

Leadership and Proliferation of Crime: Implications on Moral Culture and Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examines constructs of a theoretical model that explains the social learning process responsible for the emergence of criminal socialization. The Author applies Sutherland's differential association theory and Gabriel de Tarde's law of imitation to investigate the role of leadership and proliferation of crime and the implication on moral culture in Nigeria. The author argued that nexus exist between leaders who criminally enrich themselves and the proliferation of crime as the followers in the larger society seek to imitate them. As followers imitate the behaviours of their leaders, they either act individually or in association with others to adopt definitions favorable to crime. The consequences of this on moral culture and development are noted. Drawing from the 2004 "Mombasa Declaration on Leadership" in Africa, the author suggests ethical principles that may help to curb the culture of criminality by leaders and pave the way for meaningful development in Nigeria.

Key words: Leadership, Criminal socialization, Imitation, Learning process, Moral culture.

La gouvernance et la prolifération de la criminalité: Implications sur la culture morale et le développement au Nigeria

Cet article examine les constructions d'un modèle théorique qui explique le processus d'apprentissage sociale responsable de l'émergence de la socialisation criminelle. L'auteur applique la théorie de l'association différentielle de Sutherland et la loi de Gabriel de Tarde d'imitation pour enquêter sur le rôle des dirigeants et de la prolifération de la criminalité et l'implication sur la culture morale au Nigeria. L'auteur a fait valoir que le lien existe entre les dirigeants qui eux-mêmes s'enrichissent pénalement et la prolifération de la criminalité comme les adeptes de la société en général cherchent à les imiter. Comme les disciples imitent les comportements de leurs dirigeants, ils agissent soit individuellement ou en association avec d'autres à adopter des définitions favorables à la criminalité. Les conséquences de cette situation sur la culture morale et le développement sont notées. Dessin de la «Déclaration de Mombasa sur la gouvernance " 2004 en Afrique, l'auteur suggère des principes éthiques qui peuvent aider à réduire la culture de la criminalité par les dirigeants et ouvrir la voie à un développement significatif au Nigeria.

Mots clés: gouvernance, socialisation pénale, Imitation, le processus d'apprentissage, la culture morale.

Introduction

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The recognition of leadership as a key enabler in the socio-economic and political development of the country is not new. Several scholars (Achebe, 2008; Jamabo, 2009; Ezeugwu, 1999), public commentators (Okenyodo, 2011; Ray Ekpu (2016), and even those on the leadership seat of the country (Babangida & Obasanjo, 1988,) have held seminars and workshops on the disappointing quality of leadership that the country has been experiencing since independence. Amidst this flurry of activity, however, is the lack of commitment on the part of the leaders to change; and very little or nothing has been done to change the culture of leadership in the country. The leadership question therefore continues to remain on the front burner of debate.

In Achebe's (1983, p. 11) observation, the Nigeria's leadership question has several dimensions. The "basic element of this misfortune" is traced to "the seminal absence of intellectual rigour in the political thought of" the country's "founding fathers" who exhibited "a tendency to pious materialistic wooliness and self-centered pedestrianism". The search for materialism traced to the founding fathers is worsen today by the emergence of rogue leadership, dominated by treasury looters (Christopher & Egbai, 2014), election rigging, political brigandage and assassination (Ethusani, 2016). In an observation credited to Nigeria's former Head of State, Late President Umaru Musa Yar-Adua, he agreed with the argument of other scholars like Oshita (2011) that the concept of leadership has been bastardised in Nigeria, resulting in people using leadership position to show arrogance, oppress others, and misappropriate resources meant for the generality of Nigerians (Jamabo, 2009).

In Yukl (2006, p.8) analysis, leadership is defined as "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives". Not many scholars agree with this definition on the grounds that it adopts the stand of reductionism (Bruce & Patterson, 2006). Beside this, leadership like many other sociological variables is a complex construct open to subjective interpretation. Every scholar has his or her own intuitive understanding of what leadership is, due to exposure to the world of work and experience. Additionally, the way in which leadership is defined and understood may be influenced by one's theoretical stance. A reviewed of 160 articles and books that contained definitions of leadership (Yukl, 2006) showed the diversity in construct that described the concept. In spite of these a convergence in the definition is struck in the work of Northouse (2007) who defined leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal." This definition suggests several components central to the phenomenon of leadership. It includes the recognition of leadership as a process; the use of influence; the fact that it occurs in a group context; and the involvement of goal attainment. The synthesis of this suggests that people who lead influence the behavior of others: the followers. The quality of leaders and leadership therefore becomes very important in character building and role modeling.

Leadership in Nigeria is becoming increasingly criminalized. Proceeds from oil bunkering, trafficking in drugs, bribery and corruption, theft and robbery have been used to secure positions of leadership by influencing electoral process, appointment to position of leadership, and acquiring chieftaincy titles (Ikoh, 2013). In particular proceeds from oil bunkering and corruption are not only buying real estate and flashy cars; it is also buying power (Costa, 2008). As empirically demonstrated, these phenomena have generally occurred within contexts of dysfunctional leadership sustained by high level of corruption. As analysts by the Human Rights Watch (HRW, 2007, p.120) observed, "Nigeria is mired in a crisis of governance. For decades, Nigeria's governing elite have been widely implicated in acts of violence, corruption and electoral fraud so pervasive as to resemble criminal activity more than democratic governance". This observation

has consequences on the functioning of leadership including setting direction, policymaking and strategic decisions, overseeing and monitoring institutional performance, and ensuring accountability in governance (Cockayne, 2011). Yet, the true costs of the consequences of criminalized leadership in the country in terms of proliferation of crime and hence national development are poorly appreciated by many Nigerians.

In socialization literature, leaders are seen as the “generalized others” and in many instances as mentors, that are looked upon as “significant others” by the followers. Their influence therefore, shapes the character of the followers. Since leadership involves a process as well as influence, interactive event between leaders and followers suggests learning from the leaders and being impacted by the influence of the leaders. Adopting an eclectic theory that draws from the lenses of Sutherland’s differential association theory and Gabriel de Tarde’s law of imitation, the Author argued that the culture of criminality exhibited by Nigerian leaders is exposing the followers to appreciation of crime; and that impact of this on moral culture is extending beyond proliferation of crime to exerting adverse effect on national development. The work is therefore significant beyond contributing to the debate on the “leadership question” to exposing dysfunctional leadership and the adverse consequences on national development.

The paper is structured in theme beginning with the introduction. In the next theme the conceptual explanation and the guiding theories are presented. Thereafter, the criminalization of leadership in Nigeria is reviewed, followed by the nexus of criminal leadership and criminal followership, the implications on moral culture, proliferation of crime, and national development. In the concluding theme the author reviewed the Mombasa Declaration on leadership, and offer suggestions for ethical leadership in Nigeria.

Conceptual Explanation, Literature Review and Theoretical Consideration

The concept of leadership has a long history dating back to early Greek philosophers such as Plato and Socrates. In modern time successes associated with effective leadership has made the concept popular among scholars and research experts. Leadership has therefore become one of the most talked about issues in governance and business today. Several scholars have attempted to define the concept with wide degree of diversity on the compositional constructs. In an early scholarly work, Stogdill (1974, p.259) observed that there are “almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept”. That was 42 years ago; and the divergence in definition is not abetting.

However in a recent review of leadership theory by Northouse (2007, p.3), he identified four common characteristics shared by many definitions. These include process, influence, group, and goal attainment. These constructs suggest a possible convergence in the definition of leadership. He thus defines leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal”. In Yukl (2002, p.3) observation, “most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves a social influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person [or group] over other people [or groups] to structure the activities and relationships in a group or organization”. Leaders are therefore likely to exert influence in order to ‘transform’ people in mind and heart; enlarge their vision, insight, and understanding; clarify purposes; make behaviour congruent with beliefs, principles, or values; and bring about changes that are permanent, self-perpetuating, and momentum building” (Bass & Avolio, 1994, cited in Bolden, 2014, p.11). Empirical evidences of the impact of leaderships on socialization of followers are well documented (Shaw, 2012).

Unfortunately there is also the shadow side of leadership (Bolden, 2014) where efficiency and effectiveness are sacrificed on the altar of greed. In this context Kellerman (2004, p.45) argued that leadership is not a moral concept, as leaders may combine the characteristics of “trustworthy and deceitfulness, cowardly and braveness, greedy and generosity”. Many leaders can become deluded and lose touch with vision of governance. Such situation may become compounded if society members fail to challenge the leader’s behaviour, either due to fear of repercussions, or over-dependence and trust in the leader’s judgment. Leadership can therefore be referred to as a social process of influence, where who becomes a leader, how they behave, and what they do are all determined as much by social and cultural factors as by any individual characteristics. In Conger’s (1990, p.291) explanation, where citizens idealize their leader excessively, they may tend to ignore their negative aspects and exaggerate the good qualities. In such circumstances, they may carry out their leader’s orders unquestioningly. The leaders in turn may encourage such behaviour because of their needs to dominate and be admired”.

The concept of crime

Crime as a concept has been severally defined depending on place and time as well as the circumstances under which it occurs. However, many authors have agreed that “crime is an intentional commission of an act usually deemed socially harmful or dangerous and specifically defined, prohibited and punishable under criminal law” (Nirmala & Zegeye, 2006, p.19; Curran & Renzetti, 2001). In Morris (2002) analysis, an act becomes a crime when the State adjudges it to be so by subjecting it through the instruments of law that are clearly and distinctly spelt out. In such context the performance of that act becomes infraction against the criminal law and is punishable.

In Nigeria, the law recognizes several acts as crime. These ranged from conventional crime as murder, robbery, forcible rape, assault, to property crime as theft, vandalism, burglary, fraud, etc. Other crime include white collar crime like corruption identified by EFCC Act (2004, Sec. 46) to include “money laundering, embezzlement, bribery, looting and any form of corrupt practices, illegal arms deal, smuggling, human trafficking and child labour”. Other types of corruption range from “illegal oil bunkering, illegal mining, tax evasion, foreign exchange malpractices, counterfeiting of currency, theft of intellectual property and piracy, open market abuse”, to “dumping of toxic wastes and prohibited goods”. In recent time organized type of crime as seen in kidnapping, militancy, terrorism, and piracy, have been witnessed in Nigeria.

Crime is universal as no society can claim to be crimeless, but the rate at which it proliferates is a function of the effectiveness of the institutions established to checkmate crime. In Esheya’s (2014, p.497) argument, “the propensity to commit crime in every society is nourished by motivation and opportunity. Where there is high or sufficient motivation, and opportunity exists, crime will likely soar high”. In this context availability of motivation as provided by corrupt environment and weak legal system, and opportunity as provided by inept leadership make Nigeria hospitable to crime of all categorization.

Moral culture

Culture has been severally defined, with scholars trying to span variables and constructs to cover the scope of their discussion. For instance, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) found about 164 definitions of culture in his attempt to analyze them. While Hofstede (2001) referred to culture as the collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes members of one human group from those of another, Edward Tylor (1832 –1917, cited in Avruch, 1998, p. 6) defined it as “that

complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by [a human] as a member of society". Tylor's definition appears to cover a wide characteristic of culture and has been very popular among scholars. In this sense, culture is learned, not inherited. It is derived from one's social environment.

Similarly, a variety of definition has influenced our understanding of the meaning of "moral" and or "immoral." For instance Shweder and Menon (2014) observed that Westerners would use "immoral" to connote primarily harmful actions, while the Chinese would refer to it as uncivilized actions. The dictionary definition for morals relates it to principles of right and wrong in behavior (Wehmeier, McIntosh, Turnbull & Ashby, 2005). The relationship between culture and morality emphasizes cultural transmission of shared norms and values in predicting moral thought and action (Jensen, 2015). Many psychological theories have rendered explanation on the primary role of cultural transmission on shared norms and values, especially in predicting moral thought and action (Shweder, Much, Mahapatra & Park, 1997; Haidt, 2001; Graham, Haidt, Koleva, Motyl, Iyer, Wojcik, & Ditto, 2013). Thinking of how culture influences moral values, Bloom (1968) in Pekarsky (1998, p. 351) used a classical perspective to explain the influence of culture on moral experience and development:

Men's views about the highest beings and their choice of heroes are decisive for the tone of their lives. He who believes in the Olympian gods is a very different man from the one who believes in the Biblical God, just as the man who admires Achilles is different from the one who admires Moses or Jesus. The different men see very different things in the world and, although they may partake of a common human nature, they develop very different aspects of that nature; they hardly seem to be of the same species, so little do they agree about what is important in life.

In this context the connection between culture and moral focuses not only on behaviors individuals will find morally relevant, but also on the extent to which their personal values will be reflected in their attitudes about social issues (Graham, et al, 2013). For example, one who endorses a corrupt politician (e.g., believing that corruption pays and is valuable) strongly predicts his or her likelihood of adopting criminal attitude in life.

We are exposed to cultural values from many sources. These include our family, peers, education, authorities, society members and religion; and since we spend most of our formative years with the family, the values of the family, good or bad, are a powerful influence. However increasingly, authority figures (leaders) who constitute our "significant others" exert influence on our attitude, belief and behavior.

Theory

Numerous studies have explained the causes and consequences of crime (Warr, 2000). But many of the studies lack theoretical explanations (Lee, 2001; Mesch, 2000; Schafer et al., 2006; Wallace & May, 2005) that could establish leadership-follower crime nexus and the implications of such nexus on the proliferation of crime and national development. Gabriel Tarde's work on "imitation" had opened theoretical discussions on how socialization as a process of social interaction does shape one's life. The agents of socialization in one's life vary, but do include parents, peers, authority figures (leaders), media and institutions (Renzetti & Curran, 2000). These agents of socialization affect individual's likelihood of pursuing criminal or noncriminal activities. Building upon this argument Edwin Sutherland (1850-1950) developed a systematic theory of crime causation on what he called "Differential association". In nine fairly straightforward propositions,

five of which are very relevant to our present study, Sutherland (1947, cited in Curran & Renzetti, 2001, p.137) argued that:

criminal behaviour is learned; it is learned in interaction with other persons in a process of communication; the learning process include techniques of committing the crime, including drives, rationalizations and attitude; the specific direction of motives and drives is learned from definitions of legal codes as favourable and unfavourable. A person becomes a criminal because of an excess of definitions favourable to violation of law over definition unfavourable to violation of law.

Taken together the two theories emphasized the underlying assumption that crime is learned, and that an individual will most likely learn delinquency or criminality from friends and or authority figures who approve of delinquent or criminal behaviour and who engages in such behaviour themselves. Several empirical studies have established a strong correlation between individuals' associations and criminal peers and their own likelihood of engaging in criminal activities (Matsueda & Heimer, 1987; Akers, 1996).

In this study these theories are adopted to help illuminate the background that results in the proliferation of crime in Nigeria. They are useful not only because they can collectively explain crime as something that is learnt, but also by having an excess of definitions of amoral values, which are favorable to committing crime over moral definitions, which frown at committing crime.

Tilt in moral compass and the criminalization of leadership

In his analysis of primordial public, Ekeh (1972) reminded us about the moral values of pre-colonial Africa: a value system that frowned at crime and criminality, and where leaders led by example. What was considered morally wrong within the private realm was also considered morally wrong in the public realm and vice versa. Then come the colonialists and the emergence of capitalism and exploitation that glorified (and still glorify) wealth not minding the sources of acquisition. Achebe (1984) tried to explain the clash of the culture of civic public with the primordial public and its effect on the visions of leaders that emergence at independence. He provided the background of each of the three National leaders that represented Northern, Eastern and Western regions of the country; and observed the effect on the tilt in Nigerian moral compass.

The multiethnic background and religion that the founding fathers of the country promised to turn to assets for national development became fault lines that the leaders manipulated for selfish and political reasons. The military coup that overthrew leaders of the first republic raised tribal and religious sentiment to a level of hatred, which saw the country through a 30 months civil war. As if the Maoist dictates that "power flows from the barrel of the gun" was to determine the emergence of subsequent leaders, military coups and counter coups produced corrupt wealthy leaders that soon forgot publicized reasons (to checkmate "nepotism, corruption, ineptitude, and poor leadership") for the coups that brought them to power. The civilian politicians that took over from the military perfected the method and skills of thievery left by the military rulers. Evaluation of every passing regime revealed significant public thieving, more corruption, and other forms of illegal and immoral acquisition of wealth. Today both the primordial public and the civic public have become enmeshed in moral decadence. It severely eroded honesty once held at a very high esteem in the country.

The ground work has already been solidified. Religious leaders have taken to prosperity preaching, even without emphasis on work ethics and values (Awak, 2011); and accepting donations of all categories. Community leaders are giving chieftaincy titles and celebrating their wealthy community members without questioning the source(s) of their wealth. While political

leaders are embracing corruption, business leaders have turned to illegal way of making money including bribing government officials, smuggling, child trafficking, drugs and adulterated pharmaceutical products, kidnapping, ritual killings, etc. Today Nigeria is ranked among the top countries in the world where corruption and crime are most prevalent (Shaw, 2012). The fact that these criminal practices have permeated all facets of Nigerian society without effective hindrance for many years suggests the existence of environment favourable to crime. We have seen this in armed robbers that no longer wear masks, organized robbery, examination malpractices in school, militants uprising and even terrorism.

The proliferation of crime

No empirical record exists yet on the total amount of money that was stolen from the public treasury during the military era except for the oil wind fall during the Gulf war, that General Babangida could not account for, and the money that was looted from the national treasury by General Abacha. But a glimpse into the thievery done under the civilian regimes exists at least from the misfortune of those who have been prosecuted. From Tafa Balogun, Diepreye Alamieyegha, Lucky Igbinedion, Bode George, Cecelia Ibru, John Yusuf, James Ibori, etc, millions of Naira looted from the public treasury has been revealed. The Minister of Information Minister, Mr. Lai Mohammed, is quoted to have revealed that 55 people stole N1.34 trillion between 2006 and 2013 in Nigeria (Daniel & Elebeke, 2016). Some of the countries where looted funds from Nigeria have been kept in the past include Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. Others are France, Germany, British Virgin Islands and other tax havens spread across the globe.

In June, 2016, the Federal Government published the amount of money and other physical and landed assets recovered between 29th May, 2015 and 29th May, 2016 from treasury looters in Nigeria. Details of the recoveries, published by the Federal Ministry of Information, showed that the Nigerian government successfully retrieved total cash amounting to seventy eight billion, three hundred and twenty five million, three hundred and fifty four thousand, six hundred and thirty one naira, eighty two kobo (N78,325,354,631.82). In addition to this, one hundred and eighty five million, one hundred and nineteen thousand, five hundred and eighty four dollars, sixty one cent, (\$185,119,584.61) and three million, five hundred and eight thousand, three hundred and fifty five pound and fourty six pence (£3,508,355.46) were recovered. The cash recovery also included eleven thousand, two hundred and fifty Euro (€11, 250).

Additionally, the recoveries under interim forfeiture, which were a combination of cash and assets, during the same period include, one hundred and twenty six billion, five hundred and sixty three million, four hundred and eighty one thousand and ninety five Naira, fourty three kobo (N126,563,481,095.43). The amount of Dollars recovered under interim forfeiture was \$9,090,243,920.15, while British pound amounted to £2,484,447.55 and Euro was €303,399.17. Anticipated repatriation from foreign countries totaled: \$321,316,726.1, £6,900,000 and €11,826.11. The ministry also announced that 239 non-cash recoveries were made during the one-year period. The non-cash recoveries included farmlands, plots of land, uncompleted buildings, completed buildings, vehicles and maritime vessels.

According to the Presidential spokesman, (Adesina, cited in Ogundipe, 2016), the recovery is just a tip of the ice berg, as more looted funds are being held in foreign banks due to legal encumbrances. In March, 2014, The US government had ordered a freeze on four hundred and fifty eight million (\$458m) in assets stolen by the late Head of State, Gen. Sasni Abacha, and his

accomplice. The government named two bank accounts in Bailiwick of Jersey and two other accounts in France where looted funds amounting to \$313m and \$145m respectively were lodged. Four other investment portfolios and three bank accounts in Britain, with an estimated value of \$100m were frozen.

The recent publication of the Panamian paper also suggests looting spree by Nigerian leaders, in both public and private sector. Several denials have been made, but have failed to belittle Cameron's (the British Prime Minister) observation that "Nigerians are pathologically corrupt". In such observation, evidence abound. From the stealing of pension fund and the laughable conviction made by the judiciary to the culprit, to the outbreak of Dasukigate, the proliferation of crime and the death of moral can be explained. Or with what can one explain the diversion of money meant for the purchase of arms and ammunitions to the 2015 PDP political campaign. The People Democratic Party (PDP) political leaders were shared at least N450 million each across the 36 States of the federation and Abuja for the electioneering campaign and election, while others collected their shares for contracts that never existed. Electoral officers received handsome bribe amounting to millions of naira. About 33 Independent National Electoral Commission staff (INEC) at the commission headquarters in Abuja, including 16 Directors have been linked to the twenty three billion, two hundred and ninety nine million, seven hundred and five thousand Naira (N23,299, 705,000) poll bribery scandal against the former Petroleum Minister, being investigated by the EFCC (Alli, 2016).

Besides using the money to enrich themselves politician used part of the looted funds to stockpile arms, bribe police and soldiers and equip recruited touts who served as body guards during the electioneering campaigns and ballot box snatchers during the elections. This is not without consequence. The assumption that arms and ammunitions used for political thuggery could also be used to commit serious violent crime was proven when Lawrence Anini launched a campaign of armed robberies and murder in the former Bendel State (now Edo and Delta State) in 1986. The impact of that criminal exploit reverberated through the length and breadth of the country (Yishau, 2005). Anini's gang with syndicates of 5 members happened to have been used for political thuggery in Ondo State during the 1983 election. His criminal exploit that was believed to be largely aided by juju (the Yoruba name for charms) resulted in the murder of many policemen whom the gang regarded as "enemies of progress" (Yishau, 2005). There is abundant evidence that many of the Niger Delta militants started as political thugs; and having acquired arms during the electioneering campaigns, and established contact with politicians (who became god fathers) resort to crime robbery and bunkering (Effiong, 2002).

The consequences of thuggery-political connection in violent crime are still confronting the country today, especially in the Niger Delta region. Kidnapping and the emergence of multiplicity of militant group reminiscence of the pre-amnesty years suggest the commodification of violence. When kidnapping failed to bring enough money, oil worker are intimidated to part with money for protection. As the militant groups compete among themselves on which oil pipe to blow and or bunker, the estimated oil production suffered a setback with as well as the daily estimated revenue.

The Dasukigate provides good context to explain the dead of moral among Nigerian leaders. In the height of the insurgency, many soldiers had complained of either insufficient arms, antiquated and or/ non-functional equipment. Many had watched their colleagues died in the hands of the rampaging Boko Haram terrorists in the Sambisa forest, not because they were not brave, but because of inferior weapons. In frustration, they resorted to mutiny, not minding the consequences; other had to run away from the war front. Meanwhile the money meant for the

purchase of arms and ammunition as well as equipment found its way into bank accounts of political and business leaders. Soldiers who protested were rounded up and tried for mutiny. The verdicts were death sentence, life imprisonment, demotion and dismissal. The torture toward confession, and admission of guilt or not-guilty pleading; and the psychological burden of death sentence, imprisonment, demotion and or dismissal on these gallant soldiers and their family was of no consequence to our bankrupt moral leaders. Not even the then army chief who knew all the truth could stand up to defend his voiceless soldiers. He had soiled his hands in the putrid of corruption.

Implication on National Development

The consensus of many scholars on the role of crime in development is on the negative (Antonio, 2008; Christopher & Egbai, 2014), and empirical evidence seems to strengthen that consensus (Babangida & Obasanjo, 1988, HRW, 2007). No society can therefore attain meaningful development without curtailing its crime rate to the barest minimum. As observed by the World Bank (2016, p) “only peaceful nations governed with fairness and transparency can provide the optimal platforms for implementing development strategies and programs”. This suggests that a fragile country where citizens’ daily lives are compromised by fear, conflict, unjust laws, and opaque governance, may not experience meaningful national development. Episodes of unrest can reverse development efforts and rapidly dismantle achievements built over a long time, along social, political economy, and physical dimensions (World Bank, 2016). This is the situation in North Eastern Nigeria where Boko Haram insurgency are destroying infrastructures, killing and maiming people.

In fragile, conflict, and violent situations shadow economies tend to flourish, and the rogue exploitation of mineral and natural resources often finances and fuels conflicts. This is the situation that militancy in South-South Nigeria seeks to create. The implementation of amnesty had rewarded militant commanders with lucrative contracts and wealth, thus proving the utility of violence. While some leaders employed their wealth in fortifying their group, others had used it to sponsor friends in politics, thus exerting continuous peddling influence on governance.

On top of all types of crime in Nigeria is corruption, which is confirmed to be endemic (World Bank (2014). It has largely retarded both social and economic development. The adverse impact of corruption on economic growth and infrastructural development has exerted multiplier effects on public service delivery and poverty level of the Nigerian citizens (Ribadu, 2007). The World Bank (2015) reported a Federal governed cash deficit of -1.3% of GDP as at 2013 and a Federal government debt burden of 10.4% of GDP. This is inspite of the abundance revenue that accrued from crude oil into the country for several years. This observation supported Ribadu’s (2007) argument that post-independence political bureaucrats and military elites had pillaged Nigeria’s treasury with impunity, thereby denying Nigerians access to economic prosperity and quality living condition. According to him, about \$400 billion foreign assistance accruable to the country during the second and third Republic was not used for any meaningful project within the country. This same impunity still continues today, and it has consequence on national development.

The number of Nigerians living in poverty is not decreasing. In 2008, the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) and the European Union (EU) reported that 54 per cent of Nigerians were living below poverty line of US\$1.00 per day (Ikoh, 2012). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2009) report for 2007/2008 ranked Nigeria as 156 out 177 countries with low Human development Index (HDI), below countries like Senegal, Gambia and

Cameroun. The recent World Bank (2014) report on Nigeria and the World Development Indicators (WDI, 2016) revealed that a large share of the Nigerian population are vulnerable to poverty as 58 per cent currently lives under poverty line; with worse scenario in the rural areas. With the annual population growth averaging about 3 percent, and the 2011 purchasing power parity (PPP) conversion factors putting the international poverty line at \$1.90 a day, Nigeria would need to experience a strong reduction in the poverty rate in order to reduce the absolute number of the poor. Our minimum wage is still N18,000, even as dollar exchanges at N350/\$. Infrastructure that could better connects markets in Nigeria or measures to facilitate higher productivity in agriculture have either been abandoned or carted away by corrupt leaders. The lack of progress in poverty reduction suggests both stagnation in average consumption and increasing inequality.

In 2014, the World Bank (2014) had reported that over 90% of children in the Southern part of Nigeria between ages 6-16 attend school. However the situation in the North was different as less than half of children in the North West and North East attended school. Health indicators showed a similar divide. For example, immunization rates of 14% and 21% in the North West and North East, respectively, was reported as compared to over 70% immunization rates in the South. These data have by no means improved today as both poverty and unemployment have exacerbated with adverse effect on family income and parenting cost.

The implication on Moral culture

What facets of the criminal behaviours of our leaders shape moral behavior of the citizen-followers; and what overlaps exist between the two cultures (criminal and moral) in ethical thinking? Literature and empirical work on socialization have shown how behaviours are learnt and how leaders become role model and modifiers for the young ones. The fact that crime can be learned just like any other skills also has empirical evidence in the work of several scholars (Esheya, 2014; HRW, 2007). In the Rationalists argument, people take to crime after weighing the gains and the pains associated with it. A situation where crime is rewarded would not only promote definitions favourable to committing crime but would also promote immorality and unethical practices. In their work on political god fatherism in Nigeria, the Human Right Watch (HRW, 2007) explained the usefulness of violent skills in Nigeria, which suggests why violent subculture thrives in the country. Using the ex-militant leaders in South-South Nigeria, the study observed that Asari Dokubo and Government Ekpemupolo, aka Tompolo and their boys received an annual cash payment of \$10 million from the federal government during the administration of Yar'adua, as part of the federal "pipeline security protection fee". During the reign of President Jonathan, Tompolo, received N1.5 billion monthly to protect the nation's maritime areas. The qualification for the job was not academic credentials, but skills to foment violence against the State and fellow human beings. When violent skills attract such fabulous reward, many youth, hitherto law abiding, found it beneficial to imitate.

The Nigerian moral compass has been affected by the corrosive hands of crime and corruption. Wealth has become the new "god" and is worship not minding how it is acquired. Such worship is seen in the award of chieftaincy titles to criminals and fraudsters; it has elevated criminality to a position of attractiveness. In many parts of Nigeria, corrupt leaders and touts are given recognitions. The society no longer questions the sources of wealth, as stealing from the national treasury is simply regarded as taking ones share of the national cake. Corrupt leaders and even the hooligans and vandals are given recognition and more respected than the egg-heads in the community. The country is gradually descending into corrupto-democracy – a situation where only the corrupt ones are selected to be in power and proceeds of corruption make winning election

possible. Adekeye (2003, cited in Ogbeidi, 2012, p.16) provided a scenario of the emergence of corrupto-democracy and its demonstration during party conventions. For instance during the 2003 Special Convention of the then ruling People Democratic Party (PDP), where the presidential flag bearer was chosen, “more than N1billion bribe was allegedly shared to delegates by the Obasanjo group on the ninth floor of the Nicon Hilton Hotel, Abuja”. Such distribution of the seed of corruption is not limited to PDP as a party, but cut across all political parties. If political parties remain the ideological powerhouse of civilian administration, then it suggests that a “corrupt ruling party undoubtedly would always produce a corrupt government”. This is because legislators and the executives at the federal, state, and local councils are bound to follow the cardinal ideology of their political parties.

Another implication on moral culture which is worth pointing out is the rewards given to the militant warlords. In the height of the Boko Haram insurgency many political and community leaders had to suggest amnesty, even when the leaders of the sect were making mockery of the offer. The recognition that government only listen when citizens take to protest and or violence has downplayed the usefulness of non-violent change. The on-going militant campaign in the Niger delta region suggests using violence to arm-twist government into negotiation, especially since crude oil produced in the region is the main source of revenue for Nigeria. As the militant leaders become richer (from government compensations for violence), the young ones are learning the art and skill of violence, preparatory to launch their own some day in the future.

Since violence pays and is being rewarded by government, many young men and women in Nigeria’s tertiary institution have either abandoned or combine their studies with cultism. Ability to acquire violent skills can be used to intimidate lecturers and fellow students (Christopher & Egbai, 2014) and given cultists fellowship in a gang they can be used for paid violent engagements including political assassination, kidnapping, armed robbery, gang raping and drug trafficking, etc. After all, many of Nigeria’s ostensibly elected leaders obtained their positions by demonstrating an ability to use violence to prevail in sham elections (HRW, 2007).

The Mombasa Declaration and Nigeria’s leadership: Any lesson?

The Mombasa Declaration of 20th March, 2004 was produced by the African Leadership Council for the members of the African Union (AU). The Declaration enumerated the qualities expected of African leaders to include delivering high security for the state and the citizens; ensuring a functioning rule of law; education; health; and a framework conducive to economic growth. Other expectations centered on ensuring effective arteries of commerce, personal and human freedoms, empowerment of civil society and protection of the environment. African leaders are also expected to provide their citizens with a sense of belonging to a national enterprise of which everyone can be proud of. They should knit rather than unravel their nations and seek to be remembered for how they have bettered the real lives of the governed rather than the fortunes of the few. The Declaration was not limited to listing the qualities that African leaders should inculcate they went ahead to list leaders like Idi Amin, Jean-Bedel Bokassa, and Mobutu Sese Seko, whose qualities should not be emulated any longer in Africa.

The Mombasa Declaration places emphasis on the essential principles of ethical leadership and emphasized that leaders can only “serve their peoples and nations best when they adhere to a strong code of ethics and demand the same from all subordinate officials”. It also recognized that leaders are accountable for their actions and that no one is above the law; as they must not use their office for personal gain and avoid all conflicts of interest; and ensure human security. How much of such qualities of leadership do Nigerians enjoy?

Evaluation of leadership in Nigeria has severally been done; and the result has always been performance failure (Ogbeidi, 2012). Under their stewardship, roads have fallen into disrepair, currencies depreciate and real prices inflate, health services weaken, life expectancies slump, poverty rate surge, schooling standards fall, civil society becomes more beleaguered, the quest for personal and national prosperity slows, crime rates accelerate, and overall security becomes more tenuous. As corruption become legendary, national treasury is looted and funds are laundered outside the country, and hidden in foreign bank accounts. Discrimination based on ethnic and religious affiliation is raised to a huge social movement, even as violence and terrorism send citizens to their early graves. Ability to address these shortcomings and gear ahead toward achieving the expectation of Mombasa Declaration is necessary in Nigeria.

Conclusion and recommendations

The central argument in this paper is that the proliferation of crime we are currently observing in Nigeria has a nexus with the quality of leadership that the country has; and that this is exerting adverse impact on national development and moral of the people. As crime proliferate, Godson (2006, p.42) warned that if political establishment knowingly and regularly does business with criminal leaders, there is the temptation that professional criminals may be recruited into the national security organizations through political fatherism and or even elected into political power. If this happened as it is the case in Sicily and Taiwan, the security forces would not only be compromised, but also, the “distinction between the political establishment and the criminal underworld” would have struck a lineal connect, with adverse consequence on the country and her citizens. There is therefore the need for Nigeria’s leadership qualities to change in line with the Mombasa Declaration of the African Union, or Nigeria may descend more and more into corrupto-democracy.

As we move further into the 21st Century emphasis is turning towards the moral, social and ethical responsibilities of leaders. These observation influences the following recommendations:

- i. Train elected leaders and enforce the adherent to the ethics of leadership
- ii. Checkmate the criminalization of Nigerian leadership by severing the increasingly close connection between them and criminal financing.
- iii. Provide legislation against violent politics and punish perpetrators of political violent.
- iv. Stop rewarding criminals in the name of militants; develop the Niger Delta region and empower the youth through genuine education.
- v. Arrest and prosecute corrupt leaders beyond the return of loots through plea bargain.
- vi. Empower the National Orientation Agency (NOA) to expand its advocacy on ethical values and moral education.
- vii. Discourage the spread of ethnic and religious hatred through political manipulation in the country.

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