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TOPIC:

THE TENDENCIES OF NEPOTISM IN NIGERIA'S POLITICAL SYSTEM

A TERM PAPER

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TITLE PAGE

THE TENDENCIES OF NEPOTISM IN NIGERIA’S
POLITICAL SYSTEM
DEDICATION

To my parents Dr and Dr (Mrs.) Obiike, but most especially to the

Almighty God.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With heart-felt gratitude, I wish to acknowledge my lecturer for his fatherly and careful supervisor. My gratitude also extends to my parents Dr and Dr (Mrs.) Obidiike for their love and support and to my siblings Chidinma, Uchenna and Obiefunma Obidiike for their care and inspiration.

I also wish to acknowledge my friends but most especially P. Awah for being there for me.
This paper portrays the tendencies of nepotism on the Nigerian political system. The first chapter gives an insight on the meaning of the word Nepotism; it also shows the causes and consequences of Nepotism in a political system.

The second chapter looks at corruption in the Nigerian political system before and after the independence.

The third chapter uses Obasanjo and Gowon’s regime as case studies to illustrate the tendencies of Nepotism on the Nigerian political system.
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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Nepotism is a cankerworm, which has eaten deep into most system of government. Amongst other forms of corruption, it has the most alarming effect on the government system.

In a Nepotistic system of government the goals of the government are undermined and inferiority of service rendered to the public sets in. Also, transparency, which is the major attribute of a government system is jeopardize.

The nature of the effect caused by Nepotism will not be lucid enough if the meaning of the word is not understood. What then is Nepotism?

1.2 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Nepotism is a Latin word meaning an act of preference given to one’s nephew. It is a branch of favoritism associated with cronyism; but while cronyism deals with partially shown to friends or associates, Nepotism means favour rendered to one’s close relatives.

Nepotism is based on one’s relationship to another rather than an objective evaluation of ability, meritocracy or suitability. Nepotism is portrayed in hiring, honoring or awarding contracts to a close relative. It has always been
a complaint in government service. According to Friel (2004:16) only 36.1% of federal workers were promoted by merit in their work units the other percentage of people were promoted by Nepotism and favoritism

1.3 CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEPOTISM

The true cause of Nepotism cannot be ascertained, but it can be said to have risen as a result of man's search for loyalty. Other reasons are hatred, bigotry, greed and ignorance.

An insight into the political sector reveals that Nepotism is caused mainly by political ignorance.

HOW DOES POLITICAL IGNORANCE CAUSE NEPOTISM?

Ignorance According to the oxford dictionary is defined as a lack of knowledge or information about somethiing. Political ignorance on the other hand is the ignorance bought about by lack of knowledge in politics.

In politics, ignorant voters, who support candidates who are relatives of popular politicians, cause Nepotism. In a country like India, when a charismatic leader dies, and the citizens are not certain that the deceased's good polices will be gotten from a non descendant, they tend to vote for the deceased's descendant.
In other countries like the United States most ex-presidents came into power because of the voter name recognition they enjoyed. For example ex-president George Bush would probably not have been a president if not for the voter name recognition he enjoyed by being the son of former president. Hillary Clinton who was nominated recently would also not have been the frontrunner of her democratic party if not for her association with her popular ex-husband Bill Clinton. When Nepotism is brought down to Nigeria, it is discovered that most leaders who ruled was also as a result of voter name recognition.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEPOTISM

The drastic effect of the invasion of Nepotism in the government can be seen today in their services to the public. Political leaders who achieve high office in large part because of Nepotism are likely to be less qualified on average than those who reach it by virtue of their own achievements. Therefore, these political leaders tend to jeopardize the political system.

Nepotism weakens the morale in government, which leads to the fall in its integrity. It also brings about incompetence in the government system.
CHAPTER TWO

2.1 A BRIEF HISTORY ON THE CORRUPTION IN THE NIGERIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM BEFORE HER INDEPENDENCE.

The British became increasingly concerned after World War about Nigeria's readiness for independence, and used their worry about political corruption to argue that the transfer of power ought to be slowed down. In their turn, the competing Nigerian nationalists took up the debate, often with ferocity, especially in the South, where politicians frequently endeavored to undercut the appeal of the opponents by branding them as venal. By the time that independence was achieved in 1960, many Nigerians regarded corruption as the issue by which they and the outside world would judge the country capacity for self-rule. The soldiers who seized power in January 1960 accused the civilian regime of gross Malfeasance and promised reform the administration. Not surprisingly, subsequent civilian military leaders have made similar charges and claims.

In the light of Nigeria's long history of coup d'etats the deep uneasiness felt about corruption before independence might seem to call for the comment. In reality, Many issues troubled nationalist politicians. Their petence and
inexperience all surfaced openly during the 1950. Yet out of this amalgam of ills, corruption rose to subsume all other viets and became the emblematic defect of the fledgling republic.

A considerable amount of bribery, nepotism, and the use of politic office for personal enrichment did exist in late colonial Nigeria. Evidence of administrative malfeasance was palpable, although public awareness was not automatic. Private discussion of corruption led public discourse and then to its politicization. Colonial officials troubled by the rapid pace of desalinization in Africa, and nationalistic politicians, eager to embarrass their opponents and to win the favour of the British, all helped to make the matter of venality highly visible. Corruption was not simply an objective reality, standing on its own became a symbol and a metaphor, constructed in the midst of political competition. It drew on British colonial attitudes from an earlier period, and employed descriptions of African moral and mental using standard in British thinking ever since the origin of the colonial.

Most of the literature on political corruption seeks to define the term and to understand why and how it arises, what effects it has on policy and economy, and how it may eventually be brought under control. This article presents
evidence about what the British and their Nigerian antagonists and collaborators considered administrative malfeasance are. It focuses on the debate that took place during the late colony period in order to identify when corruption emerged on the political scene, and how it eventually assumed such prominence as to throw other worries into lesser relief. When the colonialists began to attention to the issue, they advanced their own norms of political and administrative probity. For example, the widely recognized tradition gift giving, especially in the North, was held, at least in official pronouncements, to be antithetical to a modern polity. Occasional observers of the Nigerian scene suggested that the distribution political offices and privileges served to build strong alliances. But the arguments found little support among the British or the nationalist leaders.

One of the most widely employed definitions of corruption is regarding behavior of public officials for pecuniary or status Here, instead of fitting political behaviour into a rigid formulation. His article use to language of track members of colonial Nigeria to venality, and often argued that any kind of behaviour, which spoiled of tainted Nigeria, was corrupt. Frequently they spoke in purely moral terms, claiming that a failure
of idealism or personal integrity was evidence of corruption and of course, they dwelt on its outright political aspects, the misuse of public office for private gain.

2.2 BRIEF HISTORY ON THE CORRUPTION IN NIGERIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM AFTER HER INDEPENDENCE

Nigeria became an independent nation on October 1, 1960, and that development was seen as a major leap forward for Africa. Its most populous nation would now govern itself and use its tremendous natural and human resources for the benefit of its more than 100 million citizens, and the rest of Africa would enjoy at least residual benefits. Unfortunately, Nigeria's blessings have not proved to be as widespread as was hoped.

This great nation has gained a reputation for corruption that is difficult to overcome. It is not the only nation consistently ranked high on Transparency International's corruption perception index. However, the reach of Nigerian fraud peddlers exceeds that of most other nations. Many of us who use the Internet have received solicitations to claim a fortune in funds abandoned in some forgotten bank account. These schemes-known as "419" scams after the
provision in Nigerian law outlawing them are among the issues often cited by those who know little else about Nigeria.

Nigeria's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission last year, the country's successive governments stole or misused about $400 billion during the last four decades of the 20th century. That amount is about equal to all the aid given to Africa by Western donors during the same period. Nigeria's people are those who overwhelmingly suffer. According to the World Bank, with Nigeria's large reserves of human and natural resources, it has the potential to build a prosperous economy, reduce poverty significantly. And provide the health, education, and infrastructure services its population needs. However, despite the country's relative oil wealth, poverty is widespread—about 37% of the population lives in extreme poverty.

Testimony in prior congressional hearing has cited corruption as Nigeria's biggest single problem. It has not only sapped public trust in government, but it has cost the government and the people of Nigeria billions due to corrupt management of public companies, unrealized public projects and deteriorated infrastructure caused by looted maintenance budgets. One of the earliest government scams was the cement scandal of the early 1960s, in which a
grand public housing plan was announced, and vast quantities of cement were purchased from foreign contractors. But far more cement was ordered than was needed. Corrupt officials made profits however from selling cement import licenses. But the promised housing was never constructed on the scale that had been envisioned.

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This great nation has gained a reputation for corruption that is difficult to overcome. Many of us who use the Internet have received solicitations to claim foreign funds abandoned in some foreign bank account. Those who know little else about Nigeria among the issues often cite these schemes, known as 419 scams after the provision in the Nigerian law outlawing them. There are numerous accounts of retirees and even churches losing many thousands of dollars when Internet users respond to these fraudulent requests.
Those who try to obtain someone else’s money are as criminal as those who initiate the scam.

More recently, in 2003, a commission of inquiry was appointed to investigate the collapse of Nigerian Airways. That commission found that former top airline officials, federal cabinet members and high-ranking civil servants were to blame for the national airline’s collapse through waste and misappropriation of funds. One of the hallmarks of Nigerian corruption is that the top officials most responsible for looting public enterprises are almost never punished for their crimes or forced to return the funds they’ve stolen.

Corruption in Nigeria squanders the vast resources available to the Corruption in Nigeria is not merely a problem for that country. Over the past two decades, fraud in programs designed to develop the oil-rich Niger delta region have left its residents bitter and frustrated and lacking in faith in reforms offered by their government. Every. Oil company official kidnapped or killed and every pipeline ruptured threatens global energy supplies and drives up the price of oil worldwide. Nigerians cannot afford continued fraud, and neither can the rest of the world. The Nigerian government must understand that their people are watching, and the rest of the world is too.
CHAPTER THREE

3.1 POLITICAL SYSTEM NEPOTISM DURING GOWON'S REGIME

Gowon’s regime came under fire because of widespread and obvious corruption at every level of national life. Graft, bribery, and nepotism were an integral part of a complex system of patronage and "gift" giving through which influence and authority were asserted. Although the military had pledged to rid the government of corruption, the public became increasingly aware of abuses, primarily because of daily exposes in the press. In 1973 the federal government established a special anticorruption police force—the "X-Squad"—whose subsequent investigations revealed ingenious forms of extortion and fraud—not only in government and public corporations but in private business and in the professions as well.

Crime posed a threat to internal security and had a seriously negative impact on efforts to bring about economic development. Armed gangs, often composed of former soldiers, roamed the countryside engaging in robbery, extortion, and kidnapping. The gangs sometimes operated with the connivance of the police or included moonlighting soldiers. Pirates raided cargo ships awaiting entry to ports or unloaded them at the piers ahead of the stevedores.
Drug trafficking and smuggling were prevalent. Punishment was meted out to large batches of convicted and suspected criminals, who were dispatched by firing squads in public executions meant to impress spectators with the seriousness of the offenses and with the government's concern to curb crime. These measures had no noticeable effect on the crime rate, however, but seemed rather to provoke a callous public attitude toward violence.

In January 1975, Gowon practiced nepotism by revamping membership of the Federal Executive Council, increasing the number of military minister. He depended more and more on a small group of advisers and became increasingly inaccessible to his military colleagues. Without broad consultation, he backed off from the 1976 date set for a return to civilian rule, explaining that to adhere rigidly to it would "amount to a betrayal of a trust" and "certainly throw the nation back into confusion." Public employees staged protest strikes in May and June that brought essential services to a standstill. The government responded by granting retroactive wage increases that averaged 30 percent, which fed inflation and led to industrial strikes as union members demanded parallel raises.
3.2 NEPOTISM IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM DURING OBASANJO'S REGIME

Olusegun Obasanjo, a retired general who was head of state under military rule in the 1970s, was sworn in as the newly elected president of Nigeria on May 29. The presidential election is supposedly the culmination of a transition to civilian government after 15 years of military rule. But the elections were democratic in name only. There were only two candidates for the post, Obasanjo representing the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Olu Falae, a joint candidate for the All People's Party and the Alliance for Democracy. Only parties and candidates approved by the military were allowed to stand. According to the *Financial Times*, Nigeria faces its worst economic crisis since independence. Obasanjo inherits an economy wracked by corruption and crisis. Obasanjo has called for the expulsion from government of military officers who have held political office over the last 15 years. Two days ago he carried out a purge of 29 senior army officers. Hundreds of millions of dollars were seized from the bank accounts of cronies of Abacha, including Mohamed Abdallah, the former military chief of staff. $420 million worth of shares in Sierra Leone state petroleum refinery have
been seized, as well as tens of millions of dollars in property, stocks and cash from Abacha’s former aides and family.

Obasanjo appointed Aliyu Mohammed, a retired general from the north of Nigeria, as his national security advisor. He had close connections with former military dictator Ibrahim Babangida, who played an important behind-the-scenes role in Obasanjo’s election campaign. Joseph Sanusi, the maintaining director of one of Nigeria’s largest commercial banks, was been appointed to head the Central Bank. While maintaining control of the oil portfolio himself, Obasanjo appointed the outgoing secretary of OPEC, Rilwanu Lukman, to act as his special advisor. These act depict Nepotism.
CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 CONCLUSION

In our country today, the tendencies of Nepotism increase on a daily basis. More people are being selected or elected not because they merited it but because of their various connections. It is supposing that the government, which is supposed to combat the act of Nepotism, practices it only too well.

Nepotism and its effect can be fought against if only council members, mayors and legislators make special efforts to ensure that they hear all sides of an issue rather than just relying on the views of the people they know. Furthermore, many conscientious lawmakers should also change their patterns of socializing when their work involves many decisions affecting friends and associates. At least, they may choose to recuse themselves from votes where social relationships may exert undue influence.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


