

# Embedding Corruption - The INEC Way!

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The foundations of good governance is premised upon structures and systems that form the enabling environment for equitable participation and representation in electoral processes.

Whilst it is clear governments in power may set up electoral commissions for the purpose of overseeing local, regional and national elections, such bodies over time should evolve to become a part of the culture and fabric of society. They should in essence become the conscience of the nation, enouncing the wishes of the people via the power of the box. It is only when this is seen to be operative that the true will of the people could be revealed at the box.

This normative outcome of electoral processes run by electoral commissions are today, sadly only seen in more developed communities who have over the years learnt to believe in sustaining the majority view regardless of the wishes of the privileged few in society. Hence oligarchies have learnt to be silent and allow the commoners have their say. Hence autocratic rule only survives in military dictatorship.

## **Insights**

The fact is that most African societies were ruled in years gone-by, by counsel of elders who stood only for the truth and shunned deceit among their leadership. The cost to anyone who broke this rule was not only potentially deadly, it may also lead to shame and banishment of the individual and their family from the community. This potential life-long ignominy was severe enough to discourage silly greed and utter disregard for the ethos or spirit of the community. The collective unconscious which became the belief systems of the average African society grew and neighbouring communities thrived based on this self rule by honest elders and their appointed leaders, usually the oldest rather than the strongest.

This order of course was compromised with the invasion of Africa in earlier centuries by Arab traders invading from the North, and later by self seeking White prospectors landing from the south and re-introducing slave trade. This state of affairs fractured the erstwhile leadership structures. It was now a case of survival of the fittest and communities as part of self preservation, sold out on their neighbours and only the strongest (not necessarily the wisest) were appointed leaders, to protect communities. The seed of discord was sown and brothers became enemies and things indeed fell apart.

With communities no longer holding true, and colonialism bearing root, urbanisation meant only few felt aligned to any course that held them accountable. These few altruistic and well-informed leaders felt bold enough to challenge the colonial masters for their nations' independence. Unfortunately "The nation" they clamoured to salvage was a 'bastard child' of the White European; British, Dutch, Belgian or Portuguese as the case may be. Bastard child on the grounds of the absence of a common parentage prior to colonialism. The British for instance, never relinquished the 'Slave Master' mentality as pertaining to their African conquests. So it is fallacy for any African under the guise of the Commonwealth to believe that they ever had a shared parentage in the British. This in my submission gives reason to consider the amalgamation of African nations as the birthing of bastard nations! The essence of oneness was a syncretization of myriads of cultures, faith and traditions.

## **The Conscience of the nation**

Notwithstanding these origins, it is not improbable that adoption of a new identity as a nation state comprising self-sufficient and autonomous people groups as entities, may allow the growth of a new conscience. A conscience, with nascent roots embedded in its few but notable leaders. Presumably this offers an opportunity for allegiance to a people group in addition to a wider nation state. Mutual regard and salience of each people group essentially allows each to feel at one with the other while retaining their autonomy.

So what is the missing link making true nationhood impossible? Why are current day leaders aping the colonialists with their display of greed and avarice? What is needed to instill decorum and regard for fellow citizens and enable equitable distribution of resources?

The missing link is the absence of a Conscience that represents the integral spirit of people groups that by extension represent the nation state. This explains the banality of the nation state in its current constitution. Where authenticity is lacking. Where so-called leaders shamelessly flaunt wealth they, in truth, never earned by dint of hard work. Where the constituents have little to no say in the rapacious consumption of their indigenous wealth by distant players with no evident returns for their divested resources. The missing link is the absence of proportionate representation, where few opportunists, in a neo-colonial foray, exploit their electorate with no gumption, impoverishing many for their own ill-conceived gains. The missing link is the enslavement of people groups across the nation state, subjecting many to abject poverty by entrenching policies and actions inevitably denying many access to basic needs. By stealth or brigandry, citizens are disempowered and emasculated keeping the poor and indigent docile and like starved poodles, subservient.

Little wonder the two major political parties with INEC are essentially embedding corruption! By refusing to normalize the application fees for nomination into political office; by failing to truly vet every applicant in terms of minimum educational attainments and their certification, by not demanding declaration of assets prior to application, by not ensuring independent medical evaluation prior to election for persons seeking high office, by practices that turn sitting governments into de facto electoral officers thereby disenfranchising opposition groups, we have a system sadly unfit for purpose and barely credible in the true sense of its function.

It is a national disgrace for persons seeking elected high office to be incentivizing electorates with cash awards in various guise. Not the least, offering gifts reportedly in foreign hard currencies, leaves one wondering what this is all about. There is little doubt this is now more or less a business transaction, with the expectation of

returns following election into office. This is indeed the hallmark of a government sown in corruption and certainly would breed corruption. Yet INEC is silent. And heaven knows what else it has been silent about.

What faith can one have in a system that is innately defective and overtly impotent in its pursuit of its duties?

How can one build when there is no foundation upon which to stand?

Is this the turning point for a nation set to self destruct or the beginning of a new nation? The answer to the former certainly does not lie in the two major political parties of APC and PDP. Not with the overt chicanery displayed at their so-called primary elections.

Its time to say no to these usurpers who have destroyed the spirit of hope and now close to snuffing out the little embers left.

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