



Political Economy of Service Delivery and Corruption in the Nigerian Civil Service

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The civil service is known for delivering efficiency in the functioning of government globally. Inefficiencies in terms of service delivery therefore impacts negatively on the outlook of government and developmental processes. A major factor in an inefficient civil service is linked to corruption. Corruption in this broad sense is intricately linked to public office¹. Of course, the term may differ across contexts; signifying shared values and ethics in the manifestation of corruption and corrupt behaviour. However, the concept of corruption reflect behaviour that are generally unacceptable and that are inimical to the growth of the system in which they occur. Hence, efforts have always been in place to control corruption in the public service. Nigeria has had varied methods and measures to control for corruption in its civil service; including the establishment of anti-graft agencies such as the ICPC, EFCC, Code of Conduct Bureau etc. Extant civil service rules also make provisions guiding the functions and responsibilities of workers and the sanctions for service failure at its manifestation. Despite this, Nigeria has been labelled one of the most corrupt countries in the world, with corruption index given at 76 out of 100². There may therefore be the need for a more holistic view of the issue of corruption issue; an exercise that situates in the methodologies of a Political Economy Analysis³.

Political Economy Analysis (PEA) lends itself to the understanding of factors and players that operate within a specific developmental issue. The exercise of a standard PEA examines an issue within the lens of four main dimensions. These are Foundational factors, Institutions and Rules of the game, Actors and incentives, Pathways to change. The aim is to understand visible and non-visible players, and processes that work to engender the issue of concern.

Foundational factors relate to the structural makeup of the economy, in terms of governance type, historical precedence that set up the governance style, resources available, geography and boundaries as well as culture. These factors are set and are not subject to change even in the long run, because they reflect the baseline premise that built up the economy in the first place. In relation to corruption, perhaps the most important foundational factors are the interaction of administration during the pre-colonial era; the colonial administrative periods; and the advent of the modern civil service. The paradigms in leadership and ideologies have been found to shape the extent to which the civil service currently

¹Graycar, A. (2020). Public service and corruption. *The palgrave handbook of the public servant*, 1-18.

²World Data., 2021. Corruption in Nigeria. Retrieved online from <https://www.worlddata.info/africa/nigeria/corruption.php>, 16th June, 2022.

³Osah, G., Osundina, O., Ayim, O., Nwokocha, C., & Chioma, P. (2014). The political economy of corruption and leadership in Nigeria. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (Oman Chapter)*, 3(8), 1.

operates. The modern public as in the current Nigerian civil service seems more centered on personal career development and gains within a competitive environment.

The institutional arrangement and rules of the game may be derived from the foundational structure. Also sticky in nature; howbeit subject to change in the long run; this dimension of the PEA relates to how the civil service conducts its role for development. The Nigerian civil service is centered on bureaucracy (as in many other civil service systems); which seems to have become an enabler for corruption in the country. The Federal character principle, which was attempted in engendering inclusion of the multiethnic nation, has also played a part in corruption, especially in recruitments, and appointments, so that merit is being sacrificed on the altar of an inclusive country with the attendant tendencies to circumvent the process for personal gains. Rent-seeking within the civil service also borders on the desire for personal and short-term gains rather than development. Informal rules explored in this review relate to the modalities through which corruption occurs in the Nigerian civil service. They relate to timing of corruption, corruption exchange, reasons for corruption and the styles of corruption. Corruption styles specifically could be by direct requests, indirect request, unsolicited requests, and third-party requests. These are means through which kickbacks are requested and provided for services within the Nigerian civil service.

Structures and institutional processes are activities of various interest groups and interactions within the Nigerian civil service. Stakeholders are the embodiment of a complex map of influences, beliefs, and commitments as it relates with the behaviour/norms in an organization⁴. The actors are dynamic and interact at various stages, forms, and levels of engagement. It should be understood that stakeholders include those with power, who participate in bargaining processes, those who are excluded from the processes, and networks and constituencies who may be connected through association with each other, and victims of the power been exercised. It was therefore important to examine the actor nexus in the dynamics of corruption in the Nigerian civil service.

Although not exhaustive, some identified actors include political office holders (Head of institution), civil/public servants, Internal and External Auditors, Trade Unions, Law Enforcement Agencies such as Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt and Practice Commission (ICPC), and Due Process Office; General public (Clients), Civil organizations, Code of Conduct Bureau, SERVICOM, Policy Makers (Legislators), Governing Board of MDAs, Media, Civil organizations,

⁴Whaites K. (2017). The Beginners Guide to Political Economic Analysis. National School of Government International

Judiciary, etc. The respective stakeholders play different roles in initiating corrupt practices, averting corrupt practices, reporting unethical values in the public sector and many other forms of interactions. A key importance of examining actors is the ability to examine the nexus of alignment and interest that may help to develop feasible pathways for changing the narratives. Thus, alternative feasible pathways to change may target stakeholders with low alignment to corruption, low vested interest and sufficient power to bring about a change.

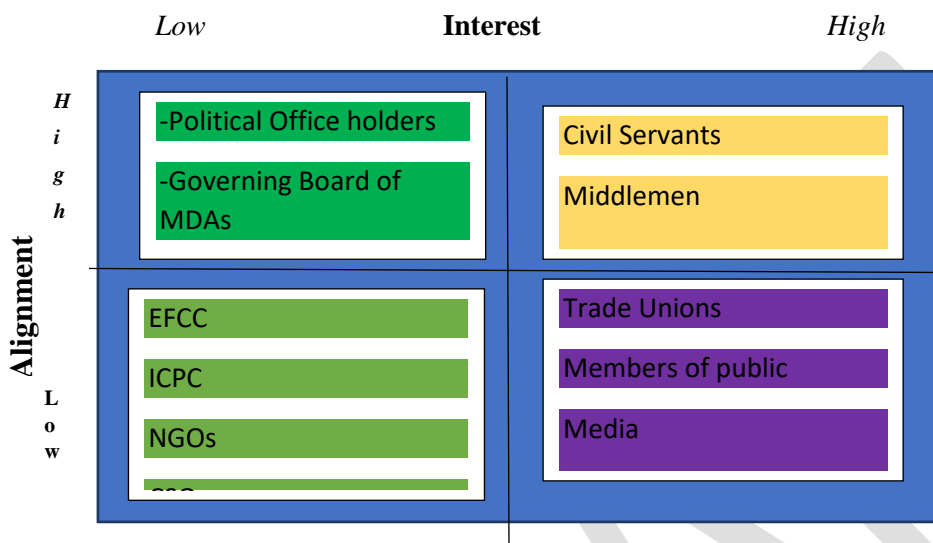


Figure 1: Alignment/Interest/Influence Matrix (AIIM) on Corrupt practices in Public Sector

Providing a mix of feasible pathways as policy implications for the government is not necessarily the end point of a PEA. This is because feedbacks and reactions that occur within such dynamic issues as corruption may necessitate revisions. However, in general, feasible pathways to change with regards to corruption have relied on rewards and penalties, monitoring, restructuring bureaucracies, screening, and recruiting, anti-corruption agencies and educational campaigns. It should be noted that providing feasible pathways for change is a function of the interactions of foundational structure, institutional framework, and stakeholder nexus. It is therefore important to note that there may need to be a series of feasible change options, which may be deployed at various alternative scenarios of the problem.

