



Oil and the politics of extravagant squandering in Africa; implication on infrastructural development

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Abstract

Our position in as presented is that, oil especially during boom fetches its producers huge earning as revenue which is expected to be utilize in the development of infrastructures to improve citizens standard of living. But in Africa, it has instead, created a fund from which corrupt political leaders looted to satisfy personal gratification of senses while infrastructural development remains unattended to. This study examined how fortune from oil led to the politics of extravagant squandering and its implication on the development of infrastructure in Africa. It was conducted using primary and secondary methods. The study found out that oil producing countries are making great fortune from the commodity. It also discovered that wealth made from sales of crude oil has culminated in politics of extravagant squandering on the part of political leaders in oil producing countries. The study also found out that reckless spending of oil money by political leaders has left oil producing countries on the continent with poor state and level of infrastructural development. The study recommended the establishment of independent anti-corruption agency among others as a good measure to controlling extravagant squandering by political leaders of Africa's oil exporting countries.

Keywords: Africa, development, infrastructural, oil, squandering, extravagant.

Introduction

Oil has continued to remain a significant determinant of the political economy of countries where it is produced. The commodity may not necessarily be the most precious or valued in the international market but, its economic importance has made it an essentially glorified product in the world and market today¹. Oil to be specific, is the leading source of foreign earning to government of states where it is produced. And Nigeria, Angola, Libya, Gabon, Sudan and Chad are the major exporters of crude oil from the African continent. Countries like Niger, Cameroun and Ghana just came on board as exporters of the commodity from Africa and with the discovering of the commodities at various locations across Africa, there is likely the possibility that the list of exporting countries on the continent will increase with time. Oil to be specific, is the leading source of foreign earnings to government of countries where it is produced.

Rise in price of oil at the global economy level leads to appreciative return for oil producing states in Africa. In 1998, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Angola as a nation was \$11 billion while in 2007, it was estimated to be \$80 billion. In Nigeria, the figures were \$106 billion and \$294 billion for 1998 and 2007 thus, giving almost a similar picture with Angola and smaller oil producing scaled states on the continent. Gabon, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Chad are examples of such smaller oil producing states in Africa. Though, at the

international market, oil price fluctuates. But, since 2003, global increase in the price of the commodity has been witnessed. This increase grew to an extraordinary price of \$120 per barrel in 2008 sometimes around early period of May. This implies how well oil exporters from Africa are flushed with huge amount of revenues. The amounts earned as revenue from oil export by global index is unprecedented for African standard. And, this has resulted in oil producing states been envied by poor states on the continent. In decades to come, a handful number of oil endowed countries in Africa such as Angola and Nigeria will experience a flow of about \$500 billion into their coffers². This inflow if successfully experienced Africa, will in history, be one of the largest inflow of oil money into the continent. Although, previous booms in crude oil price over the years at the global market have generated staggering amount of foreign earnings to African countries where it is produced. But then, infrastructural development and improve standard of living of citizens never rise as expected. Instead, complains of poor state of facilities, poverty and little attention to infrastructural development dominated the political discourse of such countries.

Wealth from oil has not only made its producing states in Africa sluggish in the area of economic diversification. It has also made political leaders on the continent familiar with wealth of a petrol-economy because fortune provided by oil of states they govern create adequate revenue from which they better their lots³. Second boom witnessed between late 1990s to mid-2000s also bears attribute of corruption and mismanagement among

political leaders of oil producing states in Africa. During this era, wasteful spending and extravagances of revenue from oil became seriously visible and severe even than in earlier booms. Helicopters and presidential jets worth billions of monies were purchased by oil producing states governments using revenue generated by their oil sector while infrastructural development projects on water, roads, hospital, school, energy and power among others were given inadequate attention⁴. It is also obvious that oil price fluctuates but then, boom also comes sometimes above expectation and prediction with the commodity producing states recording higher revenue from oil than other sectors of their economies. Cases where oil countries generated higher revenue from oil with some maintaining empty foreign reserves have been witnessed in some of the previous booms-development that signifies the growth of politics of extravagant squandering among political leaders of oil bearing states on the continent.

Problem statement: Oil is a natural endowment. A blessing which is indeed turning dangerous in Africa. Crude oil has been the cause of internal conflict in countries where it is produced in Africa. Debates on its ownership, management and resource usage have contributed to disunity among the people. Fortune from oil has found greater concentration in the hands of political leaders than majority of the citizens and thus distanced the former from the latter. Majority of the citizens are fast becoming less significant and irrelevant due to no access to fortune from oil and poor state of infrastructure for them to live a decent life. Hence, corruption and mismanagement of oil wealth by political leaders continue making oil producing countries in Africa even more distant from development than agricultural and tourist-based economy countries.

Several studies on oil and politics in Africa have been conducted over the years by different scholars among which Oliveiras is very common and popular. These studies concentrated more on the contribution of the commodity usage and ownership to internal conflict. Non has been able to point out the implication of fortune from the commodity on the growth of politics of extravagant squandering among political leaders in oil rich states on the continent. Few or no attention was also given to corruption and mismanagement among political leaders promoted by rise in oil revenue. And the implication of the foregoing on infrastructural development in oil producing countries was not also addressed.

Also, in the area of methodology, previous studies like Nwabuzor, Cohen, Lewis and Waal have adopted the secondary method of analysis which is not sufficient to address the implication of corruption as well as extravagant squandering of oil wealth among political leaders of Africa's oil producing states. The ability to analyze this problem adequately rely more on views of experts which are also needed using primary method to gather a first hand and reliable data on the matter. The use of primary method in addition to content analysis will provide a better understanding of the situation leading to

coming up with sustainable solutions that will ameliorate the problem. It is in view of the above stated problems and the desire to bridge up gaps created by previous studies as mentioned above that this study was necessitated.

Research objective: The research objectives are to; i. Identify the level of inflow of foreign earnings through oil to Africa's oil bearing states. ii. Investigate nature of extravagant squandering of oil wealth by political leaders of oil endowed states in Africa. iii. Find out implications of extravagant squandering of oil wealth by leaders on infrastructural development in oil rich states on the continent.

Research question: Questions raised and answered by the study include; i. What is the level of inflow of foreign earnings through oil to oil bearing states in Africa? ii. What is nature of extravagant squandering of oil revenue by political leaders in oil endowed states in Africa? iii. What are implications of extravagant squandering of oil revenue by leaders on infrastructural development in oil rich states on the continent?

Hypothesis: i. Hypotheses formulated to guide the study are; ii. H1; Inflow of oil revenue to oil rich states in Africa is high, iii. H2; Extravagant squandering of oil revenue among leaders of oil endowed nations in Africa is annoying, iv. H3; Extravagant squandering of oil wealth by leaders has implication on infrastructural development in oil rich states on the continent.

Literature review: Repeated rise in value of crude oil at the global economy over years has fetched government of oil exporting countries in Africa staggering amount of foreign earning which were expected to be invested in the direction of infrastructural development and improved standard of living. But unfortunately, huge flow of revenue to government of such countries has translated in minimal infrastructural development accompanied by vicious circle of poverty and under development in those countries⁵. High record of revenue generation promoted by rise in value of the commodity at the international market has created in Africa countries where oil export is the main source of foreign earning, a politics of extravagant squandering. A politics where political leaders are more concerned with how much they make for themselves form the huge flow of revenue to their countries than investing in infrastructural development to improve the living condition of their citizens. And thus, corruption and mismanagement became visible in state governance as political leaders are into competition of amassing wealth to build luxury houses, own expensive cars, marry beautiful wives, invest and maintain huge international bank accounts outside Africa.

In Sudan, oil is now the heart beat of the country's politics. After oil export started in 1999, national budget in the country rose 15-fold. Oil price has collapsed some years back between 2015-2018 but still, the argument is that foreign earnings from the commodity before this period signified that Khartoum must have generated billions of dollars as foreign earnings from the

country's oil before the collapsed came up³. Khartoum's oil revenues were estimated at \$4.3 billion with Juba's income and share estimated at \$1.5 billion both in 2007 alone⁶. Amidst this inflow of huge foreign earnings from oil, political leaders displayed fortune and concentrated infrastructural development at Khartoum to facilitate their well-being and those of their immediate families while majority of the Sudanese especially in the South Sudan and Darfur region are left with virtually low or no social and basic infrastructures to live on. The frustration created by this neglect catapulted Sudan into a state of anarchy in the Darfur region and grow in the call for referendum leading to the dismemberment of South Sudan from the country.

Gabon in record, produces and exports 240, 000 barrels of oil in a day. In this country, government revenue in is dominated with inflow from oil which represents 60% of government earnings, 50% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 80% of exports⁷. Oil production and export statistics of the country show that huge revenue flows into the government coffer but with this, low housing standard, poor and little motorable roads, joblessness, poverty, illiteracy, neglect in the health sector and inadequate water supply system among others form the lots of the majority of the Gabonese citizens⁸. Instead of joy, oil has become a source from which political leaders loot dry, the treasury of the country they lead⁹.

Multinational oil companies expanded investment to Gulf of Guinea region decades ago as a result of the richly endowed nature of the area in crude deposit. This investment resulted in serious inflow of Direct Foreign Investment (DFI) into Africa from abroad¹⁰. Though, accumulated profits may likely be expatriated abroad rather than invested in Africa but still, such inflow justify a positive increase in the revenue base of Africa countries in which such investment owners pay taxes. In the Gulf of Guinea, Nigeria is the highest producer of crude oil with several transnational oil companies involved in oil exploration in the country's oil rich Niger Delta region. The presence of petrol giant companies like Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), Exxon Mobile, Total, Texaco and the others has not been able to lead to the delivering of effective social corporate responsibility service to oil-bearing communities in the country.

Host communities, Nigerian authority as well as transnational companies are in constant conflict over the non-development of infrastructures in the communities¹¹. Huge flow of oil revenue into the country has not been able to translate in the development of infrastructures in the region due to corruption and mismanagement at the leadership level¹². Oil revenue has been spent extravagantly in developing life improvement projects outside the Niger Delta region-projects that were never executed to completion level in some cases¹³. The refusal to flourish oil producing communities with life improving projects has culminated in the rise of youth restiveness and ethic militia championing the cause of resource control in the region¹⁴. Though, corruption at leadership level has made revenue from

oil incapable of developing infrastructures for oil producing communities in the country. But then, reasonable part of same revenue has been invested in the development of infrastructures in communities outside the oil producing ones at several regions of Nigeria. This disparity triggers the cry of socio-economic and political marginalization from the part of people in oil producing communities leading to hostage taking of foreign oil companies expatriates, oil theft and bombardment of oil facilities in the region.

On a daily basis, Sudan exports between 500,000 to 750,000 barrels of crude oil. And, with this production target, Sudan's oil wealth is only evident in Khartoum-where figures of cars, hotels, restaurants and businesses opening every day grow with time¹⁵. The production target per day for Libya is 1.72 million barrels¹⁶. Angola and Nigeria maintain production target of over 2,000,000 barrels per day. These production targets sustained over years by major oil-bearing states on the continent signify how richly endowed oil rich states on the continent are. Though, mouthwatering earning from oil revenue has deceived political leaders of the countries from developing infrastructures to enriching themselves while poverty remains the picture of the situation ordinary citizens are suffering from. And, as infrastructural development continues to remained discouraging in Africa's oil producing countries, the questions of oil resource ownership, management and how revenue generated from oil are invested become sensitive and important subjects of discussion and debate among the ordinary citizens.

In Africa, poor state of life improving facilities in oil producing countries shows that oil is truly a curse. As leaders in the Arabian states of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman and others are investing oil revenue on infrastructural development, political leaders of Africa's oil nations are not only turning autocratic but using primitively accumulated fortune from oil revenue to frustrate their citizens. And the reaction from the part of the citizens to autocracy and mismanagement of oil revenue is turning into internal conflicts and demand for regime change. The battle for the ownership and control of the oil rich Abyei region between authorities at Khartoum and Juba, Cabinda region in Angola, unending struggle for control of oil resource in Nigeria as well as repeated rebellion targeting N'djamena demanding for regime change in Chad are reaction to improper management cum investment of oil revenue in the oil producing communities.

Methodology

The study used both primary and secondary methods. Secondary data for the study were sourced through text books, journal articles, magazines and internet-based information. Primary data were sourced through the administration of closed ended questionnaire on 25 oil experts and academicians selected from universities in five countries richly endowed with oil resources in Africa. Angola, Chad, Gabon, Nigeria and Sudan are represented by 5 respondents each systematically chosen using

the probability sampling technique. Questionnaires were administered and all retrieved by the researcher. And in order to arrive at reliable findings on how huge inflow of oil revenue led to the politics of extravagant squandering (mismanagement and corruption) among political leaders in the chosen countries and implication this wasteful spending has on infrastructural development. Correlation Analysis (CA) was adopted in analyzing data collected where; statistical correlation was measured by coefficient correlation where numerical values ranges from +1.0 to -0.1 gave the indication of the strength of relationship. Such as:

- r>0 indicated positive relationship
- r<0 indicated negative relationship
- r= +1.0 described a perfect positive correlation
- r= -0.1 described a perfect negative correlation

The closer the coefficients were to +1.0, the greater the strength of relationship and the closer they were to -0.1, the lower the strength of relationship as specified below:

Value or r	Strength of relationship
-1.0 to -0.5 or 1.0 to 0.5	-----Strong
-0.5 to -0.3 or 0.3 to 0.5	-----Moderate
-0.3 to -0.1 or 0.1 to 0.3	-----Weak
-0.1 to 0	-----Non-or very weak

Frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation tool was adopted in testing the hypotheses formulated to guide the study.

Presentation of data: The data collected for this study are hereby presented.

Analysis of data: Table-1 as presented above described a perfect negative correlation (r = - 0.1) between oil and the politics of extravagant squandering in Africa with infrastructural development. The table shows that 22 (17+5) out of the 25

respondents involved in the study rejected the view that there is low level of inflow of oil wealth to African states richly endowed with the resources. Their rejection is represented by 0.3 and 0.1 which are r>0 and stand for weak and very weak relationship.

There is perfect positive correlation (r = + 1.0) between oil and the politics of extravagant squandering in Africa with infrastructural development in relation with the view that extravagant squandering of oil wealth is not only high but also discouraging in oil rich states on the continent. This is noted in table 1 as 22 (19+3) of the 25 respondents accepted the view as represented by 1.0 and 0.5 which are r<0 and stand for strong and moderate relationship.

The correlation between oil and politics of extravagant squandering in Africa with infrastructural development with the view that extravagant squandering (corruption and mismanagement) has no implication on infrastructural development in oil producing countries in Africa has negative correlation (r = 0.1). This pattern of correlation is demonstrated by the number of responses on the view. As 22 (18+4) out of the 25 respondents rejected the view. This rejection reflected in table 1 as 0.3 and 0.1 which means r<0 and stand for weak and very weak relationship.

And the view that the establishment of independent anti-corruption agency is a good measure to controlling extravagant squandering (corruption and mismanagement) by leaders of oil producing countries in Africa has positive correlation (r = + 1.0) with oil and extravagant politics implication on infrastructural development in oil producing countries of Africa. Hence, 22 (18+4) out of the 25 respondents accepted the view as shown in table 1 where 1.0 and 0.5 are r >0 and stand for strong and moderate relationship.

Table-1: Oil revenue, the nature of extravagant squandering and implication on infrastructural development in oil producing countries in Africa.

S/N	Variables	1.0 SR	0.5 MR	0.3 WR	0.1 VWR
Q1	There is low level of inflow of oil revenue to oil rich states in Africa	1 4%	2 8%	5 20%	17 68%
Q2	The nature of extravagant squandering of oil revenue by political leaders in oil endowed states in Africa is high and discouraging	19 76%	3 12%	2 8%	1 4%
Q3	Extravagant squandering has no implication on infrastructural development in oil rich states of Africa	1 4%	2 8%	4 16%	18 72%
Q4	Establishment of independent anti-corruption agency is a good measure to controlling extravagant squandering by political leaders in oil producing countries in Africa	18 72%	4 16%	2 8%	1 4%

Q-Question, SR-Strong Relationship, MR-Moderate Relationship, WR-Weak Relationship, VWR-Very Weak Relationship

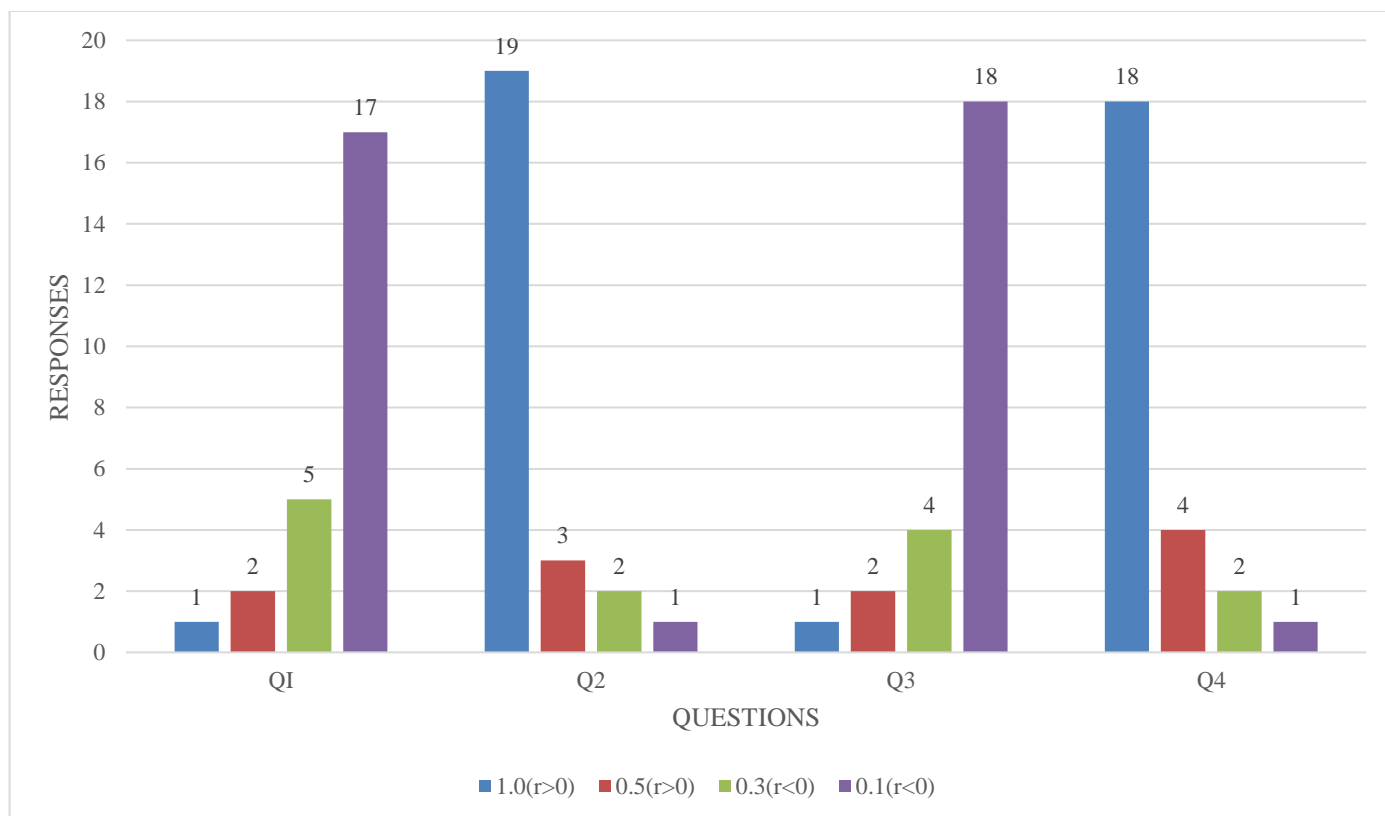


Figure-1: Oil revenue, the nature of extravagant squandering and implication on infrastructural development in oil producing countries in Africa.

Table-2: Testing the hypotheses

	FP			M		SD
H	SD	D	N	A	SA	
H1: Inflow of oil revenue to oil producing countries in Africa is high.						
H2: Extravagant squandering of oil revenue among leaders of oil producing countries in Africa is discouraging.						
H3: Extravagant squandering of oil wealth by leaders has implication on infrastructural development in oil producing countries in Africa.						

H-Hypotheses, FP-Frequency Percentage, M-Mean, SD-Standard Deviation, SD-Strongly Disagreed, D-Disagreed, N-Neutral, A-Agreed, SA-Strongly Agreed.

Hypotheses formulated to guide the study as Table-2 shows indicated that H1, H2 and H3 recorded equal mean score of M=5, H2 has the highest SD=37.2 while H3 lowest SD=22. On a general average, table 2 shows that, 18.67% of the respondents agreed (A) with the hypotheses formulated and tested to guide the study while 61.33% of them strongly agreed (SA) with them. This implies that the hypotheses formulated to guide the study tested positive on 80% (A = 18.67% + SA = 61.33% = A

+ SA = 80%) of the respondents chosen and involved in the study.

Results and discussion

Billions of dollars flow into the coffers of governments of oil producing countries in Africa. The level of such flow is often high and above expectation in the invent of rise in crude oil price at the international market. The level of inflow of oil

revenue to oil exporting countries in Africa implies that been the main source of foreign earnings, governments are expected to judiciously utilize oil earnings in the direction of improving citizens condition. But contrary, reverse is the case as oil exporting countries leaders in Africa are married with the politics of concentrating infrastructural development in urban cities where as majority of population in Africa are rural based. Corruption and mismanagement on the part of political leaders in Africa's oil exporting countries are high and discouraging. And this has resulted into extravagant squandering of oil revenue on personal than public needs. Corruption and mismanagement by political leaders of oil exporting countries in Africa are swallowing up oil revenue these countries produced on daily basis. Government in these countries spend too much on election and ministerial positions than infrastructural development. And with enough not spent on public services, sixty percent of the population remains below the poverty line but still oil revenue accruing to government of these countries keep growing especially in cases of oil boom.

Nigeria, Gabon as well as other oil rich countries in west and central Africa in the 1970s, witnessed a serious increase in oil production which coupled with rise in the price of the commodity translated in huge foreign earnings to such African states. These huge earnings were foolishly spent by political leaders of such countries. White elephant projects which were started but could not be completely executed, gulp larger share of the oil earnings in the 1970s. In Nigeria, billions were invested in a steel complex at Ajaokuta in Kogi state. Unfortunately, the complex has not been able to produce any steel till date. Huge earned oil revenue was extravagantly spent in some cases to satisfy private needs of political leaders. Percentage returns to leaders by contractors for contract awarded by leaders culminated in abandonment of several capital projects started with oil earning in oil rich states on the continent. Ostentatious consumption swallowed part of the earnings in these countries. In both Congo and Gabon, social and basic infrastructures were inadequate in many communities with both countries during the era of oil boom competing for the world highest importer of champagne position. And, in Nigeria, investment on foreign trips by elites with huge money stowed in Western bank accounts became global topics of discussion. Agriculture was neglected in oil bearing states in Africa because of the huge revenue accruing from oil exports. Political leaders became less attentive to developing other sectors or diversifying their countries economy. The end of the oil boom which started in 1970s in mid 1980s came with disappointment as debt crisis started with oil rich states in Africa having zero and depleted foreign reserve-development which shows that a post-oil economy was not prepared for by oil producing states in Africa. And today, the state of social and basic infrastructures in Africa's oil rich nations are a mere fun and sympathy due to the fact that little or no attention was given to infrastructural development.

Major findings: The major findings of the study are; i. The level of inflow of oil revenue into Africa states endowed with the resources is high. ii. Extravagant squandering of oil revenue among leaders of oil exporting states on the continent is high and discouraging in nature. iii. Extravagant squandering has implication on infrastructural development in Africa's oil producing countries. iv. And, the establishment of independent anti-corruption agency is a good measure to controlling extravagant squandering by political leaders in Africa's oil producing countries.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study is that the level of inflow of oil revenue into Africa's oil producing countries is high especially during boom and rise of the commodity at the international market. It is also concluded by the study that extravagant squandering of oil revenue by political leaders in Africa's oil producing states is not only high but discouraging. Extravagant squandering as the study also concluded has negative implication on the development of infrastructures in Africa's oil producing states. And it is also part of the conclusion of this study that, the establishment of independent anti-corruption agency is a good measure to controlling extravagant squandering by leaders of oil-bearing states on the continent.

Based on major findings made as well as conclusion arrived at, this study recommended that: i. Government of Africa's oil producing countries should established an independent anti-corruption agency free from political control. This agency should be empowered by law to arrest and forward suspected leader for prosecution in the court of law. Although, political leaders enjoy greater level of immunity and cannot be prosecuted in power. Therefore, this agency should be empowered to invite political leaders for interrogation on unclear wealth accumulated in power as soon as they leave office. It is also important to ensure that this agency is back up with law to operates without interference by political leaders or else it will become a political tool for molesting opposition by party in government. The agency should also be empowered by law to confiscate assets acquired using looted fund and to also block account stashed with looted money. The court of law should be made to support the agency in the prosecution of leaders found with the habit of corruption and mismanagement of public fund. ii. Special code of conduct bureau is also necessary in Africa's oil producing countries. And places where it exists, it should be given more power to commit political leaders into declaring their assets before and after leaving power to ascertained that revenue generated from oil exports has not been embezzled for personal enrichment. There should be a coordinated working arrangement between the anti-corruption agency and conduct bureau so as to easily identify and prosecute corrupt political leaders. iii. And finally, a special task force or committee should be formed and supported with law to monitor revenue generated from oil and how it is spent. It should be a matter of law and not political will that certain percent of

generated oil revenue is invested in the area of infrastructural development aim at bettering the well-being of ordinary citizens which form the bulk of national population.

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