse the power and authority given to them by the way they exercise their role in government, a role which is supposed to be used to improve the living standard of the people. They turn such a role for their private advantage.

In the political sphere of activity per se, we see such abuses in the electoral malpractice and in vote rigging. Such abuses in the system take the form of bribery which is the means used by politician to achieve their desired goal; here they have to offer bribes, in the form of money or incentives to people in order to get elected to positions and occupy certain prestigious political roles.

In chapter two, I will try to formulate a just political structure, to see how the structure can be corrupted based on Rawls idea of public reason and the theory of justice in the society, as shown in Rawls two great works; The Law of People and The Theory of Justice.

1.3.2 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

I will like to highlight to the reader, before proceeding to the next chapter, that this is a work in philosophy, bothering on ethical issues that are highly controversial.

The issue of corruption is controversial in philosophical debates, because most definitions given to it have not fully expressed the ethical implications associated with it, but often fall under the problem of oversimplification, which often go too far to misrepresent the true meaning of the concept. Secondly, the issue of global justice and foreign assistance has

\textsuperscript{31} Available at: http://www.transparency.org/cpi/index.html#cpi

\textsuperscript{32} Seumas, M, Peter, R and Edward, S., Corruption and Anti-Corruption: An Applied Philosophical Approach,p.7
dominated the debate of most applied philosophical works that many people have consistently argued the justification to give or not to give foreign assistance. I hereby want to acknowledge my recognition of limitations of this study.

Firstly, I think that the issues discussed here, as it concerns Political Corruption would have been elaborately and scientifically handled by a political scientist and issues of data and discussions about foreign aid done by an expert in economic issues. Owing to this fact, my discussion on political corruption and data, especially on foreign aid may not be found very systematically handled.

Secondly, the moral analysis and discussion on Corruption is an issue that not too many ethicists have dealt with. Due to this fact, it has not been easy to get so many ethical views about corruption in general and bribery in particular. Thus, this is basically the reason why Seumas Miller et al’s book entitled corruption, and Anti-corruption: An Applied Philosophical Approach is used extensively in this work, as most of the arguments and claims made represent those of the authors.

Thirdly, this work relied heavily on internet sources for data about global justice, aid, Nigerian situation and so on, as many books on these issues were not accessible to the author at the course of writing. Owing to this fact, this work encountered great difficulty in getting appropriate facts and figures about the issues mentioned above. Be that as it may, the records so far points to the fact that, corruption has a moral significance, which constitutes injustices that are witnessed in inequalities in wealth and resources in Nigeria.
CHAPTER TWO

2.1 LEGITIMATE POLITICAL STRUCTURE

In my definition on politics in Chapter one of this work, I presented two important meanings of politics by Heywood, which I deem important to always refer back to in realising the aim of this work, as the definitions are also in consonance to John Rawls ideas of the legitimate political structure. I will argue here that the political structure of any country, in order to live up to its expectation as a morally legitimate institution; instituted as a public activity, concerned with the correct conduct and management of the affairs of the community; that is not just for personal concerns of individuals; has to equip itself with a structure that is legitimate. I propose that only within the political community, which is legitimately structured that human beings can live a “good life”.

What is then, a legitimate political structure? And under what condition can a political structure be considered legitimate? I, try to look at these pertinent questions and see how I can proffer some answers to them. To define legitimacy of government, we can enunciate that, legitimacy as is witnessed in politics is the popular acceptance of a governing regime or laws as an authentic reliable authority. Legitimacy describes a system of governance, where the concept government will be understood to have the wider sphere of influence on the people. The word legitimacy therefore can be interpreted either in a normative or a positive way. For the former, as emphasised by moral philosophy, something is legitimate if one approves of it, and for the latter, which gets attention in political science, an institution is legitimate, if such approval is general among those subject to its authority. This means that, the concept of legitimacy as applied in this discussion, involves the normative and positive perspectives. Here issues of legitimacy will be linked to those of consent, as legitimacy is considered a basic condition for rule; without a minimal of it a government will collapse. From this discussion we deduce that for any government to claim legitimacy over the people, it has to first of all elicit the consent of the people, under the condition that it is capable of ensuring equity and justice to the society. Now, when we emphasise that the just and legitimate powers of any government issues from the consent of the people, we would understand that the focus

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33 Available at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legitimacy_(political_science)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legitimacy_(political_science)) visited on 13th May 2006
is always on the word “just” and not just on consent, since citizens will willingly give out their consent to a government that is fair and just.

John Rawls describes a society that is fair and just or legitimate, when he makes an allusion in his book entitled; a theory of justice, that justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is that of systems of thought. He makes it explicitly clear that the primary subject of justice is the basic structure of society; we cannot therefore, discuss the idea of justice outside the society. Rawls further enunciates the characteristics of societies that can be considered just and legitimate. That is to say that, for any society to be regarded as a legitimate society it must exhibit some components that portray it as just. And because of the fact that some societies are regarded as unjust, there will also be descriptive properties that make them that way; properties like absence of distributive justice and existence of inequality. Therefore for a society to be regarded as just, there must be a good distributive network and justice principles guiding the way the resources are being shared and distributed for equality to be maintained. Rawls continues thereafter to discuss the reason for inequality in society, caused by the natural lottery in nature, and he proposes for a correction of these bad lucks in society, by discussing two views on the equality of peoples:

One holds that equality is just, or good in itself, the law of people, on the other hand, holds that inequalities are not always unjust, and that when they are, it is because of their unjust effects on the basic structure of the society of peoples, and on relations among peoples and among their members.34

He proposes the need for Justice in the society and explains what his conception of justice as fairness would mean in the face of inequalities. For him the guiding idea is that the principles of justice are those that free and rational persons are concerned with to further their own interests, and people would accept them in an initial position of equality, as it will define the fundamental terms of their association. He posits that;

In justice as fairness the original position of equality corresponds to the state of nature in the traditional theory of the social contract. This original position is not, of course, thought of as an actual historical state of affairs, much as a primitive condition of a culture. It is understood as a purely hypothetical situation characterised so as to lead to a certain conception of justice.35

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The parties in the original position have to decide which principles they would adopt to govern their society. This original position is characterised to ensure that any chosen principles will be fair, thus various forms of knowledge will be excluded. It will ensure that the kinds of social co-operation that can be entered into by rational persons and the forms of government that can be established will be such that no one is disadvantaged in the choice of principles by the outcome of natural chance or the contingency of social circumstances. He holds that this initial position is fair, and as long as its fair, the chosen principles to attain it will be fair. He argues that it is necessary that the parties be ignorant of their social position, class, natural assets and abilities including intelligence. People in this original position, acting in their own interest would agree on the basic principles that all social values: liberty, and opportunity, income and wealth, and the basis of self respect, are to be distributed equally, unless an unequal distribution of all values is to everyone’s advantage. This principle simply means that all persons have a right to an equal minimum standard of living, and that the promotion of peoples well being in the state should come first before any other priority, and that each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties, compatible with a similar system of liberty for all. This means that since all parties are in a state of equal ignorance about their own prospects, they have no reason to accept any inequality of distribution, unless they are sure that everyone will gain from such inequality. Rawls reiterated the justice principle, which states that: in a state of uncertainty, it is rational to choose the option for which the worst possible outcome is the best among the entire alternative. The practical implication of this principle of justice in a legitimate political structure is that income and wealth should be redistributed through taxation, unless and until any remaining inequality improves the position even of the worst off.

Rawls further explains the nature of consent that is given to a legitimate government in any society with his idea of public reason. He also used this idea of public reason to discuss further the notion of legitimacy of the political system. This Idea specifies at the deepest level the basic moral and political values that are to determine a government’s relationship to the citizens and to that of other societies. Rawls tries to examine and explain with this Idea, the issue of public good as it concerns questions of fundamental political justice, in a constitutional democratic society. Having noted this therefore, we can ask the question, how did this idea of public reason by Rawls arise? According to Rawls, the idea of public reason arises from a conception of democratic citizenship in a constitutional democracy, and for him

this fundamental political relation of citizens have two features; A relation of citizens to the basic structure of society and, a relation to other free and equal citizens who exercise same power as a collective body. These two features give rise to the question of how when matters of justice are at stake, how citizens so related can be bound to honour the structure of their constitutional democratic regime and abide by the statutes and laws enacted under it. For Rawls, citizens are reasonable when, viewing one another as free and equal in a system of social cooperation over generations, they are prepared to offer one another fair terms of cooperation according to what they consider the most reasonable conception of political justice, and agreeing to act on those terms, they do so at the cost of their own interests in particular situations, provided that other citizens also accept those terms, as free and equal citizens, and not dominated or manipulated, or under pressure of an inferior political position. Even though citizens will differ in their conceptions of political justice they think is the most reasonable, they will still agree that the conceptions of justice are reasonable. Therefore, the legal process expressing the opinion of the majority will be a legitimate law, which even when thought not to be the most reasonable by all, or appropriate, will still be politically and morally binding on all, as citizens and accepted as such, because of the trust and consent given to the constitutional democratic government, and for the fact that the conceptions of political justice satisfy the “criterion of reciprocity”.

What necessitates and binds the principle of justice as posited by Rawls in the political society, which is composed of person’s deficient of comprehensive doctrines or theories of the good? Rawls implies that the answer is Trust. He proposes that interpersonal trust among the members of a reasonably just society and their trust in the institutional values, of the social structures and political mechanisms, are at the heart of what keeps the society together. Making a case for the principles of justice that form the core doctrine of the political conception of society, Rawls relies upon the possibility of trust. Ultimately, what seems to bind the society together in Rawl’s view the value of civic life, and which has the ability to sustain this civic life depends upon the existence of a civic virtue; Trust. In Rawl’s perspective, citizens are not only capable of forming a conception of the good, but are also able to acquire and act upon a conception of justice and fairness when they believe that social institutions embody these conceptions, and they have reasonable assurance that others will do

38 *Rawls, J., The Law of Peoples, pp. 132-133. “(Criterion for reciprocity as Rawls puts it is understood as when a reason and belief for political power is sufficient for people to reasonably believe, that they might accept such reasons reasonably. This happens when everyone in society have sufficiently fulfilled their role, and the political authority being able to fulfil its role to the people)”.
their part. These citizens tend to develop trust, transparency, and confidence in the society where they envisage a just and fair arrangement. This is to say that citizens will comply with rules and principles when they see other citizens complying with them. Thus, these virtues of trust, transparency and confidence strengthen and develop, as formidable arrangement for cooperation, ensuring that the basic political structure will remain successful.

Let us look at the meaning of Trust and Transparency, as they exist in a truly legitimate political structure, if they would be relevant to the citizens of that society. Noting the fact that if the political institutions in societies are found wanting in respect to these virtues, then, the conclusion can be drawn that the political institutions are illegitimate.

2.2 TRUST

I have argued so far the importance of legitimate structuring of the political institutions, for trust to be gained in the political activities of any society, since trust shown in the activities of the political office holders by the people is a veritable tool in any political system for development and success, as can be deduced in the understanding of legitimate political structure by Rawls.

In general, Trust is defined as the belief in the competence of an entity to act dependably, securely, reliably within a specified context, a belief which is influenced by the individual’s opinion about certain features in the institutions in a society that are characterised by honesty, truthfulness, competence and reliability.\(^40\) Political trust in particular, relates to the relationships between a people and the political leadership and their political institutions. Because of this relationship, political trust then becomes an essential feature in the understanding of political regimes and their systems, and transcends to being a true way with which we can assess an institution’s legitimacy or the legitimacy of the leaders.

This implies therefore, that Trust which is the relationship between the electorate and those governing them cannot be undermined in anyway; otherwise the political institution will loose its legitimacy. Democratic governments need trust because they cannot rely on coercion to get citizens to comply with their jurisdictions, and also because they cannot always rely on consultations with citizens all the time for permission to make important decisions. This statement implies that political leaders cannot do what is needed which is right for the greater

\(^{40}\) Available at: [http://www.pikolint.org/~clark/sites/trinity/nds106/trust_ia.ppt#257,7](http://www.pikolint.org/~clark/sites/trinity/nds106/trust_ia.ppt#257,7) visited on 14th May 2006.
public welfare without a considerable amount of trust by the citizens on them and on the political institutions. Citizens will find it hard to trust politicians, the political parties and all other political institutions if they fail to keep their promises to them for their interests.

How can political trust then be undermined? Naturally we understand that political corruption is dependent on not only on abuse of power but on their immorality as they contravene the moral principles; the moral environment and on the corrupt character of those in power, when they abuse power. The existence of political corruption therefore, points to the fact that political power can be abused and consequently that the defining element of the political institution, which assesses its legitimacy, understood as trust, can be undermined accordingly. This simply means that corrupt practices have an undermining effect on political trust as a value in any political system.

Disparity of wealth and opportunity\textsuperscript{41}, which political corruption causes are seen as unfair and not contributing to the common good, but leads to lack of political trust. Consequently the commitment by citizens to the political institutions and their conformity to laws and norms will weaken, making it easy for the people to distrust the government by becoming disinterested in the affairs of the state. This situation would be amenable through the means of democracy as a system of governance in modern societies. Democracy in government is important, to facilitate a proper distribution of wealth and separation of powers between the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary. This is to say that democracy as a system of governance has the capacity to limit and constrain power, bearing in mind the knowledge of the importance of “democratic trust” in Democratic government achieved through distribution of power and resources. This distribution of power and independence of the three arms of government; The Executive, Legislature and judiciary is of paramount importance in limiting and controlling corruption in politics through checks and balances, and in building of trust by the people in the government. Again, the distribution and the independence of the arms of government is imperative because the overriding of one arm of government over another will always undermine the institutional mechanism of trust, say for instance the inadequacies of the judicial system or legislative system will come together to undermine the trust mechanism in the political system.

\textsuperscript{41} Seumas, M, Peter, R and Edward, S., Corruption and Anti-Corruption: An Applied Philosophical Approach,p.31
2.3 TRANSPARENCY

The concept transparency is commonly understood as government according to fixed and published rules, on the basis of information and procedures that are accessible to the public. Transparency is beneficial to “democratic governance” since free and open access to information and elimination of secrecy is taken to be a prerequisite condition for the prevention of corrupt practices and promotion of accountability, predictability and fairness. Countries with developing democracy introduce transparency as a means of holding public officials accountable and fighting corruption, noting that corrupt practices would flourish in secretive social and political environments. Transparency therefore, enables existing corrupt practices to be brought to light and discourages other ones that are due to happen or due to be engaged in by corrupt individuals. Seumas Miller et al propose that invisibility is often present in instances of corrupt activities, which are embarked upon by rational individuals, even though in morally depraved environments, agents may act in a corrupt manner openly, considering the level of corruption in some developing countries.

We will notice that most times, government officials are aware of their corrupt behaviours and their capacity to undermine the economy and increase poverty, yet they engage in them, and the citizens who are supposed to oppose them tend to be supportive of them, because of some benefits they derive from them. However, Transparency will succeed in eradicating corrupt activities only if it exists against a background of widely accepted social norms. It is only when the citizens of a country find corruption morally unacceptable, will its exposure to public domain bring about the downfall of the corrupt. If the community has a high tolerance for corruption or specific forms of corrupt practices like bribery then both transparency and exposure of the corrupt will not necessarily be a powerful instrument to combat corruption. In the natural state of lawlessness of man as conceived by Thomas Hobbes, one can be corrupt openly without any fear of the legal system because no moral or legal sanction exists. Here everyone seeks to maximize his or her own self-interest under such conditions. Miller et al affirms that, in the state of nature, socio-moral attitudes do not matter and legal sanctions are not to be feared, therefore, there will be no need to hide one’s transgressions on their account.

http://public-services.politics.ox.ac.uk/transparency.asp visited on 14th May 2006


In summary, any legitimate political structure must have transparency as institutional mechanism, for combating corrupt practices to be fully recognized as legitimate.

2.4 CONDITIONS FOR CORRUPT PRACTICE; SEUMAS MILLER ET AL’S PERSPECTIVE:

Seumas Miller et al propose conditions that would be conducive for corrupt practices to be prevalent in any given society, thereby ensuring the undermining of the legitimate political structure. They argue that the condition of the environment, whether it is moral or immoral, will be an important institutional determinant for combating or facilitating corrupt practices. Moral environment, for Miller et al involves the socio-moral context in which corrupt activities take place. Moral conditions for them consist of coherent structure of moral norms that guide any given social group. These norms are understood as regularities in action or omission, sustained in part by the moral approval and disapproval of the participants in a given social system. The individuals in such social system might have differences in their moral beliefs and worldview, for they might interpret the social norms differently which will obviously lead to variations in practicing the social norms. For instance, many people will have the view that bribery is wrong, while others will view it less strictly, since it will be beneficial to them, while they engage in them.

Nevertheless, a substantial fragment of the social norms when adhered to by social groups, will facilitate cooperation and good order, otherwise the social group will disintegrate. To buttress this point Seuma Miller et al propose that:

In contemporary societies, social norms are in large part enshrined in the criminal law. Theft, fraud…are actions which violate social norms in contemporary societies, and they are also criminal acts. Indeed, it is because these acts are held to be profoundly morally wrong that perpetrators are held criminally liable.

What do we mean by social norms? Social norms in the sense used here, are all moral norms, which are types of actions, or inactions that are widely believed to be morally right. A concept

of a corrupt action will be an action that is corrupt relative to the person and sets of circumstances, surrounding the person.\textsuperscript{47}

These norms constitute the basic framework within which individuals, groups, and organisations interact in the various spheres of activity and thereby lead their individual and collective lives. Such framework provides a moral environment, including compliance with basic social prohibitions on theft, fraud…without which social life will collapse.\textsuperscript{48} Individuals will conform to social norms because they believe that others do them and for that they ought to do what others are doing, unless they want to be held criminally liable for wrong actions. Hence taking bribe is a violation of social norms that are able to bring feelings of shame to the person engaging in it. This framework of shame and all other compliance with basic social prohibitions in the social life of the people will bring about a proper integration in the society, and help control corrupt practices. But then, Miller et al enunciate that within this moral environment exist various conditions that will facilitate corrupt practices in the society.

The first condition according to Seumas Miller et al is conflict and factionalism. Seumas Miller et al identifies that conflict-ridden societies are always prone to corrupt practices and often provide fertile ground for corrupt practices. This is always the case as a result of inadequate system of social values that is complied by all or that is operational to combat corruption. Here, the members of the groups comply with social norms only when it suits them for their personal goal and with regard to one another in the same social group excluding other people that don’t belong to their group.\textsuperscript{49} Communities under this condition, where there is high level of conflict tend to commit a lot of morally wrong actions like bribing anyone in position of authority in order to protect their interest, without considering the consequences of their actions. In fact, for them, what they hold as morally right are all those beliefs held by their own group even when it does not favour the general public. They justify their actions therefore; with their belief system and the interests their groups have for their very own sustenance. Therefore, the interest of their group, which often times turn to be detrimental to the entire society, becomes of paramount interest to them. This then constitutes a conducive condition for acts of corruption.

\textsuperscript{47} Seumas, M, Peter, R and Edward, S., Corruption and Anti-Corruption: An Applied Philosophical Approach, p.25
\textsuperscript{49} Seumas, M, Peter, R and Edward, S., Corruption and Anti-Corruption: An Applied Philosophical Approach, p.31
A Second condition capable of favouring corrupt practices like bribery is an Unjust and unequal system of wealth and status. This is a problem highlighted because differences in wealth and opportunity are often perceived as unfair and undermining the common good of any society; People often justify their corrupt actions also on the basis that they are politically and economically marginalised and thereby poorly treated in the way resources are distributed. Thus, taking a closer look at the situation in some developing countries in Africa where inequality in the way wealth, power and resources are distributed, and how unjustly and unfairly people are affected by them, we will find a situation whereby people will do all kinds of wrong acts to uplift and improve their economic and social condition. Often time’s people have to offer gifts to people in position of government to get some benefits, which they may or may not be entitled to meritoriously. Habitually engaging in the act of bribery, corrode the social norms and moral principles that guide the society and this will inevitably undermine the political process.

Thirdly, Moral confusion which involves a combination of confusion in relation to moral beliefs about what is right and wrong, and a tempting opportunity to do wrong always will set in, as a result of some of these conditions for corruption. Moral confusion manifests as strong barriers to ethical actions, implying that there is a tempting dilemma to do wrong consistently, in an environment characterised by inequality and injustices in the way wealth is distributed.

Fourthly, Miller et al identifies imbalance of power as a conducive condition for corrupt practices. They posited Lord Acton’s statement that “Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely” to explain their position. They give instances of autocratic political office holders and heads of state that have used their political position in the past to abuse the rights of citizens, as they sought for power and fame. These abuses according to these authors portray the importance of limiting and separating power.

Miller et al also identified abuses of power, position and influence, by the rich and powerful nations when world trade agreements are made to favour the interests of the rich and powerful at the expense of the powerless and poor nations. They however conclude that perhaps the level playing ground often talked about, especially when issues of “global justice” is discussed, could be a self serving myth fabricated by powerful multinational companies and government of the developed western nation to further their political and economic interest.

According to Miller et al, institutions in the society, (whether political or civil),

50 Seuma,M, Peter,R and Edward,S., Corruption and Anti-Corruption: An Applied Philosophical Approach, pp.31
51 Seuma,M, Peter,R and Edward,S., Corruption and Anti-Corruption: An Applied Philosophical Approach, pp.31-33
52 Seumas,M, Peter,R and Edward,S., Corruption and Anti-Corruption: An Applied Philosophical Approach, p.34
organisations (whether public or private), Individual (whether occupying public or private roles) in the society, will constitute and contribute to the imbalance of power that are testimonies to corrupt practices in the society, if they become corrupt and abuse their roles.

This abuse can be witnessed when the desire for wealth acquisition sets in, the moral virtues that help to restrain persons from morally wrong acts and being prudent erode, leaving an individual vulnerable and susceptible to Abuse of power. This condition turns to lack of discernment and into a source of moral confusion, bringing about various acts of corrupt behaviours, like bribery.

All these factors could turn to be justifying reasons for individuals to engage in bribery to promote their interest, since they view these conditions as injustices imposed on them by the society. Indeed the damage caused by such ground of justification is enormous on the society, because it undermines the process of governance and brings about moral decadence.

2.4 SUMMARY:

In this chapter I have tried to formulate a just political structure to see how this can be corrupted. I have shown also the characteristics of the legitimate political structure, and the meaning of justice, which is the goal a legitimate political structure, seeks to achieve. I have based my argument on John Rawls ideas of justice and legitimate political structure which are vivid in his two great works: The Law of Peoples and Theory of Justice, since the realization of a just society will necessitate the proper distribution of wealth and resources that should be paramount in the activity of political institutions. In order to achieve this, the legitimate political system must strive to be trustworthy and exhibit transparency in its activities and dealings with the public to ensure that the principles of justice are fully integrated into the political structure I also looked at the conditions that are conducive for corrupt practices from Seumas Miller et al’s perspective as I try to analyze them and relate them to developing countries in general.

In the third Chapter, I will focus on the moral implication of corrupt practices in general, and bribery in particular, using three moral arguments as an evaluative tool to show claims why corrupt practices are morally bad, since they undermine the legitimate political structure of society. I will do this to justify my position that a corrupt practice like bribery as seen in the political institution is morally bad, and should be combated if not completely eradicated.
CHAPTER THREE:

3.0 MORAL IMPLICATION OF POLITICAL CORRUPTION:

In this chapter, I will take a normative approach to my discussion against corruption. I will try to use the three ethical positions, namely, Deontological argument, Utilitarianism, and Virtue ethics as an evaluative tool for my claims against corruption in general and bribery in particular to find out what should be obtainable in the moral environment. I will argue, judging from my discussion so far, that corruption under any circumstance would not be justified, as they have bad effect on the moral character of persons, and violates legitimacy of institutions.

3.1 DEONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT:

There are norms that guide and protect the citizenry, which everyone may collectively accept. An acceptance of this fact presupposes that human societies are guided by moral principles, and that an infringement of these moral principles or values politically, under certain circumstances constitutes political corruption. This is seen vividly in cases that relate to duties that attach to political roles to which special powers are involved and in duties entrusted on one to perform on behalf of others. It is understood that, political office holders occupy positions of trust and have duties to the people, which other people who do not occupy such positions do not have. These political offices go with powers and authority, which arise, from the political structure, the laws and the principles guiding the society. The powers constitute that of enacting and executing laws by the executive; making laws by the legislature and that of interpreting laws by the judiciary.

Naturally, there is the tendency that there will be an abuse of such powers that accompany these political roles in the society, based on condition found in societies which might favour such abuse. The abuse of political powers can be witnessed for instance in the infringement of rights of citizens. Rights properly understood here points to the dispositions that are naturally and morally associated with human beings as rational animals. They are claims that individual citizens in the society exercise towards each other. Thus, the target of such a claim can be registered towards another person, a group or the community or even the political authority. Be that as it may, corrupt practices as evidenced in the political system, in relation to moral
principles and laws guiding the society, will consist of a violation of natural right to life, property and basic human needs. For Seumas Miller et al, therefore, such corrupt practice constitute a violation of the Categorical imperative proposed by Immanuel Kant.\footnote{Seuma,M, Peter,R and Edward,S.,Corruption and Anti-Corruption: An Applied Philosophical Approach,pp.64-65}

Categorical imperative by Immanuel Kant emphasizes acting in accordance to a moral principle that would be universally accepted in all places and at all times without exception. Kant stipulates that people must act according to rules that they can at same time "will" as universal principle. People must act in a way that their actions would become a universal law, and treat humanity as an end and never as means. Emphasis will be on the need to respect persons for themselves and not simply for what they can do for us. Kant designed the Categorical imperative to show clearly that treating people wrongly with the intention of advancing ones self-interest will be morally wrong.

Based on Kant's argument, political office holders should not engage in bribery, which involve cheating and deception. If they want to justify their corrupt beheaviour, they have to question the act by asking themselves, the outcome of a situation whereby every member of the society engages in corrupt beheaviour. This will result to a hostile and morally depraved society being created, which will bring about the collapse of the legitimate political system and every other institution in the society. There is a moral duty for political leaders therefore, to exhibit proper moral beheaviour for the sustenance of the legitimate political system, which will benefit all.

3.2 UTILITARIAN ARGUMENT:

Utilitarianism consists of two doctrines; a theory of what is good, and a theory of what is morally right. Utilitarian theory of what is right is Consequentialism, or the theory that morally right option in any circumstance is that option which brings about the most good or the best consequence; any other option is wrong. Thus utilitarians refer to the "optimific" alternative as an option that brings about the best consequences, or maximizes the good; hence the right option is the optimific option.\footnote{Available at: http://web.missouri.edu/~philrnj/utilnote.html visited on 18th May 2006}

Utilitarianism as a political and ethical doctrine that is comprehensive stipulates that what makes actions morally right or wrong is determined by the utilitarian standard, and through these standards we are able to envisage governmental systems, institutions and laws that are
just or unjust. Thus when Rawls discusses the basic structure of society as evidenced in government that is legitimate and just in his political theory, he is thus concerned with political structure of society.

The question we need to ask then is; what really constitute human well being or welfare? Is it pleasure, wealth and so on? Again what things should we evaluate using the consequentialist standard? Is it particular actions, rules and character traits, institutions and so on? Even though the utilitarian’s disagree about these, they still agree that what makes an action right is the outcome, which is the best consequences, and that human well being constitute so many parts that come together in association with welfare. On these two bases, therefore, any political institution found to be engulfed in bribery as an abuse of power, will be judged morally wrong on the basis that it results in bad consequences for the greatest number of people in the society, since the corrupt political institution will tend not to promote the welfare of the majority of people.

As witnessed in many corrupt developing countries, like Nigeria the utilitarian would argue that political corruption is unethical because it results to poverty, untold hardship and in a reduction of overall utility for the greatest amount of the people in the country. The impact of bribery on the electoral system of any country, for instance results to an erosion of basic moral principles and values, which leave the society in a vulnerable condition in accepting morally bad practices that are also unlawful. For the utilitarians, bribery and all its effects, violate “the essence of legitimately instituted systems of governance that is set up for the proper conduct and management of the society’s affairs for a good life for the citizenry”. It also militates against the proper production and distribution of the society’s resources in the course of the people’s social existence.\textsuperscript{55}

A Utilitarian like, Peter Singer will argue that justice demands that the welfare of every being be maximized. His work emphasizes that what matter is people’s welfare. Thus, underlying Singer’s moral theory is a commitment to moral equality, which requires that principles of justice incorporate everyone’s utility.\textsuperscript{56} Singer’s statement implies that, as long as bribery does not promote human well-being or welfare, then it is morally bad.

\textsuperscript{55} Heywood, A., Key Concepts in Politics, Macmillan Press Ltd., pp.35-37

\textsuperscript{56} Singer, P., Practical Ethics, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979, pp.14-23
3.3 VIRTUE ETHICS: HARM TO MORAL CHARACTER:

This moral subject of philosophy is connected with practical issues about the right behaviours. Virtue ethicists realising the importance of the role of the person in ethical decision-making, argue that individuals with high moral character are more likely to make wise choices. Whereas deontological and consequentialist arguments concern themselves with the right action, virtue ethics concern’s itself with the good life and what kinds of persons people ought to be. The virtue ethicists will ask, “What is the right action?” which is a different question to ask from “How should a person live? Or what kind of person should a person be?” Whereas the first type of question deals with specific dilemmas, the second is a question about life. Thus, instead of asking what is the right act here and now, virtue ethics asks what kind of person one should be in order to get actions right all the time. The answer to how one should live, lies in the fact that one should live virtuously, that is, have a virtuous character, a good life and a habit of values that are attached to personal relationships and friendship that extends to the general public.

The Aristotelian understanding of character and virtue inspires modern virtue ethicists, most of whom formulate their ideas in accordance with Aristotle’s idea. Aristotle based the character of the ideal person on the state of being of the person, which is all about having the appropriate inner states or character. The virtue of prudence for instance, for Aristotle will include the right sort of emotions and inner states, to act prudently with respect to right feelings towards the welfare of others in the society. Aristotelian character as witnessed in the virtuous person is all about doing, and a doctrine of action, which is not just any kind of action, but right actions, since having the virtuous inner dispositions will also involve being moved to act in accordance with them. A person for instance, realizing that prudence is a good, responds to a situation and feels kindly disposed always to doing good things.

Another important feature of virtue ethics is that character traits are stable, habitual and reliable dispositions. If an individual possesses a character of prudence, he or she will be expected to act prudently in all sorts of situation, towards all kinds of people and over a long period of time, even when he finds it difficult to do so, thus he can be relied upon to act prudently, consistently over a period of time.

58 Available at: X:\Virtue Ethics [Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy].htm visited on 18th May 2006
Following from all we have said so far, the act of leadership and governance entails ethics because leaders have responsibilities towards the citizenry who voted them into power. Thus, people in political position often bring about changes in character that would ordinarily not occur without their presence and actions. In other words they influence a lot in the system and in the lives of all those who elected them into power. The responsible leader according to the ethics of responsibility would attend to the consequences of his actions, since the capacity to live up to promises, obey the law and follow directives rests upon the primary moral capacity, choices and judgements he make. People in position of power have the moral obligation to control their passions and not fall into temptations, of acquiring resources meant for the common good for their own personal aggrandisement. We should therefore have in mind that without basic disciplines, like prudence leaders will have the tendency of abusing the power entrusted to them. To possess a virtue like prudence means that a person’s emotion and perceptions are trained and aligned with moral purposes so that they support rather than subvert responsible judgements and choices.

Before I summarise, it is important to note this controversial stand of the Utilitarian as regards bribe given for the “good” of the individuals within, a political structure that is not considered legitimate. This argument goes a long way, trying to justify the reason for bribery in a particular context. The utilitarians would argue considering the case of an illegitimate political system that, there could be a “good” manifest in an act of bribery exhibited in certain contextual illegitimate conditions. Actions such as bribery, given to a government office holder who has no morally legitimate basis for his existence will not be seen as morally bad, for it will be clearly overridden by some claims, one of which could be that of defending the right to life and survival of the persons who offered the bribe, knowing full well that the office holder has no moral basis for being in that position. The utilitarians or consequentialists will argue that if bribery will be the best option, which will bring about the best consequence, especially in that illegitimate political structure, then bribery will be the optimific option. This reasoning according to the utilitarians will then, constitute a moral standard that will make the act in this sense, a morally right action. However, looking at the deontological argument, we will deduce the fact that, corrupt actions like that of bribery undermine the social norms and moral principles that regulate the lives of the people. Intuitively, it is assumed and taken for granted that there exist a tendency that abuses will be witnessed in political institutions, composed of rational human beings as regards to abuses of political powers that accompany political roles, in many human societies. Therefore, acting in a way of giving bribery for instance, will contravene the categorical imperative of Immanuel Kant, since one will be
using other people as means to his or her ends. Treating people wrongly, by using them as means to advance ones end, is morally wrong, for such action does not portray a respect for human life. Again, bribery is not acting in accordance to rules and laws that we can at same time “will” to be universal principle, such moral principles that will be acceptable to all rational human beings. Therefore, corrupt practices in form of bribery will contravene the categorical imperative according to Kant.

Again, considering the virtue ethics emphasis on moral character as a determining factor for ethical-decision making, we can argue that justifying the act of bribery on the basis of the condition of the political institution; will have a corrupting effect on the moral character of individuals living in the society or on the office bearer. The virtues, like that of prudence and honesty, that ought to be imbibed for the good of the individual and the society in general will be eroded, thereby creating a susceptibility in people to tend towards corrupt behaviours that will disintegrate the whole social life of the people. On the same note, bribery will also violate the legitimate character of all the other spheres of activity that are witnessed in the society as it permeates the political structure, tending also to despoil and disintegrate the entire political structure.

On these grounds, I argue that, the “optimific option” according to the utilitarians, or in other words the best consequence which maximizes the general good, will rather be to desist from acts of corruption, like bribery so that utility of the generality of the people could be maximized to a certain level in such an illegitimate environment.

**SUMMARY:**

I have argued in this chapter using the normative approach to show the moral implication of corrupt practices especially that of bribery as it undermines the political institution, which ought to be legitimate. I have analyzed the problem with corruption in general and bribery in particular in order to find moral justifications for and against it. I started this process by proffering three ethical arguments as analytical tools for my discussion. I finally arrived at a conclusion that under no circumstance can acts of corruption be justified. In the next chapter, I will look at the political structure of Nigerian government so far, and how corrupt practices affect the electoral system of the country. Thus, this has so far constituted a moral dilemma in Nigerian politics, as politicians tend to rationalise the reasons for engaging in corruption.
In arguing along this direction, my purpose therefore, is to find a justificatory basis or grounds for foreign aid to Nigeria, which I will try to answer in section 4.4, using the nationalists’ perspective.
CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 POLITICAL STRUCTURE IN NIGERIA:

The fact that Nigeria is a relatively young country, gaining its independence in 1960, means that establishing the government’s legitimacy will be a challenging priority, considering the entire political and economic trauma the country has passed through, over the years, in the hands of corrupt military and civilian rulers. A brief analysis of the social effects of a very long military rule in the country provides a good understanding of the current socio-political and economic realities of Nigeria. At one point in the country’s existence, it was thought that the office of the head of state was the highest position any military officer would attain, as the military enjoyed their unchallenged rule over the country for almost twenty-six years, constituting a two-third of the forty-six years of indigenous rule in the country since independence. Bearing in mind that an intercourse between the military and the civil society, in the early stages of the country’s existence after the dreadful civil war in 1970, combined with oil boom prosperity, in the late 1970’s, constituted more to Nigeria’s political corruption. The later stages of the country in the early 80’s and late 90’s in the hands of three notable military dictators saw the country brutalised with corruption, inequalities and increased poverty. The military generally, left a distorted legacy to the country. An experience that was characterized by dictatorship, anarchy, and lack of accountability mechanism. This situation resulted in alienation of Nigerian citizens further from their leaders and government, resulting to loss of trust and confidence in the political system.

This condition as can be deduced is the environment the present democracy, under the present democratic dispensation operates. It is a condition that has placed the legitimacy of the present democratic government that took power on the 29th of May 1999, currently questionable, with many citizens having little or no trust in the leaders’ abilities to run an efficient or trust worthy society.

Earlier, the British Colonialists also contributed in no small measure to the political instability and corruption in the country, as it is witnessed today. It is believed that the British created

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59 Available at: www.myheritage.org visited on 19th of May 2006
tension, resulting to lack of agreement that worked against the democratic structure they put in place, as their legacy after independence in 1960. It is held that the British trained Chiefs, who were then, traditional rulers in the pre colonial era, to help them operate their government in order to reach their economic goals. Whereas in Britain, the rights of people and the market economy check the government’s power, no such checks were evidenced in Nigeria towards the chiefs that were instituted to oversee the affairs of the people by the British. Thus, it constituted a tendency for these local rulers to think about their personal benefits while governing the people, instead of the general good of the whole community. This practice set in place the disposition in people to passively accept the actions of their rulers no matter the consequences of such actions on the social life of the people. At this period, the indigenous leaders lost touch with the communal traditions and norms that govern the community in the interest of the whole community. Individualism sets in, resulting into a kind of rule for personal gain, which has never been experienced in the country before. 61

Another important feature in the Nigerian political structure is the factor of Patron-client relationship, commonly known as “God fatherism” in the country. This is the practice of exchanging political and economic favours amongst patrons and their clients, which is always associated with corruption. Here, the patron (or political leader) builds loyalty amongst his clients (close associates) by granting them favours that are denied others, who do not belong to the same ethnic group, political party or group of friends. For instance, in Nigeria, in exchange for support, the president may grant to his supporters a portion of the oil revenue or contract in order to gain important favour from them, like their support in elections. Often patrons are mostly linked to clients by ethnicity, religion or on political party basis. Emphasis is always on ethnic criterion because Nigeria is made up of 250 diverse ethnic groups that often struggle for political identity and autonomy. This condition, seen in patron-client relationship often leads to victimization of one group by another as one group will do anything within its reach to attain their aim, thereby violating Kant’s categorical imperative, as they use others as means to their ends. A victimization that might lead to exclusions in the distribution of wealth and power in the country.

Let me now discuss how corruption undermines growth and development of the political structure of Nigeria and how they undermine all other institutions found in the country.

Corrupt practices in Nigerian political structure, (The political structure we have discussed so far) are often associated with conflict between traditional values and imported norms, witnessed in the colonial era. We can identify this in modernistic acquisition tendencies, as regards financial and other material benefits. The authoritarian nature of the colonial political order produced local political individuals that had little or no interest in the affairs of the local people in the country. Even though these products of British political regime mobilized people for political independence, in the post colonial era, they also inflamed ethnic sentiments and acquisition tendencies of money and property.

Many of these local political elites resolved to an extended family assistance as a way of alleviating the economic problems of their loved ones. Generally, this high community spirit necessitated a situation whereby all those who are financially better placed are responsible to use their resources to assist other people in their community. A condition which determines the political assistance and support; and even the social status the elites are entitled to in the community. A successful member of the community is not only expected to give gifts, but also is looked upon to embark in projects that are beneficial to his or her people.

The act of giving gifts in Nigeria, signify gratitude for favours received, which may take the form of money, property and so on. It shows a manifestation of gratitude on the side of the person that received the favour or on behalf of the receiver by a loved one. Thus, a contractor who gets a contract from a government official might decide to take gifts to the politician who was so helpful to him securing the contract. In some other case, giving of gift could be done while anticipating a favour in return, which could be seen in instance of contractors going to government officials who are supposed to be responsible for issuing them contracts, with gifts to reciprocate the favour made to them often engender aspects of support for one who has given the gift. Here, the receiver is expected to offer some kind of favour in return.

In the next section I will see how this corrupt practice permeates into the electoral system of the country, causing chaos, anarchy and loss of interest by the people in the system.
4.2 CORRUPT PRACTICES AND THE NIGERIAN ELECTORAL SYSTEM:

It is commonly understood that the major functions of political parties in modern democracies include the mobilization of voters in support of political agendas; the selection of candidates for public office; and the organization of election campaigns. To win a majority of seats and control government, parties compete with each other for votes in the country.

In Nigeria, election campaigns are costly, and involve a lot of financing. This is because Nigeria operates a multi party system, of which the main parties are the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP).

Elone J.Nwabuzor describes the electoral situation in Nigeria when he postulates that:

> During the April 2003 Federal and state elections, 30 political parties were registered following the Supreme Court’s ruling on the law governing party registration. Financed partly by government and partly by huge individual donations, party politics and elections have now become both rancorous and corrupt. Allegations of massive rigging attended the recent elections.62

Corruption is witnessed because, the Parties and their candidates need money to operate, to print posters, brochures and leaflets, or to pay TV and radio commercials to make their agenda or Manifesto publicly known to voters. They have to pay staff, pay for equipment to organize and run campaigns, and finance campaign-related travel of candidates and party leaders. In their struggle to succeed, individual candidates and party leaders are willing to accept payoffs or illegal monies offered by wealthy donors in exchange for promises of future favours. Many of these “money bags” are therefore tempted to spend as much money as possible on party campaigns, often in excess of official campaign spending limits. Therefore, to fill their campaign proposals, some political parties in the country not only accept donations from wealthy donors or from the business community, but often extort money from individual candidates, who need to bribe their way into such parties to be able to be eligible to participate for elections. While the payment of money to one’s own party can be seen as a politician’s legitimate support for building a strong party organization, and thus investing in the party’s future, they come close to corrupt practice and extortion when they are demanded in the context of a prerequisite for a candidate’s selection and nomination for national or

regional elections or as the “price” for a promising ranking on a party’s list of candidates. Therefore, it is a morally wrong practice, which is always the case in Nigeria, when party leaders extort money from candidates by threatening to remove their names from the party list, or to assign them to a less secure constituency, or if they offer to switch names on the party list in return for bribes. We can also consider it a wrong practice when party leaders demand bribes from party members as a prerequisite for promotion within the party hierarchy or for eligibility for party leadership.

A fact to be noted is that, many politicians before being accepted into these parties to be nominated for electoral offices have little or modest income, but when elected they become owners of properties around the world and operators of huge bank accounts all over Europe and America. Income often seen to be accumulated through bribery and other related corrupt practices. This is why in September 2005; a State Governor in Nigeria was caught with close to one billion Pounds (£1b) at the Heathrow Airport in London, in a bid to launder the money. He was remanded in prison and was awaiting trial. News had it that he manoeuvred himself out of the prison by impersonating to be a woman to get himself out of Britain. Till today nothing has been heard about the money and the said Governor even though he was impeached, has not been duly prosecuted. The governor in question is known to be a one time inspector of police under a meagre salary, before he took up the position as the first governor, of the newly created state, that is still very much underdeveloped judging from the standards of the other states created before it in the country. This man chose rather to exploit the resources of the state, under his leadership.

As events unfolded, in 1999, a whooping sum of eight hundred and fifty thousand naira (850,000 naira) about US$6000 was allegedly given by the President to each of the senators, as bribe in exchange for their votes, for the election of the choice of the President, as the senate president. This president before election lives on pensions from the military an institution he retired from as a head of state. He is alleged to merely own a meagre agricultural farm in a remote village in his home town, but has grown rich serving the country as the President.

Again, in the year 2003, a supposedly appointed Minister of the Federal capital territory Abuja, accused the senate of demanding fifty four million naira bribe money, from him, about US$393,000, if he wished to be cleared for the ministerial appointment, since he will still

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63 Available at: http://www.gamji.com/archive/archive.htm visited on 22nd May 2006
recuperate the money when he assumes office. But the investigation into the matter ended with no prosecution. In July 1999, the News of bribery, fraud and forgery came up committed by the speaker of the house of representative, an institution responsible for the making of laws and representation of political constituencies in the country. Through fraudulent practices, like bribery, he amassed wealth working for a governmental public sector, and bribed his way to become the speaker of the House of Representatives, the country’s fourth highest position. This politician does not even possess a secondary school certificate and was alleged to have forged a degree certificate from University of Toronto Canada to become a speaker of the house of representative.

On the 16th of May 2006, the plans of the President were foiled by the National Assembly, which failed to adopt a bill for the third term bid of the President for the Presidency. It was alleged that the President offered each and every one of the legislators previously a 50 million naira bribe package if the bill is passed to allow him contest for the third consecutive term. On that fateful day, the National assembly rejected the bill and foiled his ambitions to contest.

Corrupt practices such as these, in the electoral system keep undermining the nascent democracy in that it subvert’s formal processes. It reduces accountability and distort’s representation in policy making; and further compromises the rule of law and unfair provision of social justice and welfare. They erode the institutional capacity of the government to provide for the people, the basic necessities of life, as procedures are disregarded, resources are taken out of the country, and bribes are offered for governmental offices.

Election rigging and Vote-buying are also manifestations of corrupt practice in the area of electoral institution. In developing countries, like Nigeria where patronage is an important social factor, voters always expect presents and gifts from parties and candidates prior to elections and then base their decision on the basis of the quality of such gifts. Once such a tradition has been established, voters are always demanding gifts in exchange for votes. In Nigeria vote buying and election rigging has been a major problem for years, and it is still a widespread practice despite repeated reform efforts. In the 1999 and 2003 elections, parties and candidates tried to buy individual votes or votes of whole communities. In return, party

representatives would offer cash, sometimes clipped to campaign literature, food, clothing, and other gifts.

This is as a result of the fact that, the first elections in Nigeria in 1999 had incredibly high stakes, and accordingly, the temptation for corrupt activities was so high. In that initial stage of the democratic system, the party system was weak, and the relationship between civil society and political parties was not fully established. The parties had every opportunity to exercise their corrupt intentions through acts of bribery. For parties, like the PDP, which is the ruling party in Nigeria, the potential rewards for victory in the first election in 1999 were very high. The gains were seen in their untireless effort for an opportunity to lead the country’s political and economic institutions in 2003, thus ensuring future benefits for the party’s supporters, and the chance to enter the next elections as incumbents in that year, even though they never fulfilled there promises to the electorates in their first tenure in government.

Given these high benefits, many Nigerian political parties faced increased enticements to engage in bribery, as some collaborated with the PDP to take over power at all cost. These other parties’ supporters invested as much money as possible to make sure that the winner of the first election which is the PDP will advance their own interests as well.

Consequently, as the promotion of corrupt culture in the electoral sphere, and the influence of party competition and party control over state institutions and society became noticed, the more control for instance PDP had over state institutions and society; and the lower the level of other party competing, the higher the risk became for corrupt behaviour. As PDP had a very strong control over many national and state institutions and even occupy the seat of the Presidency, they are often seen to abuse their influence to secure private gain for party member and supporters.

As shown so far, in order to fully understand the weight of corrupt practices in the area of electoral process, we have to address both political party influence and the level of political party control over state institutions and society, and between wealth and power in the country. This is important to understand, because most times we find a situation whereby, these politicians justify their corrupt behaviours as being in the interest of the masses that elected them into power. They often claim that when bribes are given, they are given in order to achieve a good course, either to consolidate their position in office, or to achieve a quick goal which may not come by easily.

Let us now look at the conditions that could be seen in Nigeria, which have proved conducive to corrupt practices in the country and which has put the country into a state of moral
dilemma. This dilemmic condition has proved as justifying grounds for corrupt practices in the country.

4.3 THE MORAL DILEMMA IN NIGERIAN POLITICS:

I will look at some of the conditions that abound in Nigeria that favour the spread of corrupt practices, like bribery that is so common in the country, thus placing the political system in a vulnerable state of moral confusion. These conditions in the country have necessitated corrupt actions that corrode the social values in the country; infringe the people’s right for social and political justice; and contribute to breakdown of the laws of the country; as the code of conduct for political office holders is no longer strictly adhered to. Hence Nigeria as a democratic country is suffering series of problems in her political life, which has affected the economy drastically, as she tries to combat these problems by embarking on several reform strategies.

No matter how we may look at the problems with bribery and the apparent conditions that promote such practice, the reason for corrupt behaviour may not deviate significantly from cultural considerations, values and the poor political culture in the country; an obsession for material things; compulsion for a shortcut to affluence; and exhibition of ill gotten wealth by the general public are all judged among the reasons for persistence of corrupt practice in the country. It is commonly believed that the social value for good life in modernistic Nigeria is flamboyant living and affluent consumption of common good by politicians, who find themselves in governance. They privatize the public good for their personal purposes. A condition which makes Nigeria a society where the government overlooks its role and responsibility to the people; a country where hard work in public and private institutions are not rewarded adequately, while glorifying corrupt individuals. Infact, the moral principles that used to be regarded as important and extolled in the society are gradually eroding. Priorities are misplaced and the social values are being set wrong. Onalaja et al enunciates that the

68 Available at:X:\ICPC IN NIGERIA.htm visited on 22nd May 2006
69 Ndiulor,T.,Price,Nigeria is paying for corruption, The Guardian Online, March 17,1999
influence of the peer community, extended family pressures and polygamous institutions in the country cannot be overlooked, for they contribute to the prevalence of corrupt practices.\textsuperscript{70}

The influence of the family which is more often extended, help to pressurize the political office holder to meet certain obligations even when he is not disposed to corrupt practices in government, hence this institution is judged to undermine development. Even though the institution of family per se is judged as an effective system in the society, but it sure tends to obstruct the proper advancement of social good and distribution of resources. This is witnessed when family members tend to persuade their relatives in authority to take part of public fund that does not rightfully belong to them.\textsuperscript{71}

Robert Merton thus noted the relationship between social norms, institutions and corrupt practices when he opines that corrupt acts could be understood as motivated behaviour to respond to social pressures to violate the social norms that guide society and some basic institutions, in order to meet the set goals and objectives of an assumed social group.\textsuperscript{72}

Again, the acquisition tendency, imbibed through contact with western culture and capitalism which stress financial success as an important goal, but restrict access to opportunities, has higher capacities to political corruption in the country. As many government officials, who were colonial products began to be achievement oriented and wealth conscious, they were obliged to do anything, and criminally innovate new means to attain their desired aim. Obviously there is nothing wrong with one seeking a worthy goal, but their actions became morally wrong when within the core of those actions is found a bad intent or motivation for bribery; and even when bad consequences emanate from such immoral behaviour, causing hardship to the greater part of the society.

Another condition that contributes to a moral problem to the Nigerian society is the cultural norm of gift giving, as this traditional practice is consistently abused, and used as means of bribing those in political positions into doing the wish of those that offer the gifts. Arguably, the concept of gift giving is a good thing, for there is nothing morally wrong with one reciprocating favours done to him by someone, not minding the persons position or status in

\textsuperscript{71} Harrison, L.E., Underdevelopment Is a State Of Mind; The Latin American Case; University Press Of America, Lanham, MD, 1985,p.7
the society. However, it has been found to be a problem when violated or habitually indulged in with the sole intent of influencing the judgement of the person to whom it is offered.

It breeds a conducive environment for bribery in the electoral system, because it tends to influence the judgement of electoral officers and those elected into public offices. The common cases abound in Nigeria where communal groups politically visit the offices and homes of elected officers with expensive gifts to get their attention into doing special favours for their communities. This act is becoming habitual in the lives of the people, as it is beginning to be ingrained in the mentality of the people.

I understand that if the communities know exactly that what they are doing is bribery, they will shudder at their morally wrongful action. The act of bribery that often come in this way, we should understand is a corrupt act that is morally pervasive in Nigeria for it cuts across every facet of social activities especially that of the electoral system, which has the capacity to affect every other institution in the life of the Nigerian people.

We should note that these political parties that corrupt the electoral institution, for instance are legitimately instituted and do not exist for the purposes of engaging in corrupt activities, but many corrupt individuals within these morally legitimate parties engage in ongoing corrupt activity to undermine the electoral process in the country. The absence of good moral standards in the sector of governance, necessitated mainly by long-term military intervention in politics contributes also to the setback of good electoral process in Nigeria. If ethics emphasizes actions and the way we carry out values, it then behoves on Nigerian politicians to use ethical principles as morally acceptable system in decision-making. But unfortunately, many legitimately elected political office holders in Nigeria do not have clear knowledge of ethical demands of their position, constituting the reason political corrupt practices reach the high and low alike, and even the senior members of the government and the legislature. Sometimes these people frame laws and make policies to suit their private interest, undermining the very structure of the political institution, which is the correct conduct and management of community’s affairs, and the production and distribution of resources in the course of social existence.\(^{73}\)

Another point to be noted is, conflict of interest is another important factor conducive to the moral dilemma and injustices witnessed in the Nigeria. Seumas Miller et al describe it thus;

\(^{73}\) Available at: www.africaeconomicanalysis.org visited on 22nd May 2006
A conflict of interest occurs when a person’s or a group’s self-regarding interest comes into conflict with its fiduciary duties. Or when a person or a group has two fiduciary roles, and the duties of one compete with the duties of the other…conflict of interest are conducive to institutional corruption in a variety of ways, depending on the nature of the role of the person or group that has the conflict of interest.\(^74\)

This is why in the political life of Nigeria, Politicians often find their self-regarding interests conflicting with the duties they are supposed to perform for the people. Most times, they find themselves occupying two or more roles in society which often conflict in their decision making process. In the 2003 elections in Nigeria, a lot of business minded individuals voted and dolled out money to the incumbent PDP government that had the majority of seats in the Houses of Assembly, the Senate and the House of Representative. They gave out these monies to secure and award themselves contracts in time to come when these politicians have assumed office. As millions of naira was alleged to be given out by multi national companies, like Nigerian breweries Plc, Shell Petroleum Company; other business men that owned big companies dolled out millions of naira as well to the party for the re-election of the President. Some state Governors that belong to PDP, also were not left out as they contributed their own millions of naira to the party for the president’s re-election so that they will secure their position. These monies where never accounted for as they went to private account of the party.

Similarly, many politicians and state Governors in the country are alleged to own large scale industries and parastatals, of which they are invisible members of the board and share holders of the companies. They often recommend those who voted for them for contracts and positions in those companies. Ironically, as politicians they are supposed to have a duty to provide services to the people. But Conflict of interest shows up when these politicians use their office to provide a questionable service to a person who they had relied upon for contribution in their campaign days. Here, conflict of interest involves the improper use of political office, as could be seen in cases the government has introduced or tend to introduce laws and policies to suit their purpose, which does not benefit the citizenry, or improve the standard of living of those that voted them into power (Note the incidence on quote 66).

\(^{74}\) Seuma, M, Peter, R and Edward, S., Corruption and Anti-Corruption: An Applied Philosophical Approach, p.46
As we can deduce a moral dilemma sets in, as this condition brought about by conflict of interest renders the politician’s judgment less reliable than it should be and results in a failure, for him to properly discharge his duties.

This situation is further worsened by the fact that Nigerian political office holders are not frequently checked properly in whatsoever manner in the way properties or establishments are acquired which often conflict with their roles as public servants. They tend to lack adequate judgment in cases of corrupt actions by companies; as regards to incidents of non-execution of contracts by companies, they have interest in or which they own, and in situations of failure by such companies to be accountable to the government.

However, judging from my discussion so far, I argue that the political structure in Nigeria has been found wanting basing my standards and criterion on the Just political structure formulated by Rawls. The government has so far failed to elicit the trust and confidence of the people as it has consistently failed to offer the people justice. As inequality and border between the rich and poor is being widened, people seem to be disinterested in the affairs of the government. The question then is where the legitimacy of the Nigerian democratic government lies, when issues of consent and approval that are due to the government are still questioned by the masses in Nigeria? As long as citizens in Nigeria fail to co-operate according to their understanding of the conception of justice, agreeing and abiding by the principles of justice as they consider them reasonable as free and equal citizen, poverty will continue to prevail, and the democratic government in progress though legitimate, will fall short of the legitimate standards to further the interest of the Nigerian people.

4.4 ANY MORAL JUSTIFICATION FOR FOREIGN AID TO NIGERIA? A Nationalist Perspective.

“There developing countries made the sixth consecutive and largest ever transfer of funds to “other countries” in 2002, a sum totaling “almost $200 billion.” Funds should be moving from developed countries to developing countries, but these numbers tell us the opposite is happening… Funds that should be promoting investment and growth in developing countries, or building schools and hospitals, or supporting other steps towards the Millennium Development Goals, are, instead, being transferred abroad.” 75

This statement made by the secretary General of the United Nations brings to further clarity the fact that bad governance and policies have ruined the political system of many developing

75 Annan, K., United Nations News Centre, 30th October 2003, Available at, www.globalissues.org/TradeRelated/Debt/USAid.asp#ForeignAidNumbersinChartsandGraphs visited on 25th May 2006
countries of Africa. Thus, instead of funds being applied to various sectors of the economy, they are being taken out of the country to foreign banks, yet these developing countries constantly demand for aid and assistance from the international body and developed countries for their development. Hence the question has become imperative to ask, whether there is a basis to justify the giving of foreign aid to developing countries of Africa, like Nigeria? And secondly, if foreign aid so far given has been able to achieve the purpose for which the donors have given them, which is for the development of these countries? But before I proceed to answer these, I wish to introduce the reader to this topic by giving a definition of foreign aid. Foreign aid or international aid is defined by the wikipedia, as a situation in which one country assists another country through donation, which may take the form of money or services. The main recipients of aid are developing countries and the main contributors are developed countries. According to the encyclopedia, one major type of aid is “developmental aid”, used to refer to official development assistance which is aid given by governments on certain concessional terms, usually as simple donations. It is given by governments through individual countries, international aid agencies, and multi- lateral institutions like World Bank and development charities.76

Having elucidated this definition, I will like to ask why foreign aid? And why should the developed nations be interested in giving aid to developing nations? It is pertinent to note that human societies across the globe have progressively established closer contacts over many centuries, which are necessitated by religious, political and social movements; like the Church, Islam, Colonialism, Science and Culture. Recently, the pace has dramatically increased, with the introduction of the Internet services like; cheap telephone services, e-mail services, and computer programs. Other technological advancements in the world have also been associated to have led to this development, such as, the invention and building of jet air planes, huge ocean vessels (ships), rail transportation (trains), television, radio and instant capital (money) flows to mention but a few. All these influence our values and positions, positively or negatively in our experiences with globalization, since they result to interaction from the west especially, to other parts of the world. Money, technology and raw materials now move evermore swiftly across national borders, and along with products; ideas and cultures also circulate more freely. As a result of these movements; laws, economies and social values are now being formulated at the international level. Globalization, therefore, is fast becoming an inevitable trend, a house-hold concept and a welcome development in this

modern era, when people are beginning to realise their interconnectedness with other people, with their cultures and social values.\textsuperscript{77} Globalization summarily refers to the processes and relations of social, economic, political and cultural phenomena that are transcending national borders, which link distant places and peoples. These processes of globalization are spontaneous rather than result of political decision.\textsuperscript{78}

Thus, the issue of global justice comes into play in this trend of globalization, in the form of global rectificatory justice and redistributive justice, as seen in redistribution of wealth and income that is witnessed in the world. For some moral theorists, in this era of globalization like Peter Singer and Brian R. Opeskin, the global distribution of wealth is a matter of moral obligation, which finds its basis of obligation in the idea of humanity. The cosmopolitans like Kok-Chor Tan will stipulate an obligation that may require people to relieve human suffering or people in distress, irrespective of state boundaries. Peter Singer was motivated by maximum utility and sacrifice, when he discusses ethical issues on globalisation and global justice. This motivation he says transcends the communitarian doctrines and emphasis on fellow co-nationals, and examines some important issues, which are basically humanitarian that, really affect the world today. This includes the need for a widely acceptable principle of global fairness and equality. By arguing along this direction he challenges the idea that people should allocate aid only to those who are of the same race with them. He argued on the grounds that, it is arbitrary to think that only those fortunate enough to be citizens of our own community will share in our bounty.\textsuperscript{79} On another development, Kok-Chor Tan proposes that the principles of distributive justice ought to apply equally and impartially to all persons and ought not to be constrained by the borders of countries. He explains that cosmopolitan Justice calls for a fundamental creation of forms of global institutions in which the basic rights and liberties of people can be equally protected and secured, ensuring that all are treated with equal concern. From a cosmopolitan perspective, principles of distributive justice ought to transcend nationality and citizenship, to apply equally to all individuals of the world as a whole, in that a persons legitimate material entitlements are to be determined independently of his or her nationality and state membership. In fact, cosmopolitan Justice is Justice without borders, citizenship or nationality, where everyone is entitled to give help to others and receive assistance from others irrespective of country or nationality.

\textsuperscript{77} Scholte, J.A, Globalization : Available at \url{http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/SIOISECTI} Visited on 20th April 2006
\textsuperscript{78} A Lecture by Prof. Göran Collste, Linköping University, 2nd Dec., 2005.
Having streamlined the moral basis for the dispensing and distribution of resources globally in form of aid by these two authors, let me now resort briefly to figures to see how inequality has grounded the existence of humanity, having in mind that my claim does not lie in the total abrogation of aid, but how we can justify the incidence of redistribution of resources from developed nations to the developing nations as aid, in the face of corruption, and the natural resources that abound in those developing countries; resources that have not been so far harnessed properly. As an applied ethics student, I cannot deny the fact that development assistance can be worthwhile, but we have to note that aid can contribute to alleviation of poverty in countries that have good existing policies and not just ones with weak and flexible policies that can be manipulated easily by corrupt individuals, thereby causing massive inequality and poverty to the populace.

In their report, the United Nations development programme in 1992 stated the inequality in national income between states. They announced that in 1989, countries with the richest 20% of world population had earned 82.7% of world income, while countries with the poorest 20% of world population earned a mere 1.4%. Judging by this figure one will deduce that the richest earned nearly 60 times the income of the poorest 20%. It should however be noted that, for Utilitarians, like Peter Singer, these figures conceal a gross level of inequality, because the results are based, on a comparison of average per capita incomes between the rich and poor countries. 80 Thus, Inequality has nearly doubled over the years, and beyond these inequalities of income is the reality for a need for justice signified by these records, for the welfare and quality of life of the poorest individuals. Again, in the early 90’s the life expectancy of individuals in the southern Sahara (Africa) was 12 years lower than that in the North (Western world). Infant mortality was nearly six times higher and individuals received only one third of the schooling of those in the west. 81 It has also been estimated that in the same year, over 100 million people in developing countries were affected by famine, while fully one quarter of the world’s population did not get sufficient food. 82

Furthermore, looking at the world bank report, in 2002, an estimated number of five hundred and eighty two(582) million poorest people in the world living in the south have an income of $146 billion, while the richest two hundred(200) persons in the world have an income of

$1042 billion exceeding the income of the poorest. More than one billion (1b) people lack access to clean water and 2.4 billion have insufficient sanitary equipment. While, 1.2 billion People are estimated to be very poor and earn less than $1 dollar per day. Gross inequality also is seen in the access to productive resources, where 97% of all patents belong to the industrialized West and 90% of them are in the hands of multi national companies. Consequently, it is shown that the poorest fifth of the world’s population had in 1990 only 1.4% of the total wealth of the, whereas in 1960 it was higher at about 2.3%. This additional record goes further to support the claim that there exists a state of poverty, misery and degradation of human life in developing countries. An experience I always have while walking down the streets of London, United Kingdom and Linkoping, Sweden seeing hundreds and thousands of well and over fed children, make me wonder the fate of millions of hungry children in Africa, especially in Nigeria.

An imperative question that needs to be asked is this, will developing countries in Africa continue to blame their political and economic problems on the former colonial powers, who they accuse, of robbing them of their rich and natural resources? Which is part of the basis for their justification for quest for global justice? Or is there no way Africa can find a way of helping themselves before calling for external support? Again, can’t there be a way these countries can harness their resources to better the lives of the people? And how can we be guaranteed that when these aids are given in the name of global justice, that African leaders will use them judiciouisly, considering the level of corrupt practices that have engrossed their political system.

At this point let me look at the record of aid that has been given so far and how it has affected, the developmental conditions in these developing countries so far, based on Philip Booth’ claims. Booth argues that, aid as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product grew continually in Africa, from 1970 to 1995 from 5% of gross national income to 18% of gross national income of African countries. In the 70’s aid was relatively low as a proportion of African national income which grew at about 2% per annum. It was noticed that growth collapsed in the 80’s whilst aid increased. Growth then came up again in the late 90’s when aid fell. Overall, from 1970 to 2000, Africa received an estimated of about $400 billion of aid, but there was little economic progress. For Booth therefore, aid does not lead to growth. This conclusion by

84 Booth, P Aid Trade and Governance: Can we make poverty History? Available at www.iea.org.uk visited on 24th May 2006
him is derived from an assessment and comparison of economic growth between East Asia and the Pacific, and South Asia, which has many of the countries developed now, leaving many countries in Africa yet underdeveloped. According to him a country like Nigeria which income per head was equal to that of South Korea 50 years ago, now is just 5% of South Korean level. Signifying that, when aid reduced in Asia and the Pacific in the 70’s the income per capita grew. This analysis shows that growth was highest when aid fell. A worrying phenomenon then is that till date, these results notwithstanding, African countries are still insistent on receiving aid whereas development is still far fetched. Most times I listen to the media; I hear “news” of millions and billions of dollars, Euros or pounds given to countries in Africa as developmental aid. Let me give few examples. Recently, on the 22nd of May 2006, the government of the Swiss confederation donated $3million aid package to Liberian government for concrete projects in some of her cities; in Namibia, Germany committed 60 million Euros on areas of transportation, natural resource management and rural development, including land reform and promotion of the economy, and in Nigeria, the month of May 2006 witnessed Britain donating $15billion to fund education in Nigeria. All these are numerous instances of aid funds being committed to some countries in Africa; without mentioning those that were given in the past. In spite of all these funds, these countries’ Gross Domestic Product still remain low, and such funds are sometimes never accounted for.

Another aspect I need to look at is the fact that some of these developing countries are very rich in resources, even though they fail to harness them, if we take a closer look at the situation of a country like Nigeria’s as regard to her resources. Recently the economic intelligence unit and the World Bank stated that, Nigerian gross domestic product (GDP) at purchasing power parity was only at $170.7 billion as of financial year (FY2005). The GDP per head was at $692, while Nigeria is considered a leading petroleum producer and exporter, the 12th largest producer of petroleum in the world and the 8th largest exporter. According to this report, Nigeria has one of the world’s largest proven natural gas and petroleum reserves and, a founding member of the organization of the petroleum exporting countries (OPEC). Other mineral resources present in Nigeria, like coal and tin are not fully exploited yet. Agricultural products which include groundnuts, palm oil, cocoa, citrus fruits, maize, millet, cassava, yams and sugar cane are surplus yet they are no longer invested in. Like many developing nations, Nigeria has accumulated a significant foreign debt. However many of the

85 Booth, P Aid Trade and Governance: Can we make poverty History? Available at www.iea.org.uk visited on 24th May 2006
projects financed by these debts were inefficient, bedevilled by corruption or failed policies. This examination of Nigeria by the economic intelligence unit and the World Bank further buttress the fact that Nigeria as a “Nation” for instance has not fully harnessed her full capacity, considering having all the necessary resources to get out of her present state of poverty. Having in mind that Nigeria has not done much to alleviate the suffering of the masses, by not putting in use the resources available to her; and considering also the level of corruption that abounds in the country, the question then is what solution can be given to these problems? Or which philosophical claim can we resort to as the best perspective that will be responsible for proffering solution to these problems in Nigeria, rightly understood as a nation? I will try to look at the Nationalists’ claims for the “uniqueness of nationhood”, in order to see the moral relevance, of such claims to the Nigerian situation. This position is relevant as it takes a look at the moral implications of being a member of a nation and Contributing to it’s welfare. I will do this in order to find reasons why Africans should improve their socio-economic conditions in general and why Nigeria as a nation should direct her affairs properly to improve the socio-economic life of the people.

Nationalists like David Miller, have indicated the relevance of membership in a nation. Miller in a bid to define what a nation is, proposed five characterizations of a nation, as a community,(a) constituted by shared belief and mutual commitment,(b) extended in history,(c) active in character,(d) connected to a particular territory, and (e) marked off from other communities by it’s distinct public culture. He further expressed his claims which are advanced in three claims: The national duties claim, the viability claim and the allocation claim. Miller suggests that stronger formulations should be given for the meaning of nation, in that communities living in a territory have a good claim to self determination. Therefore, there ought to be put in place institutional structure that enables individuals to decide matters collectively, which concern primarily their own community. For Miller there is a good claim for the right to national self-determination and self-reliance. Miller gives a normative account of the legitimacy of the authority of the state, by proposing the principle of nationality. He stipulates claims that the value of being a single nation within a state is sufficient since states have the authority to foster a common national identity and good distribution network of resources through laws and policy making.

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In the “National thesis” claim, Miller affirms that individuals owe special obligations to other members of their nation, as can be intuitively understood. Individuals as it were are subject to obligations of distributive justice to other members of their nation, if they engage in a joint co-operative system within a nation. Rawls will also defend this argument with his criterion for reciprocity for the defense of this special obligation, by individuals to other members of their community.

In a bid to disprove the workability of global distributive justice, Miller argues with the “viability claim” that global distributive justice as proposed by cosmopolitans should not be accepted because it is not feasible. People can only adhere to a system of redistributive justice if it is to be successfully put in place. The viability claim therefore, supports a system of distributive justice that is based only on national communities, since that which involves global systems of distributive justice are unworkable. Why will global system of justice not be workable? Prof Philip Booth in a response to this argues that some developing countries in Africa have a large percentage of their GDP coming from aid, and when this happen, people who are talented would not pursue their self-interested wealth accumulation through entrepreneurship and business. Rather, they would depend on obtaining the benefit of the aid resources allocated to them through the political system, making the opportunities for corruption very huge. Aid for him feeds corruption, and keeps the rich and powerful, rich and powerful, as can be deduced from what is happening in the developing countries. This consequentialist view point can be understood by saying that the effects of aid is harmful and include a promotion of a culture of dependency and a discouragement of self reliance by people in developing countries.

Another problem with global redistributive justice is that, it is understood to be bribes offered by governments in developed countries to those in developing countries for political advantage. The transfer of money and services from one government to another will perform a function of a price paid for political services rendered or yet to be rendered. Governments justify this form of bribery as foreign aid for economic development since money is transferred through legitimate machinery put in place for economic aid. Governments over

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89 Rawls, J., The Law of Peoples, pp. 132-133. (Criterion for reciprocity as Rawls puts it is understood as when a reason and belief for political power is sufficient for people to reasonably believe that they might accept such reasons reasonably. This happens when everyone in society have sufficiently fulfilled their role, and the political authority being able to fulfil its role to the people).
90 Booth, P. Aid Trade and Governance: Can we make poverty History? Available at www.iea.org.uk visited on 24th May 2006
time have used this legitimate means to buy political advantage from governments of developing countries. This practice of giving bribes as though they are contributions for development in developing countries creates in the giver and the recipient an expectation which is often bound to be disappointing. For the nationalists therefore, global justice in the form of foreign assistance will not be workable. Cosmopolitans like Thomas Pogge will argue that moral criteria for global justice are what counts and not political policies or institutions which are responsible to dispense them favourably. For Pogge, people are motivated morally for their commitment to principles of global distributive Justice. But then, Booth will ask, how we can accept Pogge’s argument that what really counts is the moral disposition to commitment to cosmopolitan distributive justice ideals, and not political institutions and structures responsible for the implementation of global justice principles. For what then, is the need for foreign aid if it is just to enrich and help the rich and powerful, get richer and more powerful while increasing the level of corrupt practices? What is the essence of foreign aid to Africa, if according to Koffi Annan; the developing countries will continue to intensify their efforts by devising new means of transferring huge sums of money meant for development or as aid, to foreign banks instead of using them for the economic development which the monies are meant for? The reader’s guess is as good as mine. If foreign aid to developing countries of Africa has not been workable, since many countries of Africa have remained poor, I think that the allocation claim posited by the Nationalists can really help to solve the problem of corruption, and harness the available resources on ground in these developing countries.

The “Allocation of duty” claim, stipulates that people living in the nation have the duties to ensure that everyone receive their entitlements due to them. Nations have the special duty to ensure that their members receive their just entitlements as can be deduced from the cosmopolitan idea of distributive justice. Miller agrees with the cosmopolitan claim that people are entitled to their security, liberty and subsistence, but this duty for him belongs to co-nationals. Miller supports his positions that the obligations to ensure that people receive their entitlements and promote their basic rights belong to co-nationals. He made this claim with these propositions that, if human beings have basic rights, and individuals are under a special obligations to their co-nationals then individuals are responsible to see to it that the

basic rights of co-nationals are observed. The responsibility to see that the basic rights are taken care of rests on local communities to which the individual belongs.\textsuperscript{94} Even though Freeman has rejected this argument on the basis that proposition one and two does not imply the conclusion, since we can accept one and two and deny the conclusion. He further argues that for the fact that an individual is entitled to something, does not make him (Freeman), who has a duty to that individual to provide him with that which he is entitled to.\textsuperscript{95} But looking at it differently, we will deduce that Miller’s argument is plausible for if individuals who have basic rights, fulfill their obligations to other co-nationals, I think justice demands that co-nationals owe a special duty to that individual, to ensure that he gets all his just entitlements in the nation. I can argue that, applying the allocation claim by the nationalists to the Nigerian situation; that Nigeria as a nation will realize that she owes her citizens special obligation to ensure that their basic rights are protected and their just entitlements are given to them. In as much as individuals fulfill their own obligation to their co-nationals, and carry out their civic duties as and when due, it is the duty and responsibility of the government locally, to ensure that members of the nation receive the entitlements due to them. In this case resources have to be adequately distributed and harnessed for the good of the people in order to alleviate the poverty that has pervaded the nation.

4.5 \textbf{SUMMARY:}

I have tried to analyze the situation in Nigerian politics, as it concerns the electoral system and the moral problems associated with corrupt practices in the country’s political structure, to see how the country has really fared in maintaining that legitimate character that should characterize her activities. This is because the realization of a just society for proper distribution of wealth and resources should be paramount in the activity of any given political system. I also looked at the moral justification for foreign aid in Developing countries of Africa especially Nigeria, in the face of corruption and abundant natural resources in them. I then proffered the nationalists’ claims as a remedy for the sustenance of the natural resources that abound in some of these developing countries like Nigeria.

\textsuperscript{94} Millner D, On Nationality, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995, p.75
CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 CONCLUSION:

It is ethically imperative that any discussion on corruption would necessarily start with a moral approach in order to understand fully the moral implications of corruption and how it occurs and affects different societies. This means that the notion of corruption will be shown to be wider than has often been recognized, as there are differences in ways social norms and moral principles that guide societies are practiced amongst and within societies.

I have taken a normative approach in this work by positing first, some definitions by various authors, which I found descriptively insufficient as an ethics student to represent corruption as a moral concept that has moral implications. Even though I will acknowledge the fact that all the definitions represent a common feature of corruption as an abuse of public office for private gain, that is capable of constituting harm to the public. But then ethicists have shown that corruption go beyond such claim, to include habitual wrong acts that are performed by moral agents, which are capable of despoiling the moral character of the individual as well as undermining the morally legitimate institution in which such actions occur. Consequently, these wrongful acts disintegrate the political structure of the society, which is the means to achieving correct conduct and management of a community’s affairs and the production and distribution of resources. This problem brought about by corruption will then intensify poverty in the society.

I have also gone further to argue that these corrupt practices always find their way into the political sphere of the society, which is a vital institution in any country, not just for growth and development of the economic standard of living, of the members of the society but also for a sustainable and long lasting effect of such development. This is the reason why, when corrupt practices cut into the fabric of any country’s political life, the effects are however drastic, because they set back the rate development that is supposed to be achieved.

Summarily, I have used different moral arguments and principles, as evaluative tools to give a normative account of the problem with corruption especially as it affects developing countries of Africa, where I laid a strong emphasis on Nigeria. I further argued in this work that in no

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way would corrupt practices like bribery which cuts across the electoral institution of Nigeria be justified or rationalized. Judging by the favourable conditions that warrant them in the country. Again, I went further to enunciate that foreign assistance which is a cry by developing countries in this era of globalization would not be justified in the face of corrupt practices and the abundant natural and human resources that are mismanaged over time in these countries. The application of principles and ideas of the Nationalists are highly needed for the promotion of national responsibility and distribution of wealth and resources in the country. Bearing in mind inequality and poverty brought about by corruption in the political system of the country is not a product of or absence of natural resources, but differences in perception and implementation of poor political culture and irrelevant policies in Nigeria. As long as the country can experience a reform of her political structure based on Rawls ideas and the Nationalists’ claims, through a firm fight with corruption, she may not be morally entitled to foreign assistance in the form of aid.

Proper sense of national values, integrity, trust and transparency by government officials is imperative to get problems of corruption in politics solved in Nigeria.
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