

IMPACT OF THE 9TH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON ANTI-CORRUPTION INSTITUTION IN NIGERIA, 2019-2023

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Abstract

The battle against corruption in Nigeria has been a key focus of governance reform, especially since the return to democracy in 1999. Institutions aimed at combating corruption, like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), and the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB), have played a vital role in fostering accountability and transparency. The 9th National Assembly (2019-2023) was convened during a period when public expectations were heightened for legislative moves that could either bolster or weaken these institutions. This study assesses the influence of the legislative actions taken by the 9th National Assembly on anti-corruption institutions in Nigeria throughout this period. Specifically, it investigates the nature and purpose of the bills passed, the oversight roles performed, and the financial resources allocated to key anti-corruption agencies. Employing a qualitative research approach, the study utilizes both primary and secondary data sources, including legislative documents, committee findings, expert interviews, and media reviews. The theoretical framework is based on Principal-Agent Theory, which assists in clarifying the interactions between legislative entities and anti-corruption organizations. The findings indicate a complicated relationship between political motivations, institutional changes, and the legislative process. Although the 9th Assembly enacted several bills aimed at enhancing anti-corruption efforts, the effectiveness of these laws is hampered by frail implementation strategies, political meddling, and duplicative institutions. The study concludes that, despite legislative actions having a measurable effect, they did not achieve transformative reforms. It advocates for improved legislative independence, increased involvement from civil society, and tighter performance monitoring of anti-corruption institutions.

Keywords: anti-corruption, legislative oversight, corruption, governance, accountability, political and interference.

Introduction

Corruption continues to be a significant global issue, undermining effective governance, diminishing public trust, and distorting economic and social growth. In numerous countries, especially in developing regions, it appears in both major and minor forms, impacting everything from policy choices to day-to-day administrative processes. The fallout from unchecked corruption is extensive: it fosters inequality, undermines institutions, discourages foreign investment, and hinders

progress towards sustainable development. Acknowledging its widespread effects, international organizations like the United Nations, World Bank, and Transparency International have consistently pushed for stronger institutional frameworks, transparency, and accountability measures as vital tools in the battle against corruption.

In the African landscape, corruption has been recognized as one of the main barriers to democratic development and socio-economic change. Many African nations have begun reforms, established anti-corruption bodies, and pursued international collaboration to address this issue. However, despite these initiatives, corruption remains deeply rooted due to reasons like weak legal systems, limited political commitment, institutional inefficiency, and fragile democratic foundations. Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation and largest economy, exemplifies a particularly intricate and revealing case. In Nigeria, corruption has been a longstanding challenge since independence, permeating both public and private sectors and impacting all levels of government. It is generally seen as a significant obstacle to national growth, hindering advancements in infrastructure, education, healthcare, security, and economic diversification. The widespread nature of corruption has resulted in deep disillusionment among citizens, weakened the credibility of government institutions, and led to social unrest.

Various administrations, military and civilian, have sought to tackle this issue through the creation of anti-corruption agencies, legal reforms, and public awareness campaigns. Organizations like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), and the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) have been established with mandates to investigate, prosecute, and prevent corrupt practices. Even with these organizations in place, the effectiveness of Nigeria's anti-corruption framework remains uneven and inconsistent. While some advancement has been made, substantial challenges continue to exist, including political meddling, selective enforcement, limited resources, and legal gaps. Importantly, the legislative and political environment in which these agencies function plays a crucial role in determining their capability and independence. The legislative branch, in particular, wields considerable influence through its law-making, oversight, and budgeting responsibilities. By passing relevant legislation, allocating funds, and exercising oversight, the National Assembly can either bolster or undermine anti-corruption institutions.

The 9th National Assembly started its journey in June 2019 and wrapped up in June 2023, functioning in a unique political atmosphere. Unlike past assemblies, it maintained

a more seamless and collaborative connection with the executive branch led by President Muhammadu Buhari. This political synchronicity sparked both hope and apprehension among academics and governance watchers. For instance, Olukoshi (2019) and Suberu (2020) were optimistic that improved cooperation between the executive and legislature would foster better governance and cohesive policy implementation, particularly in vital sectors like anti-corruption and public finance management. They suggested that decreased conflict might hasten policy changes and enhance institutional collaboration. On the other hand, some commentators, such as Fagbadebo and Afolabi (2020) and Ojo (2022), cautioned that such intimacy might undermine legislative autonomy, weaken institutional safeguards against executive power, and restrict the Assembly's ability to hold the government accountable. These scholars highlighted that too much agreement between government branches can hinder the legislature's oversight functions, thus diminishing the effectiveness of anti-corruption agencies. In this setting, the steps or lack thereof taken by the 9th Assembly have significant consequences for Nigeria's anti-corruption journey. As Olorunfoba (2021) and Egwu (2020) pointed out, legislative choices regarding law-making, budget approval, institutional oversight, and the confirmation of important officials significantly affect the credibility, independence, and operational capability of anti-corruption bodies. This paper, therefore, investigates how the legislative actions of the 9th National Assembly impacted Nigeria's anti-corruption institutions. Specifically, it assesses how the Assembly's decisions like enacting or modifying important laws, approving budgets, and conducting oversight investigations affected the effectiveness, independence, and public confidence in agencies dedicated to fighting corruption. By analyzing the legislative dynamics during this period, the study aims to deepen the understanding of the relationship between law-making and institutional performance in Nigeria's ongoing battle against corruption.

Conceptual Review

This section introduces the Conceptual Review, designed to simplify and clarify the essential ideas that underpin the study. By exploring the key terms, concepts, and frameworks pertinent to the research, this section gives a clear insight into how these ideas are applied within the study's context. It also emphasizes the connections between the concepts and builds a strong intellectual foundation for the following analysis and discussion. Through this review, readers are led toward a richer understanding of the topic and the theoretical questions influencing the research.

Concept of Corruption

Ekumankama (2022) explains corruption as morally decayed, lowly, corrupt, damaged, spoiled, and compromised actions carried out for unfair gain. Corruption weakens the moral essence of society and more importantly, it infringes on the social and economic rights of the disadvantaged and the needy. Namo, Agwadu, and Amakoromo (2024) characterize corruption as not only widespread but deeply rooted and largely accountable for the nation's lack of progress. Tyokya (2024) describes corruption as showing up in different ways, such as stealing public funds, falsifying data, cheating, dishonesty, and receiving kickbacks from contractors. Ajibade (2023) describes political corruption as the actions or failures to act by those in power who, through abusing their roles, aim to gain personal or political benefits at the cost of the

common good, thus obstructing national progress. Based on these definitions, the study takes on the views of institutional and political economy regarding corruption, as they most effectively illustrate corruption as a failure of moral principles, a misuse of authority, and a widespread governance issue that hampers national growth.

Concept of Anti-corruption

Okolie & Egbon (2025) Anticorruption is described as a planned and structured effort focused on eliminating corrupt practices through reforms in public administration and the implementation of legal systems by committed anti-corruption bodies in Nigeria. Nwosu (2022) Anticorruption includes the collection of laws, policies, and regulatory actions established to prevent, uncover, and penalize corrupt behaviors in both public and private sectors, thus improving governance and accountability. Akinsanya (2025) Anticorruption signifies the all-encompassing legal and policy setup aimed at reducing corruption by bolstering institutional abilities and fostering transparency, accountability, and integrity in public service. Ajah & Biereenu-Nnabugwu (2023) Anticorruption involves the development and application of government strategies designed to diminish corruption through legal reforms, efficient oversight, and the active involvement of civil society in governance activities. Adeyemi & Mutambara (2022) Anticorruption is the organized method that includes crafting policies, enforcing anti-corruption laws, and fostering institutional teamwork aimed at decreasing corruption and enhancing governance results in Nigeria. However, anticorruption can be seen as a coordinated and complex effort utilizing laws, policy changes, strengthening institutions, and engaging citizens to stop, identify, and penalize corruption, with the ultimate goal of enhancing transparency, accountability, and effective governance.

Legislative Action

Adewale (2021) explains legislative action as the process allowed by the constitution where the Nigerian legislature creates, discusses, and establishes laws to manage social relationships and enhance governance. Eze and Okonkwo (2023) describe legislative action as the organized effort by Nigeria's National Assembly to create, change, or remove laws in response to national growth challenges. Bello (2020) sees legislative action as the method through which Nigerian elected officials consider and enact laws meant to set legal guidelines for socio-economic management. Oluwole (2022) considers legislative action as the official role of Nigeria's legislature that involves establishing and altering legal standards that influence public policy and governance. Ibrahim (2024) clarifies legislative action as the official and thoughtful process of making laws carried out by Nigeria's parliament to meet public demands and support democratic values.

Theoretical framework

Principal-Agent Theory

The study anchored on Principal-Agent Theory, Principal-Agent Theory first introduced by Stephen Ross (1973) and expanded by Michael Jensen and William Meckling (1976), investigates the dynamics where one entity (the principal) grants authority or decision-making power to another entity (the agent) to act on their behalf. Initially grounded in economics and corporate governance, the theory has been widely utilized in political science and public administration to illustrate how delegated authority

can cause misaligned incentives and governance failures. In democratic governance, the public (citizens) serves as the principal, while elected officials and public servants act as agents. Ideally, these agents should operate in the public's best interest. Problems arise when the agents prioritize their personal or political gains over the principal's goals. This leads to what is known as agency loss a failure of representatives to effectively or honestly fulfill their responsibilities, often worsened by information asymmetry, where the agent possesses more or superior information than the principal and can operate with minimal oversight.

In Nigeria, the National Assembly serves as a prime example of this principal-agent conflict. Elected by the populace to uphold public interests, the legislature also supervises key anti-corruption bodies like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) which themselves act as agents assigned to combat corruption. This multi-faceted delegation creates opposing incentives. Legislators, acting as public representatives, might propose or back anti-corruption laws to show accountability. However, they may also undermine oversight processes or interfere in investigations to shield political allies or protect their own interests. This inconsistency between public declarations and private motivations is a central issue in Principal-Agent Theory. The theory sheds light on why anti-corruption initiatives in Nigeria often seem sporadic or ineffective, despite formal legislative endorsement. While laws may be enacted, their enforcement might be strategically postponed or inadequately applied. It has become clearer how institutional constraints, political motivations, and power imbalances influence legislative conduct. It also provides a vital framework for evaluating whether the actions taken by entities such as the 9th National Assembly were sincere efforts to enhance accountability or largely symbolic moves aimed at satisfying public demands while retaining political dominance.

Legislative Bills and Motions Related to Anti-Corruption (2019-2023)

During Nigeria's 9th National Assembly (2019-2023), there were significant strides to enhance the nation's anti-corruption framework through the creation and revision of key laws. Acknowledging the ongoing issue of corruption in public institutions, the Assembly aimed to improve legal tools, bridge institutional gaps, and align Nigeria with international best practices. One of the key achievements was the passing of the Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act, 2022, a groundbreaking law that established a consolidated system for tracking, freezing, managing, and disposing of assets obtained from illegal activities.

Prior to this Act, anti-corruption agencies like EFCC, ICPC, the Nigeria Police, Customs, and NDLEA ran separate asset recovery systems, leading to overlaps, secrecy, revenue losses, and, at times, re-looting of recovered assets. The new law brought in a central asset database and encouraged transparency, accountability, and cooperation among agencies, reflecting suggestions from global partners like the UNODC. As for implementation, initial reports from the Federal Ministry of Justice indicated that over ₦30 billion in assets including cash, properties, and vehicles were processed under the framework from 2022 to 2023. Nonetheless, challenges like inter-agency competition and delays in making the

Asset Management Committee fully operational hindered the law's early effectiveness.

The Assembly also achieved significant progress by passing the Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022, which bolstered Nigeria's compliance with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) standards. This law increased reporting requirements for financial institutions and non-financial businesses, empowered the NFIU with enhanced monitoring powers, and tightened customer verification processes. These changes helped Nigeria stay off the FATF grey list and improved the quality of suspicious transaction reports from banks. However, enforcement issues remained, especially within the real estate sector and among professional groups like lawyers and accountants, many of whom resisted compliance obligations.

In a similar vein, the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022 while mainly centered on security implemented strong actions against terrorist financing and illegal financial flows. This Act improved collaboration between security agencies and financial intelligence units and increased penalties on entities facilitating illegal transactions. Although it strengthened Nigeria's adherence to global counter-terrorism financing standards, weak enforcement in rural and border areas continued to limit its effectiveness overall. Aside from these pivotal laws, the National Assembly also introduced essential anti-corruption measures through the Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) 2020, particularly regarding beneficial ownership transparency.

The creation of the Beneficial Ownership Register enhanced efforts to uncover shell companies used for money laundering and tax evasion. Nigeria's advancements in this field were acknowledged by international partners in the Open Government Partnership. However, challenges persisted, with many companies providing incomplete or false beneficial ownership details, coupled with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) lacking sufficient verification capacity.

In addition to legislative actions, the Assembly approved motions and carried out oversight efforts intended to fight corruption within Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). These efforts included probes into revenue losses, failure to deposit funds into the Treasury Single Account (TSA), discrepancies in fuel subsidy payments, corruption claims involving NIRSAL, and misuse of social investment programs. Such oversight helped unveil financial misconduct and pushed MDAs to adhere to financial regulations. However, in spite of these successes, many important anti-corruption reforms either stalled or did not succeed. The Whistleblower Protection Bill, aimed at offering legal protections and incentives for individuals reporting corruption, remained stuck in the legislative process. This setback was widely condemned since Nigeria's whistleblower policy, introduced in 2016, had already resulted in the recovery of billions of naira, yet whistleblowers faced ongoing victimization, lack of safety, and delayed rewards due to the lack of legal support. Likewise, the Assembly's failure to pass the EFCC Act Amendment Bill, which aimed to separate the appointment of the EFCC chairman from political pressure, was a missed chance to bolster the institutional independence of Nigeria's leading anti-corruption body. Consequently, worries about executive interference in EFCC leadership and operations continued throughout this period.

Overall, the 9th National Assembly made notable strides in asset recovery, financial intelligence reforms, transparency in beneficial ownership, and aligning legislation with international standards. Still, shortcomings in implementation, selective enforcement, rivalry between agencies, incomplete databases, and the inability to pass crucial bills persisted in limiting the transformative potential of its anti-corruption efforts.

Legislative Oversight: Rhetoric vs. Reality

The 9th National Assembly of Nigeria (2019-2023) actively utilized its formal oversight powers, which included investigative hearings, committee probes, and public summons of government officials. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these actions is questionable because of weak enforcement mechanisms, a lack of transparency, and poor follow-up on findings. Although Sections 88 and 89 of the Nigerian Constitution grant oversight powers to investigate public officers' or institutions' conduct, these powers were often merely symbolic rather than effective tools for ensuring accountability. A key example is the investigation into the use of COVID-19 intervention funds. In 2020, the House of Representatives initiated a probe into how funds assigned to ministries and agencies, notably the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, were utilized. Despite extensive media coverage of mismanagement and inflated contracts, particularly regarding cash transfers and food assistance, the results of the legislative investigation were never completely revealed. Significantly, the ministry spent over ₦500 billion during the pandemic, with claims that large sums were unaccounted for (Premium Times, 2021). While hearings were conducted, no substantial administrative or legal actions ensued, and the officials involved were neither prosecuted nor removed from their positions. Another significant area of oversight failure concerns budget padding and recurring questionable allocations. The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) disclosed in 2022 that federal MDAs had included duplicate projects amounting to over ₦300 billion in the 2021 budget (ICPC, 2022). Constituency projects often supported by legislators were marked by corruption, inadequate implementation, and a lack of accountability. Many of these projects were never carried out, and reports suggested that some oversight committees accepted inducements to overlook discrepancies, which weakened public confidence in the process (BudgIT, 2021).

In the oil and gas sector, even with the landmark passage of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) in 2021, the National Assembly failed to implement transparency and accountability measures, particularly regarding the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL). Concerns such as unpaid oil revenues, inflated subsidy payments, and a lack of clarity in crude oil sales largely remained unaddressed. The Senate Public Accounts Committee in 2023 found audit discrepancies amounting to ₦210 trillion related to NNPCL operations but could not enforce meaningful action (ThisDay, 2023). Together, these examples reflect a concerning gap between legislative claims and genuine accountability. Although oversight tools were employed, the lack of repercussions for misconduct indicates a deficiency in political will, and in some instances, possible collusion or a suppression of accountability by the legislature itself.

Budgetary Allocations and Legislative Appropriations

A look at federal budget trends from 2019 to 2023 shows that the 9th National Assembly made slight increases in

funding for Nigeria's main anti-corruption bodies. While this suggests a nominal legislative dedication to boosting anti-corruption initiatives, the funding often fell short of the budget requests made by the agencies themselves. This continuous underfunding severely limited their capabilities, restricting the effectiveness of agencies like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), and the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB). Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC): From 2019 to 2023, the EFCC's budget slowly increased in absolute terms, with the agency securing ₦30.8 billion in 2023, up from around ₦24 billion in 2019 (Budget Office of the Federation, 2023).

However, this growth was diminished by high inflation and rising operational demands, including the need for more cybercrime investigations, increased international partnerships, and heightened asset recovery efforts. The real value of funding when adjusted for inflation and operational costs thus remained flat or even fell in practical terms. Consequently, the EFCC faced challenges in hiring and training personnel en masse, advancing forensic capabilities, or adding regional offices throughout Nigeria. Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB): The ICPC and CCB received much smaller budgets compared to the EFCC, often labeled as inadequate for their responsibilities. For example, the ICPC was given around ₦15.5 billion in 2023, a rise from ₦9.4 billion in 2019 (Budget Office of the Federation, 2023). Although this signifies growth, both agencies noted difficulties in receiving funds on time, particularly for capital expenses, which directly hinders their investigation and prosecution efforts. Delayed fund releases meant that crucial infrastructure like forensic labs, data centers, and surveillance tools could not be developed or upgraded as intended. The CCB, in particular, continued to be underfunded, struggling to digitize its asset declaration processes or uphold its investigative independence. Asset Recovery and Proceeds of Crime: A key legislative success during this timeframe was the enactment of the Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act (POCA) in 2022. This law aimed to unify the asset recovery process across anti-corruption bodies and promote transparency and accountability in managing assets. However, its execution has been hampered by a lack of dedicated budget allocations. Even though the Act requires the establishment of structures like the Proceeds of Crime Management Directorate, the budgets for 2023 and 2024 did not set aside enough money to effectively implement this framework (SERAP, 2023; BudgIT, 2023). This shortfall leaves asset tracing, seizure, and management mostly disjointed and reactive, with persistent inter-agency conflicts.

Political Dynamics and Legislative Independence

One of the keys and most discussed aspects of Nigeria's 9th National Assembly (2019-2023) was its notably "harmonious relationship" with the executive branch, particularly during President Muhammadu Buhari's tenure. While some lauded this cooperation for enabling smoother governance and reducing political stalemates, it also sparked serious worries about the decline of legislative independence. The effects of this relationship were especially evident in the area of anti-corruption legislation and oversight. Fast-Tracking of Executive Bills: Throughout the 9th Assembly, many significant anti-corruption laws enacted were sponsored by the executive.

These included the Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act, 2022, and the Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022.

These laws were frequently expedited through the legislative process, passed with few revisions and limited public discussion. According to legislative tracking data from the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC), over 70% of successful bills related to anti-corruption during this period came from the executive (PLAC, 2023). While the quick passage of such bills enhanced the legal structure for fighting corruption, critics contend that this tendency undermined the deliberative and oversight role of the legislature. Neglect of Private Member Bills: Conversely, private member bills particularly those suggesting reforms to the framework and management of anti-corruption agencies received little attention or stalled at committee levels. For example, bills promoting the independence of bodies like the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) or clarifying overlapping roles between the EFCC and ICPC seldom advanced. Legislative efforts pushing for more open appointment processes for agency leaders or increased parliamentary oversight of anti-corruption agencies were largely overlooked.

This trend indicated reluctance by the Assembly to contest or modify the executive's dominance over the anti-corruption framework. Limited Oversight and Critical Scrutiny: The close connection between the legislature and executive also stirred worries that the Assembly was hesitant to effectively perform its constitutional oversight duties. Civil society organizations and media sources reported multiple occasions where lawmakers neglected to investigate or discuss credible corruption allegations involving high-ranking officials or state agencies. For instance, scandals relating to the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs both facing accusations of financial mismanagement did not lead to ongoing legislative inquiries or penalties (SERAP, 2021; Premium Times, 2022). This perceived inaction raised doubts about the distribution of power and the legislature's function as a check on executive misconduct. According to the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), this situation resulted in an "accountability vacuum," where corruption thrived under the guise of political loyalty and legislative inaction (CDD, 2023). In short, the 9th National Assembly's teamwork with the executive helped in quick lawmaking, particularly for anti-corruption laws, but it also weakened necessary supervision. The reduced independence of the legislature restricted its power to hold the executive responsible, undermining Nigeria's larger institutional struggle against corruption. A strong, independent legislature is essential to ensure that anti-corruption initiatives are not merely influenced by political agendas, but are based on transparency, inclusivity, and the rule of law.

Effects on Major Anti-Corruption Institutions

The legislative and political climate of the 9th National Assembly (2019-2023) had a varied effect on Nigeria's main anti-corruption institutions. Some agencies gained from legislative focus and policy changes, while others continued to face neglect, insufficient funding, and structural challenges. The three main institutions the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), and the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) each had different outcomes during this time. Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC):

Throughout the 9th Assembly's term, the EFCC was the most prominent and active anti-corruption body. Its role as Nigeria's leading institution in the fight against corruption was strengthened by support from the legislature and the executive, especially during the spotlight confirmation of Abdulsheed Bawa as chairman in 2021 (Premium Times, 2021).

Legislative support also included the Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022 and the Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act, 2022, which enhanced the EFCC's legal framework for tackling and prosecuting financial crimes. Nevertheless, challenges persisted. Critics often highlighted the political bias in the EFCC's operations, alleging that it targeted political opponents or acted as a weapon for political revenge (Transparency International, 2022). Furthermore, the Commission continued to struggle with inadequate funding, logistical hurdles, and capacity limitations, especially regarding digital forensics, staff development, and partnerships with international bodies. While the EFCC was more visible than its counterparts, its effectiveness was frequently compromised by broader systemic issues and selective enforcement. Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC): The ICPC attracted significantly less legislative and media focus compared to the EFCC. Although it kept a consistent pace of investigations mainly in the education and public procurement sectors there was little initiative from the legislature to enhance its legal authority or rise its funding.

The ICPC's preventive anti-corruption efforts through audits of government agencies, system evaluations, and public awareness were important but often eclipsed by the EFCC's high-profile cases. As reported by the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC, 2023), legislative interest in reforms for the ICPC was low, with no major bills introduced or approved to enhance its operational independence or broaden its investigative powers. This lack of involvement left the agency functioning below its capacity, despite its essential role in systemic and institutional anti-corruption efforts. Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB): The CCB, despite being constitutionally empowered to enforce asset declarations and maintain public service ethics, remained the most neglected of the three agencies. It struggled with chronic underfunding, outdated facilities, and limited legislative focus. Even with its vital responsibilities, such as assessing the asset declarations of public officials, the Bureau lacked the political and financial backing required to operate effectively. Civil society organizations, including the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), have consistently urged changes to enhance the CCB's independence and to modernize its processes for improved transparency (SERAP, 2022). Nevertheless, these changes were not a priority for the 9th Assembly. Consequently, the CCB's role in combating illegal wealth accumulation and fostering transparency in public service stayed limited.

Conclusion

The 9th National Assembly of Nigeria (2019-2023) had a detailed and intricate role in influencing the operational landscape of the nation's anti-corruption institutions. While it made notable strides such as enacting the Proceeds of Crime Act and aligning with global anti-money laundering practices its legislative actions were characterized by both hope and flaws. Importantly, the Assembly's cooperation with the executive branch fostered

legislative effectiveness but diminished the crucial checks and balances necessary for strong democratic supervision. Even though several investigative hearings took place, their results seldom led to meaningful institutional changes or prosecutions, raising doubts about the authenticity and influence of these oversight endeavors. Funding for anti-corruption agencies saw only a modest increase, and in many instances remained inadequate for the level of operations needed. Additionally, the inability to pass vital legislation like the Whistleblower Protection Bill and reforms to diminish executive control over the leadership of anti-corruption agencies indicates a hesitation to implement sweeping reforms that could alter the political landscape. Institutional Theory and Principal-Agent Theory both shed light on these results. Legislative actions were shaped by institutional limitations, political motivations, and conflicts between elected officials and the public good. The resulting policies, although symbolically connected to anti-corruption objectives, frequently lacked the foundational strength to create systemic change. In summary, while the 9th Assembly did not entirely forsake the anti-corruption agenda, it failed to become a transformative agent. Its influence was gradual rather than groundbreaking, leaving essential reforms to be undertaken by future legislatures and an engaged civil society.

Recommendations

The following suggestions are made

1. **Pass Critical Legislative Reforms:** The National Assembly should focus on important pending bills like the Whistleblower Protection Bill and EFCC Act Amendment to boost institutional independence and public involvement in fighting corruption.
2. **Enhance Oversight Effectiveness:** Investigative hearings need to produce real results, such as legal actions and reforms, instead of just being political performances.
3. **Increase Funding for Anti-Corruption Agencies:** Budget allocations must align with the operational needs of agencies such as the EFCC, ICPC, and CCB, ensuring timely funding and performance-based financial models.
4. **Reduce Executive Influence:** Appointments in anti-corruption organizations should undergo more legislative examination and merit-based processes to avoid political biases.
5. **Strengthen Legislative Independence:** Future assemblies must claim their independence from the executive branch to genuinely act as guardians of public accountability.
6. **Promote Civil Society Engagement:** The legislature ought to establish ways for civil society organizations to regularly provide input in the creation and oversight of anti-corruption laws.

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