

Gender and Corruption in Nigerian Politics.

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Abstract

This article explores the relationships, or the lack thereof, between gender and grand corruption in Nigeria. Methodologically, Butler's theory of subject formation/performativity, and Kothari's critique of participation, was used to interrogate selected Nigerian grand corruption literature and public indictment records. The objective was to tease-out and explain under-emphasized influences on grand corruption, such as the roles of godfathers, women's political socialization and self-interests. Findings indicate that powerful political, cultural, military and industrial godfathers and mothers regulate aspirants' selection, electoral funding, appointments and extra-constitutional protection from prosecution when they engage in grand corruption. Godfathers regulate political participation in a manner that encourage protégées fantasies about, and imitative adoption of their patrons' corrupt worldviews and practices. Consequently, godfather political socialization, extra-constitutional pressures on office holders, and crass materialist accumulation interests of indicted female leaders seem to matter more than the gender binary.

Key Words: *Nigeria; Godfathers; Subjection; Gender; Corruption*

Résumé

Cet article explore les relations, ou leur absence, entre le genre et la grande corruption en Nigeria. Méthodologiquement, la théorie de Butler sur la formation de sujet / Performativity, et la critique de participation de Kothari, a été pour on Employee roger de la Littérature Selection sets Nigeria grand corruption et les dossiers publics d'acte d'accusation. L'objectif était de Decrypter et d'expliquer influences les sous-soulignées sur la grande corruption, Telles que les roles des parrains, socialisation la politique des femmes et les intérêts personnels. Les résultats de que indiquent puissants parrains mères et politiques, culturels, Military INDUSTRIELS régissent et la sélection des aspirants, for Financing électoral, les nominations et la protection extra-Constitutional contre les poursuites lorsqu'ils commettent une grande corruption. Les parrains participation réglementent la politique d'une manière qui les encourage fantasmes des protégés et l'adoption des imitative visions du monde et des pratiques de leurs corrompues patrons. Par conséquent, socialisation la politique de parrain, les pressions extra-constitutionnelles sur les titulaires de charge et les intérêts Grossiers de l'accumulation des femmes materialists accusées semblent avoir plus d'Importance que le genre de binôme.

Mots clés: *Nigeria; Parrain; Sujétion; Le genre; la corruption*

Introduction

It is trendy for scholarly and professional development discourse about Nigeria to blame patriarchy for her perennial underdevelopment. Such discourse additionally accentuates narrow corrective programmes and projects that address selective symptoms of maladministration, such as grand corruption. A version of such essentialist development orthodoxy suggests that “increasing women’s presence in public life can reduce levels of corruption” (Swamy et al, 2001:36; see also Dollar et al. 2001; Oduyoye 1986). Another version states that “African men have ruined Africa; therefore, there might be a need to shift the political power base to the women” (Ojior 2002:2; see also Arowolo and Aluko 2010; Akunyili 2006; World Bank 2001).

The above essentialist sentiment that women’s political participation will reduce levels of grand corruption continues to be driven by an inexact interpretation of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action declaration (see Beijing Declaration 1995: Chapter 1: 7). Critically, the Beijing declaration did not claim that women are less corrupt than men. Instead, the platform promotes socio-economic and political parity, which is a desirable development goal in itself. Unlike the Beijing Platform’s advocacy for parity however, a powerful wing of the parity lobby proposes that masculinity is synonymous with corruption while femininity is synonymous with probity (Arowolo and Aluko 2010; Swamy et al, 2001). This foundational proposition of the essentialist parity lobby neglects that “not all men are successful patriarchs” nor every woman oppressed (Silberschmidt 1999:8). Moreover, the essentialist parity lobby seem to illogically suggest those women’s historic marginalization experiences somehow confer emancipatory governance qualities, such as probity, on them.

Unfortunately, women’s growing participation in Nigerian public sphere has not reduced the levels of grand corruption by May 2015 (see Global Witness 2015; Human Rights Watch 2011; Ribadu 2010; Smith 2010; Ajayi 2010). Consequently, rather than a priori assignation of honesty to one gender, and corruption to the other, anti-corruption stakeholders should advocate for institutional/legal reforms, and dispassionate legal enforcement, which would encourage honesty among politically exposed Nigerian men and women; and judicially try indicted persons, exonerate or punish offenders. Politically exposed persons are Nigerians who contest and win elections into public offices, such as the president, governors and local government chairpersons; are appointed to serve as ministers, commissioners, and heads of government agencies, such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and are wealthy and powerful men and women who exert influence over Nigerian political processes.

The seeming failure of the gender binary, as an anti-corruption device in Nigeria, implies that there may be alternative and plausible explanations for grand corruption that the gender binary fails to capture. Such explanations may include godfather pressures, women’s political socialization, and their own materialist interests and pursuits. The importance of considering these latter set of influences on grand corruption is accentuated by the fact that participation in Nigerian politics is like gender action. Public service in Nigeria has become a pre-scripted act that is sustained by godfather influence and corrupt self-interests of participants, which are disguised as community service and emancipatory politics. The foregoing is why successive generations of Nigerian public servants “fight for booty or ‘national cake’ through grand corruption in a very pre-scripted and predictable manner (Garba 1995:237). Grand corruption nurtures the collapse of public services and confidence in government across Nigeria amidst worsening poverty rates, ethnic divisions and “shriller parochial politics in which ethnic groups battle for the shrinking national cake” (Africa Confidential 1999;online).

Leveraging Butler’s performative gender construct, this article proposes that the extra-constitutional activities of Nigerian godfathers/mothers and candidates’ own action-orientations are more robust explanations for grand corruption in Nigeria than the gender binary (and other factors discussed in the next sections). The remainder of the article will attempt to validate this claim. For analytical and presentational clarity, this paper focuses exclusively on grand or public sector corruption, such as those perpetrated by politically exposed women. Several institutional and individual authors have robustly catalogued and discussed politically exposed Nigerian males’ indictments for grand corruption (see Global Witness 2015; Human Rights Watch 2011; see Ribadu 2010; World Bank 2007; USAID 2006; Bello-Imam 2005; Transparency International 2004). It is important to note that female leaders presented herein were indicted for grand corruption in a manner similar to some of their male counterparts, such as former Governor Lucky Iginiedion of Edo state and James Ibori of Delta State. Influences discussed by this paper are selectively limited to politically exposed women’s socialization and induction into politics by godfathers in a permissive political culture (the processes of subject formation), which combines with the women’s own agencies (assimilation and imitation of patrons’ perverse desires for, and actions to accumulate crass wealth) which promotes and sustains grand corruption in Nigeria.

To achieve the above objectives, the remainder of the paper is divided into eight broad sections. Section one stipulates the meaning of corruption; and examines why it is intractable in Nigeria. Section two presents literature on gender and corruption while section three discusses the paper’s conceptual framework. Section four presents the article’s methods while section five presents evidence of conceptual linkages between the Nigerian structure and indicted women’s agencies, pathways to public office and

corruption. In contrast, section six demonstrates the practical implications of the described subject formation and action linkages on the women's corrupt conducts. The next section, section seven, presents evidence of the growing list of Nigerian women indicted for grand corruption. The last section revisits key issues discussed, and concludes that corruption is not gendered but a product of systemic godfathers' political socialization and pressures on politically exposed persons, and their own perverse desires to accumulate crass wealth in a selectively permissive political culture.

The meaning of corruption; and why it is intractable in Nigeria

This article adopts Nye's definition of corruption, which is very pertinent to Nigeria. According to Nye, corruption is "behaviour which deviates from the normal duties of a public role because of private-regarding (family, close private clique), pecuniary or status gains; or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence. This includes such behaviour as bribery (use of reward to pervert the judgment of a person in a position of trust); nepotism (bestowal of patronage by reason of ascriptive relationship rather than merit); and misappropriation (illegal appropriation of public resources for private regarding uses)" (Nye 1967:419). Rephrased, corruption "is the misuse of public power for private gain" (Rose-Ackerman 1999:9; see also Joseph 1997; Goetz 2007 and 2002). But why is corruption endemic in Nigeria?

Simply put, corruption is endemic in Nigeria because politically exposed persons are socialized by Nigerian oligarchs and elites' who observe a corrupt political culture; and lack incentives (because they derive perverse advantage from it) to sustainably address several factors that recommend public servants grand corruption. Some of these influences include festering inter-ethnic cultural, political and economic uncertainty and fears, which are associated with Nigeria's initial and present conditions (i.e. colonialism, fractured ethnicities, regional/ethnic variance in natural resource endowment, development outcomes, poverty etc.). These challenges continue to promote splintered national identities among Nigerian citizens, erode the state's legitimacy and capacities for action, and delineate her resources as a bounty to be captured by elected and appointed office holders, and those in their patronage networks. In different combinations, these features of the Nigerian state inadvertently accentuate the importance of holding elective/appointive office as the means to accumulate personal wealth and power.

It is important to note that the article's primacy of political subject formation and self-interest argument does not disqualify competing influences on endemic corruption in Nigeria. A few of these readily come to mind. They include the expedient colonial divide-and-rule legacy, which institutionalized corruption by vesting warrant chiefs and other

local potentates with power (beyond their traditional limits and divested of traditional constraints) to collect, grant tax exemptions and keep a portion of the collected sums as their remuneration (Ezekwesili 2014; Adebani and Obadare 2010; Brown 2011; Taiwo 1999). Writing about the pivotal role of colonialism in institutionalizing grand corruption in Nigeria, for example, Brown (2011) observed that "warrant chief's salaries were a percentage of the tax they collected and they became fat, rich men ... This is also where we first see the phenomenon of Big Men, leaders who are gorged with unchecked power and ill-begotten gain" (Brown 2011:56; see also Afigbo 1972). In Nigeria's *illiberal democracy* today (Zakaria 2007), elected officials continue the above described practice of aggregating state funds and keeping self-determined portions (Mohammed 2013; Ribadu 2010).

Other influential factors on endemic corruption in Nigeria include inter-ethnic elites' concerns about diminishing (and the need to maintain their) cultural, political and economic power; interpersonal relations/network pressures, a pervasive belief that every politician in Nigeria is corrupt, and fears that the Nigeria state is ultimately bound for dissolution. In addition, we have influential factors such as the Nigerian state near-total control of the economy, which accentuates the importance of controlling the state (and her resources) through her cultural, religious and military-industrial complex; poor civil service remuneration culture, limited institutional oversight of politically exposed persons, selective prosecution and limited punishment of offenders, endemic poverty amidst spectacular wealth displays, the abetting influence of multinational corporations, local and international financial institutions, personal greed, and so on (see Lederman, Loayza and Soares 2006; Bello-Imam 2005; Ake 2000).

Above all, corruption is intractable in Nigeria because select and indicted politically exposed persons, male and female, are rarely prosecuted for their crime (Human Rights Watch 2011; Ribadu 2010; World Bank 2002 and 2007). In fact, the "knowledge of probability of getting caught and knowledge of the penalty" are limited deterrents against grand corruption in Nigeria (Tanzi 1994:8). It is against the foregoing backgrounds and not the gender binary that one may comprehend the corrupt conducts of indicted female politically exposed persons in Nigeria (see Ribadu, 2010; Sampson and Decker, 2010).

Literature – gender and corruption

A combination of structural and (inter)personal factors have been blamed for women's under-representation in Nigerian politics today (Inter-Parliamentary Union 1999; Arowolo and Aluko 2010; Ajayi 2007). These include cultural prejudice and stereotyping, difficulties encountered in everyday (re)productive life, lack of time and

family responsibilities, lack of motivation and the bad image of party politics, lack of resources, and lack of self-confidence - all allied to low literacy levels, income and social statuses. Other obstacles include the patriarchal hierarchies and prejudice within political parties and the lack of solidarity among women themselves (see Inter-Parliamentary Union 1999:35-47; Arowolo and Aluko 2010). Without explicitly addressing the above listed parity challenges, nascent movements for political parity in Nigeria have coalesced into affirmative action, quotas, and so forth, pursued to achieve gender parity in politics (see INEC 2006; Suara 1996). The essentialist parity lobby is particularly enlivened by attempts to capture Nigeria's acclaimed gender-neutral pre-colonial past where women were not as subjugated and subordinated to men in political and civil life as they are today (see Amadiume's (1987) dual sex system).

In literature and lay discourse therefore, the benefits of women's participation in Nigerian politics are thus uncritically proposed drawing-on their biological uniqueness from men, which supposedly endow them with good governance attributes (see Dollar, Fisman and Gatti 2001; Swamy et al, 2001). In their zeal to effect change, the essentialist parity lobby have adopted a "reverse-discourse that uncritically mimics the strategy of the oppressor instead of offering a different set of terms" (Butler 1999:18). Accordingly, modest parity gains have been made in the 1999, 2003 and 2007 Nigerian elections. However, these gains were eroded in the 2011 and 2015 national elections (see Table 1).

Office	1999		2003		2007		2011		2015	
	Seats	Women	Seats	Women	Seats	Women	Seats	Women	Seats	Women
President	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
Senate	109	3 (2.8%)	109	4 (3.7%)	109	9 (8.3%)	109	7 (6.4%)	109	8 (7.3%)
House of Representatives	360	7 (1.9%)	360	21 (5.8%)	360	27 (7.5%)	360	25 (6.9%)	360	18 (5%)
Governor	36	0	36	0	36	0	36	0	36	0
State House of Assembly (SHA)	990	24 (2.4%)	990	40 (3.9%)	990	57 (5.8%)	990	68 (6.9%)	990	Data Unavailable
SHA Committee Chairpersons	829	18 (2.2%)	881	32 (3.6%)	887	52 (5.9%)	887	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable
LGA Chairpersons	710	13 (1.8%)	774	15 (1.9%)	740	27 (3.6%)	740	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable
LGA Councillors	6368	69(1.1)	6368	267(4.2)	6368	235(3.7)	6368	Data Unavailable	6368	Data Unavailable

Table 1: Parity Trends in Nigeria from 1999-2015: Source British Council Gender in Nigeria Report 2012 and EU Election Observation Mission Nigeria, General Elections 2015

This article attributes the reversal to the triple tyrannies of participation (or

domineering and exploitative exercise of political power) among the above listed challenges of political parity in Nigeria. The triple participatory tyrannies in Nigeria are the tyrannies of: (1) patriarchal decision-making and control, (2) masculine interest-begotten group dynamics and, (3) patriarchal manipulative usurpation of participatory methods to suggest progress in political parity, discipline feminine political conduct, and pacify international pressure groups (see Cooke and Kothari 2001:7-8).

Additional literature on gender and corruption include Sampson and Decker (2010) study of the applicability of the parity-anticorruption hypothesis to Nigeria. The authors found that instead of gender, the Nigerian corrupt political system is responsible for politically exposed women's indictment for corruption. However, Sampson and Decker (2010) did not elaborate on the recursive interrelationships and interdependencies between the corrupt political system and female candidates, which creates and maintains the corrupt system. For example, in Uganda, Goetz (2002:549) reports that "the political value of specially created new seats [quotas] has been eroded by their exploitation as currency for the National Resistance Movement's (NRM) patronage system, undermining women's effectiveness as representatives of women's interests once in office." Elsewhere, literature testing the gender-corruption relationship abound.

In a study that sought theoretical and practical lessons on corruption in Nicaragua and Tanzania for the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Seppanen and Virtanen (2008) report that parity in the public service did not necessarily improve service because pre-existing accountability structures were not reformed. Similarly, UNDP and UNIFEM report systemic corruption of senior female officials managing the baby food supply contracts in Karnataka, India (2010:23; citing Sengupta 1998). In the same vein, leveraging a re-analysis of parity and mitigated corruption data, Sung (2003) conclude that liberal democratic institutions or "fairer systems," and not femininity, more robustly account for what the author called the fallacious association of femininity with reduced corruption. Further challenging the parity-anticorruption rhetoric, Alolo (2005) did not find significant differences in corruption levels among government bureaucrats gendered as male or female in Ghana (2005: cited in Sung 2006). Correspondingly, Alatas and colleagues (2009) cross-country study of gendered attitudes to corruption report a stronger influence of cultural inducement (not gender) in accounts of attitudes to corruption. To cap these cautionary studies, Goetz (2007) advances the limited opportunity argument for corruption (see also Zager 1994; Okin 1989). That is, women seem less corrupt because of their limited numbers in politics unlike men, and as a consequence, they have limited opportunities to embezzle state funds.

The foregoing synopsis of gender and corruption literature raises important questions about emerging experimental evidence, such as Lambsdorff and Frank's (2011:122-

123) study with students simulating the roles of businesspersons and public servants. Although the authors qualified their findings with several caveats, such that deterministic interpretations are unwise, they did conclude that 'where one-shot interactions between public and private entail temptations for bribery, women are less likely to strike successful corrupt deals' (Lambsdorff and Frank 2011:123). For this paper, Lambsdorff and Frank's (2011) findings raises another question. How would the female participants in their experiment react if the public servants/business persons' interactions become recurrent and not a one shot deal? In Nigeria, as in most developing nations, public officials' interactions with the organized private sector are recurrent and depend on monetized personal networks, which are leveraged to exploit existing legal and bureaucratic rules for personal gain.

Consider other inconclusive laboratory corruption experiments. In a 2009 experimental study, Alatas, Cameron and Chaudhuri report that men were more willing to punish corruption in all the four countries under study while women's willingness to punish corruption was variable and contextual (opportunistic?). Moreover, according to the authors, "while women are less tolerant of corruption than men in Australia, no significant gender differences are seen in India, Indonesia, and Singapore" (Alatas, Cameron and Chaudhuri 2009:663). Similarly, another recent study, which sought to establish "the contexts in which we would expect female involvement in government to fight corruption," the authors assert, "that women are less susceptible to corruption in democracies but are equally susceptible in autocratic system" (Esarey and Chirillo 2013:362). The Nigerian system is neither a *de facto* nor *de jure* democracy. It is an illiberal democracy (Zakaria 2007) because it retains a variety of autocratic features. These features include the over-centralization of state power, abuse of power by state officials, to mention a few. Based on the above review of literature, the essentialist claims that women in politics have a constraining effect on corruption seem unfounded.

Conceptual Framework

To demonstrate that essentialist parity claims, such as women's participation in politics reduces grand corruption is conceptually and empirical misleading, this paper is sensitized by Judith Butler's (1997) construct of subject formation and performativity. Butler's construct is employed to understand and explain why corruption in Nigeria is not determined by the gender of politically exposed persons. Instead, we must reference the extra-constitutional influences of godfathers, public leaders' political socialization and selection processes, and their own perverse desires and active pursuit of crass material accumulation. In Butler's more technical formulation, this means the article will deconstruct "the substantive appearance of gender (femininity and masculinity) into its constitutive acts (corruption

or probity) and locate and account for those acts within the compulsory frames set by the various forces" (patriarchy, prebendal and self-interest politics) which regulates political participation in Nigeria (Butler 1999:45; words in parenthesis, by author).

According to Butler, subjection or "the process of becoming subordinated by power as well as the process of becoming a subject commences with an infant's passionate attachment and dependence on 'parents, guardians, and siblings' for physical and emotional survival" (i.e. life and growth assets; Butler 1997:2 and 8). The relationship between an infant and its significant adults are unequal and ambiguous, which ensures the child becomes a well-adjusted contextual subject whose conduct is not predetermined. Critically, the desires and conducts of the child's powerful guardians (in the eyes of the child at least) saturates the child - unequivocally influencing the child's life choices and conducts in a manner that is neither predetermined nor structured by unfettered freedom. Yet, the child's life choices and conducts are neither predetermined nor structured by unfettered freedom because people can always (and often) do otherwise despite threats to their persons and privilege.

Comparable to a child's unequal relations and dependence on adults, aspiring politicians in Nigeria depend on godfathers' patronage for introduction to politics, nomination, appointments, electoral support and victory (Fayemi 2009; Kew 2006). Nigerian godfathers/mothers are drawn from various cultural, religious, political and military-industrial complexes. Godfathers, and lately godmothers,' patronage for political participation are imperative because "politics at the federal, state, and local levels of the Nigerian federation are dominated by the powerful mandarins who built vast patronage networks ... who now use political office to expand these networks and their personal fortunes" (Kew 2006: 419; see also Ayoade 2008; Human Rights Watch 2007). Consider Butler's more technical formulation of the above concept - quoted at some length for clarity purposes:

The more a practice is mastered, the more fully subjection is achieved. Submission and mastery take place simultaneously, and this paradoxical simultaneity constitutes the ambivalence of subjection. Though one might expect submission to consist in yielding to an externally imposed dominant order and to be marked by a loss of control and mastery, paradoxically, it is itself marked by mastery ... the lived simultaneity of submission as mastery, and mastery as submission, is the condition of possibility for the emergence of the subject (Butler 1997:116-117).

Similar to parity, participation is ideally a tool for the recruitment and empowerment of local people, especially marginalized groups into politics and development (see

Cornwall and Gaventa 2001; Scott 1998). Of late Nigeria, participation may have become a technique for the procedural drafting of minority elites (especially women) into development and politics – a substitute for good, inclusive and accountable governance (see Ake 1996; Ayoade 2008; Goetz 2002; Lovenduski 1993). Consequently, political participation in Nigeria may be judged tyrannical. The relevant tyrannies are: (1) patriarchal decision-making and control, (2) masculine interest-begotten group dynamics and, (3) patriarchal manipulative usurpation of participatory methods to simulate progress, discipline feminine political conducts, and pacify international stakeholders (see Kothari 2001). The above-described processes of political subject formation and political participation explains why corruption thrives in Nigeria. Indeed, public officials in Nigeria respond most to informal [godfathers/mothers dictates and/or personal greed] than formal institutional and legal regulations (UNDP 2004).

Methods

This article identified analysed and synthesized select literature on Nigerian grand corruption, and grand corruption indictment records from the EFCC website. This paper relied on grand corruption indictment records because “corruption generally comprises illegal activities, which are deliberately hidden and only come to light through scandals, investigations or prosecutions” (Transparency International 2014; see also Global Witness 2015). It is through indictments that the Nigerian public learns about public sector corruption. In addition, this paper relied on indictment records because they have been similarly used to discuss politically exposed Nigerian males’ grand corruption with little controversy (see Ribadu 2010; World Bank 2007; USAID 2006; Bello-Imam 2005; Transparency International 2004).

In 2009 for example, the Chairman of EFCC, Nuhu Ribadu, claims that Nigeria lost \$440USD billion since independence in 1960. How does available literature theoretically and empirically account for this loss? Was the gender of office holders responsible for the said loss? What alternative influences on grand corruptions, which were previously not accorded primacy, could be discerned in literature? The objective of these sensitizing questions was to identify and fill gaps in current grand corruption research, indictments records, and apply an alternative theory to understand, interpret and support empirical evidence.

Most of the analysed articles were previously published in journals and reports, such as ActionAid (2015). The inclusion criteria for literature analysed are their relevance to the Nigerian case, and critical content. Ultimately, the selected articles were subjected to a theoretical content analysis and interpretation (see Hsieh and Shannon 2005: Miles

and Huberman 1994). That is, selected studies and reports were critically read to isolate and categorise passages of texts that are assignable to Butlers (1997) theoretical concepts of political subject formation and conduct, which offer alternative insights into grand corruption in Nigeria.

Findings

Conceptual linkages between structural influences and politically exposed women’s corruption

In the Nigerian context, the political socialization and subordination of willing political aspirants often entails their stylized guidance, observation and (re)enactment of corrupt practices of either their godfathers and/or previous public office holders. Aspirants’ relationships with their patrons are consolidated with pre-electoral agreements and juju/oaths (Ribadu 2010; Fayemi 2009; Kew 2006; Ake 2000). Pre-electoral agreements are believed to be enforced with threats of political sanctions, character and/or physical assassination.

Similar to a growing child, male and female political and bureaucratic aspirants’ in Nigeria ambivalently depend on godfathers and godmothers for nomination, electoral funding, and protection from prosecution for corruption (Global Witness 2015; Human Rights Watch 2011; Ribadu 2010). On the one hand, aspirants’ dependence on their godfathers/godmothers is a demonstration of their subjection by, and submission to, the oligarchs. On the other hand, and paradoxically, aspirants’ dependence on the mandarins is a demonstration of their agential penetration, or reflexive knowledge and mastery of their political economic contexts. The above ambivalent processes of dependence and mastery of contextual political norms inform public office holders’ selective and creative re-application (or not) of select political norms, such as grand corruption, to maximize their symbolic, political and material advantage in Nigeria.

Accordingly, godfathers and godmothers do not deterministically impose their (corrupt) worldviews and grand corruption practices on protégés. Neither does every political protégé unilaterally fantasize about, or adopt their godfather’s corrupt political worldviews and practices. Thus, the political socialization (subjection) and subordination of willing Nigerian elites into active political actors, and their mastery of contextual political culture of grand corruption are incomplete until male or female public office holders wholly or selectively re-enact the dominant political norm in Nigeria – grand corruption. This is likely what Butler (1988) described as performativity – in this instance, public office holders’ stylized repetition of grand corruption acts. The above-described processes illustrate how godfathers/mothers’ power concurrently forms Nigerian public

office holders (as subject) and provides “the very condition of its existence (political participation) and the trajectory of its desire” which is often grand corruption in Nigeria (Butler 1997:2; words in bracket, by author).

Consequently, there are symbiotic but non-deterministic relationships among Nigerian mandarins of politics and their protégés. The relationships is such that protégés’ need to participate in politics (and accumulate wealth) are exploited by patrons who have the power and resources to facilitate (or thwart) such aspirations. Evidence for such relationships often emerges at the indictment of public office holders when godfathers often derail their prosecution – despite their indictment for grand corruption. It is in this regard that Human Rights Watch observes that “although Nigeria lost about 380 billion USD to corruption ... many of the corruption cases against the political elite have made little progress ... At this writing, not a single politician was serving prison time for any of these alleged crimes” (Human Rights Watch 2011:1; see also Ribadu 2010; World Bank 2002 and 2007).

Practical linkages between structural influences and politically exposed women’s corruption

We saw in the literature review section how combinations of structural and (inter)personal factors are responsible for women’s under-representation in Nigerian politics (see Inter-Parliamentary Union 1999; Arowolo and Aluko 2010; Ajayi 2007). Another important constrain is what MacLeod describes as “women’s own contradictory subjectivities and ambiguous purposes” (1992:534) – such as their desires to personify the contradictory dictates of traditional motherhood, professionalism and modernity. This means that women lack critical mass in Nigerian public office. The consequence is that there are fewer female role models that aspirants could rely-on for political socialization, nomination, electoral funding and public sector appointments. These facts necessitate female aspirants’ reliance on better established patriarchal networks for political socialization, nomination, electoral funding and public sector appointments. As we have seen so far, patriarchal (and slowly emerging matriarchal) political networks who currently dominate Nigerian politics practice and socialize aspirants on self-interest-begotten politics.

To the above, we must add Fayemi’s (2009: online) empirical observation that regardless of gender, success in Nigerian politics, and in securing political appointments, depends upon aspirants active and purposive appeasement of five mini-gods. These gods are the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Nigeria’s election management agency; the Nigerian Police Force, State Security Service and military,

and thugs and bandits employed to rig elections. The other mini-gods are the Nigerian judiciary, needed to legally secure stolen elections, and the money god/godfather complex, which determines who can run, and who wins elections (see also Ake 2000 and Sklar, Onwudiwe and Kew 2006). If the foregoing assertion by a former Nigerian state governor sounds incredible, please consider Human Rights Watch documented account of the disagreement between a godfather and his protégé as another evidence of the linkages between public office holders’ political socialization and corrupt conducts.

The public quarrel between a godfather (Chris Uba), and his protégé, the former Governor Chris Ngige of Anambra State, Nigeria is now infamous. Apparently, Chris Ngige entered an extraconstitutional agreement (constituents of which he subsequently reneged) with his godfather Chris Uba, and signed a private contract to “exercise and manifest absolute loyalty to the person of Chief Chris Uba as my mentor, benefactor and sponsor;” and “allow Uba control over all important government appointments and the awarding of all government contracts” (Human Rights Watch 2007:68; see also FGN 2005). As can be deduced from the preceding quote, Chris Uba and former Governor Ngige’s conducts are emblematic of the active and purposive agencies of both Nigerian political candidates and their patrons in orchestrating corruption and bad governance. Consequently, it seems plausible to suggest that politically exposed Nigerian women, similar to their male counterparts, are prone to similar pressures from godfathers, and pursuit of self-interests that were outlined by a former Nigerian President. According to former President Obasanjo, “elective offices have become mere commodities to be purchased by the highest bidder, and those who literally invest merely see it as an avenue to recoup and make profits” (cited in FGN 2005:5).

Probably as a consequence of the above-described political culture, “women in office do not necessarily defend ... feminist(s) position(s) on policies” as the essentialist-parity lobby would argue (Cornwall and Goetz 2005:784; words in parenthesis, by author). Elsewhere in New Zealand, a 1975 - 1999 study found that women previously conceived as unaggressive adopted essentialist masculine aggressive attitudes during parliamentary debates. This finding contradicted the investigators earlier essentialist expectations that males’ parliamentarians are more aggressive than their female counterparts (see Grey 2001:9). A plausible explanation for New Zealand’s female parliamentarians’ aggressive attitudes, such as rude interjections and personal attacks during parliamentary debates, is that new female parliamentarians were socialized on pre-existing male parliamentary elites’ uncivil behaviour – in concert with female parliamentarians’ own interests in adopting the existing parliamentary norms for success. The above-described process parallels how female politically exposed Nigerians may have adopted the prevailing corrupt political and bureaucratic behaviour to advance their godfather’s and own wealth accumulation agendas.

Based on the foregoing analysis, one may conclude that the pathways into Nigerian politics have high integrity and material costs. This implies that successful candidates (male or female) must jettison emancipatory and development ideals on entering office - if they ever held any. Instead, most successful politically exposed Nigerians focus their considerable energies on recouping politicking expenditures, materially and symbolically reaffirming their loyalties to patrons with uncompetitive and unsupervised contract awards; and building the financial arsenal and political networks that are imperative for defeating future challengers (see Smah 2008; Ribadu 2006).

Supporting evidence: the growing list of Nigerian women indicted for corruption

Thus far, the paper employs conceptual and empirical evidence to defend the claim that Nigerian politicians are corrupt, not because they are gendered as male or female, but because their career paths are structured by powerful mandarins whose patronage, in concert with protégées' unorthodox wealth aspirations, have significant material and integrity costs. It is against the above dual background, and not easily falsifiable gender binaries, that we must view the corrupt conducts of select indicted Nigerian women.

Consider, for example, the alleged corrupt conducts of Nigerian 'first ladies' whose political power and influence derives directly from male relatives who hold political office at the federal, state, local levels of governance. Maryam Babangida, the late wife of former President Ibrahim Babangida, was the pioneer of the first lady syndrome in Nigeria with her launch of the Better Life Program (BLP) in 1987. The stated objective of the extra-constitutional organization was to emancipate rural Nigerian women from poverty, disease and other existential insecurities. With considerable state resources at her disposal [over 20 million USD] and fanfare, Maryam Babangida drafted the wives of senior military officers at the federal, state and local government areas to assume leadership of the triple-tiered organization whose achievements are contested today as non-emancipatory, femocracy and governmentality (see Mama 1997; Okeke 1998; Smith 2010).

Other 'first ladies' succeeded Maryam Babangida. They include Mariam Abacha, the former wife of late General Abacha; the Late Stella Obasanjo, wife of former President Obasanjo, and Patience Jonathan. They all established pet-projects to tackle endemic poverty, feminine health challenges, unemployment, and so forth, which were similarly adjudged failures by observers - despite adequate state funding (see Omotola 2007; Okeke 1998; Mama 1997). First ladies alleged exorbitance, autocracy and corruption likely instigated the unresolved law suit in Nigeria against all wives of former Presidents, Vice-

Presidents and state governors requiring them to "render public accounts of all the funds raised in their respective foundations and projects; and to refund funds and properties not accounted for" (Agina-Ude 2003:1). Notwithstanding the negative assessment of first ladies pet-projects, they allegedly amassed great fortunes for themselves and select members of their extended families by drawing unconstitutionally and unaccountably from the Nigerian state treasury (Omotola 2007; Okeke 1998; Mama 1997). In Smith's opinion, for example, Maryam Babangida's:

Better Life program established a precedent and pattern for how Nigerian rulers and their wives at all levels of government channelled resources to themselves in the name of development Nigerian public coined new names for the program, such as 'Better Life for Rich Women' and 'Better Life for Ruling Women' (Smith 2010:6).

Regardless of the above, the question could be asked: if first ladies' pet projects failed, does this mean that the funds were lost to corruption? In Nigeria, it consistently does (see Ribadu 2010; Bello-Imam 2005; Ake 1996). This is because most projects are conceived and executed to facilitate patronage and corruption. First ladies' project failures are no exceptions. Their extra-constitutional office and projects have been associated with wilful inflation of project costs; project abandonment, fund misappropriation, procurement scams, and direct embezzlement (see Ajayi 2010; Smith 2010 and 2007; Ibrahim 2004). First ladies' project syndrome is particularly problematic because they mirror a component of the development project in Lesotho eloquently critiqued by Ferguson (1994). In Nigeria, first ladies employ hegemonic and technocratic versions of development to appropriate land and wealth while simultaneously obscuring the political and exploitative content and trajectories of their pet projects, manifest wealth and land usurpations.

To cite one example, Maryam Babangida (First Lady from 1985-1993) built the Maryam Babangida Centre for Women and Development with state funds (16 million USD). She registered it as her private property (Maryam Ibrahim Babangida Foundation), and subsequently as a trust jointly administered with her son - Mohammed Babangida (Ibrahim 2004; Okeke 1998). On a related note, Maryam Abacha, the Late General Sani Abacha's widow "was caught trying to flee the country with 38 suitcases stuffed with cash" (Global Witness 2015:4). How do such conducts enhance women development in Nigeria? It came as no surprise therefore that a formal assessment of Nigerian first ladies' pet-projects' performance reveals that:

majority of the respondents believed that the first ladies' programs had no direct benefits for the political emancipation and aspirations of the Nigerian women, and therefore, were a waste of time, energy and resources They also believed that the office provided them with avenues to embezzle public funds, to acquire fame and to exhibit their latest clothes (Ajayi 2010: 47).

Consider also several politically exposed Nigerian women recently indicted for corruption. Recall that indictments in Nigeria are often the only media through which the public learns of grand corruption in Nigeria. Regardless, the indicted are rarely tried in law courts, and often return portions of stolen wealth in secret negotiations with the Nigerian state (Human Rights Watch 2011; Ribadu 2010; World Bank 2007). The list indicted includes the former (and first) female speaker of the House of Representative, Patricia Etteh, who was indicted for spending 3.1 million USD to modernize her residence, her deputy's residence, and purchase of 12 official cars for the House of Representatives. Similarly, the Housing Minister under President Obasanjo, Alice Mobolaji Osomo, was fired for her questionable allocation of over 200 government properties (slated for public auction) to top government functionaries while Veronica Uloma Onyegbula stood trial (with other male officials) for allegedly embezzling about 72.8 million USD from the Nigerian Police Pension fund (see Mohammed 2013; Soniyi 2012; International Herald Tribune 2007).

The list of indicted politically exposed women, which continue to grow, include Senator Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello (former President Obasanjo's daughter); who was indicted with the former Minister of health, Professor Adenike Grange for embezzling 1.5 million USD. Also indicted was the previous Nigerian President's wife, Patience Jonathan, who was variously indicted by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for laundering 67.5 thousand USD and 13.5 million USD while her husband was a governor of Bayelsa State. Moreover, Christine-Ibori-Ibie, former Governor James Ibori's younger sister who is currently serving a jail term in the UK was indicted for corruption and money laundry while the former female chairperson of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Farida Waziri, was accused of corruption by "leading activists and political figures" in Nigeria and has since been removed from office (Human Rights Watch 2011:2; see also Akindele, Adeyemi and Aluko 2010; Transparency International 2004).

Furthermore, we could consider the conduct of the former Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Commissioner for Legal Services, Mary Obegolu, who allegedly embezzled 105 thousand USD. Also indicted was Stella Oduah-Ogiemwonyi's (former Aviation Minister) for purchasing two (2) armoured BMW cars worth about

1.1 million USD for her personal use (see Amaize & Anozie 2013; Mohammed 2013; Soniyi 2012). Another case involves Amaka Anajemba, who plea-bargained her participation (in association with her late husband) "in a financial scam which cost a Brazilian bank some \$242 million, leading to its collapse" (see Enweremadu 2012:100). There is additionally the case of Diezani Alison-Madueke, a previous Federal Minister of Petroleum Resources, who was indicted for her spurious accounting for about 155.2 million USD, which she allegedly withdrew under five days in 2007 while serving as a Minister of Transportation. Diezani Alison-Madueke made the withdrawals against express presidential directives to lodge unspent ministry funds only in federal accounts (see Amaize and Anozie 2013; Mohammed 2013; Soniyi 2012).

Yet others indicted for embezzling various sums of money include Zainab Dakingari, the Late President Yar'Adua's daughter and wife of former Kebbi state Governor Saidu Dakingari who was indicted for 'misappropriating' over 10 million USD. Also indicted was Marilyn Ogar, the former Department of State Security spokesperson for accepting 75.4 thousand USD bribe in connection with Osun State gubernatorial elections (see Mohammed 2013; Soniyi 2012; International Herald Tribune 2007; Ekenna 2007). Furthermore, some state governors' wives have been implicated in corruption. For example, Toyin Saraki, the wife of the Senate President and former governor of Kwara state, Bukola Saraki, indicted for money laundering because of the alleged questionable inflow of undisclosed funds into corporations she has interest in. Other women were indicted for maintaining illegal foreign bank accounts while their spouses were sitting governors. This latter list included former Governor Alamieyeseigha of Bayelsa State wife, Margaret Alamieyeseigha, was indicted for maintaining a foreign NatWest Bank Account in London worth 438 thousand USD. Another state's first lady implicated in corruption is Valentina Dariye, the spouse of former Plateau State Governor, Joshua Dariye, who had two bank accounts in the United Kingdom's NatWest Bank worth 151 thousand USD (see Global Witness 2010:9 and 24).

Similarly, Ndidi Okereke-Onyiuke, the previous Director-General of the Nigerian Stock Exchange, was indicted for misappropriating the organization's funds used for fraudulent purchases. Her successor, Aruma Oteh, told the House of Representative Panel investigating the near-collapse of the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) that the previous Director General, Ndidi Okereke-Onyiuke, spent 6.5 million USD on trips; 930 thousand USD on Rolex watches allegedly used for staff awards, 190 thousand USD for the purchase of a luxury yacht, and 8.5 million USD distributed among Nigerian Stock Exchange council members (see Alliyu, Kalejaiye and Ogunola 2014; Osaze 2011; KPMG and Oyebo 2010).

It ought to be noted however, that every indicted politically exposed person in Nigeria (male and female) usually alleges political persecution by powerful forces that dislike them and/or consider them a threat to the status quo. The indicted make such defensive claims until most prejudicially return a portion of the stolen funds to avoid prosecution and potentially spending time in Nigerian notorious jails (see Enweremadu 2013; Human Rights Watch 2011; The World Bank 2007). Notwithstanding such defensive claims, and based on the conceptual and empirical evidence presented so far, the masculine facade of corruption in Nigeria is illusory because they exist as instruments that the gender (currently males) who dominate Nigerian politics exploit to maintain themselves in office and accrue personal gains.

Reflection and Conclusion

It must be noted that godfathers/godmothers, aspirants and public office holders in Nigeria actively seek each other out; and enter into complex extra-constitutional contracts and agreements that have little emancipatory and development outcomes. Such extra-constitutional associations and contracts open both male and female politically exposed persons to perverse manipulation by political mandarins, who the candidates often imitate. This because most aspirants and public office holders “desire to survive ... is a pervasively exploitable desire ... [by godfathers and godmothers] who hold out the promise of continued” political growth, and in some instances, physical survival in Nigeria (Butler 1997:7; words in parenthesis, by author). The above deduction accentuates the reality that godfathers’ pressures, aspirants’ political socialization, wealth aspirations and personal conducts continue to (re)combine to promote and sustain grand corruption rather than the gender binary (see Alatas et al, 2009; Alolo 2005; Sung 2003; Goetz 2007 for similar conclusions).

This may explain USAID’s contention that “corruption is still the stock-in-trade of Nigerian democracy, rooted in the centralized, clientelistic nature of politics Political elites misappropriate considerable public funds for their personal gain” (USAID 2006:19). Thus, the reasonable and plausible conclusion to be drawn from any critical analysis of parity, political participation and grand corruption in Nigeria is that there are no empirical bases to associate sex differences with grand corruption or probity. In Nigeria, the dominant masculine facade of grand corruption is a testament to the historic and numeric dominance of the Nigerian socio-economic and political space by males. The lack of relationship between gender and corruption probably explains why the movement for parity in Nigeria have so far amounted to governmentality; that is, the Nigerian government production public office holders who perpetuate her corrupt political culture (see Foucault 1997:67).

Consequently, while political parity remains an important ideal in and of itself, it may not redress the broader Nigerian grand corruption challenge. More sustainable solutions to political and bureaucratic probity will reside in the institutionalization of good governance or features of development states elaborated by Leftwich (2000; see also World Bank 1992). These will encourage honesty and accountability of male and female public office holders. Notwithstanding the preceding discussions, findings do not negate the human rights value and associated utilities of parity in Nigeria. Honest Nigerian men and women, who wish to serve, must be encouraged to serve – against the background of stringent institutional and legal reforms that emulates Leftwich’s (2000:160-165) description of a development state, which would reduce grand corruption in Nigeria. For example, Nigeria must cultivate a committed and developmentally-oriented political elite, insulated her bureaucracy from political interference, and so forth.

The foregoing implies that this paper’s does not challenge the necessity or validity of parity. Instead, the paper challenges the essentialist wing of the parity lobby’s proposition that gender binary is a tool that would reduce grand corruption, despite four conceptual and empirical shortcomings. First, calls for political parity, as constituted by the essentialist parity lobby, inherently propagates uncritical assumptions about deterministic linkages between people gendered as males with corruption; and people gendered as females with probity. Second, the movement fails to acknowledge that Nigerian women are heterogeneous in their needs, aspirations, strength, limitations, and so forth, such that the unitary versions of their felt-needs and challenges, such as aspirations for political participation, are spurious. Third, essentialist parity proponents neglect to work-on the various structural and agential challenges that constrain varied Nigerian women’s political participation, such as illiteracy, poverty, and so forth. Fourth, essentialist proponents of political parity seem unaware that the movement may have been hijacked by dominant political oligarchy in Nigeria to divert attention from what should be the primary development discourse – the institutionalization of political and bureaucratic accountability regardless of the sex of office holders. These shortcomings illustrate that essentialist parity stakeholders have not been “self-critical with respect to the totalizing gestures of feminism” or masculinity (Butler 1999:18).

In their various combinations, the above shortcomings of the essentialist parity lobby ensure that narrow affirmative admission of elite Nigerian women into politics, which does not substantively challenge patriarchy-begotten self-interests, has little emancipatory or developmental content. Instead, narrow affirmative actions just serve to ensure that women remain consumers of parity, and not producers of socio-economic and political development in Nigeria. Moreover, until Nigerian people gendered as men and women commence a subversive challenge of the local socialization processes, emotive calls for political parity in Nigeria, to adapt Goetz analysis of the political

parity movement in Uganda, will neither threaten patriarchy nor challenge entrenched interests because women's "gender, not their politics ... is their admission ticket" into the grand corruption club in Nigeria (2002:559).

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