

**CONSTITUENTS AND PARLIAMENTARIANS:
EXPECTATIONS OF POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN
CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA.**

BY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis challenges the stereotypical (mis-)representation of all exchanges between Nigerian politicians and their constituents as corruption or patron-client relationship. While it does not challenge the existence of corruption in Nigeria, it seeks to differentiate exchanges widely – though not always – seen as legitimate from those clearly associated with corruption or clientelism. In order to do so, this thesis explores local expectations and practices of accountability, which include expectations of politicians' support for those in need. Based on fieldwork consisting of interviews, participant, and other observations as well as a survey, this thesis shows that politicians and constituents alike understand the expectation and provision of goods and services as politicians' social responsibility. Politicians including MPs, provide such benefits where they can because they understand it as part of their contribution to the wellbeing of the voters. Thus, political parties and politicians do make electoral campaign promises based on this understanding. Constituents also perceive demands made of their politicians as reflecting legitimate expectations of privileged individuals, including political leaders. Most people do not understand any benefits received from a politician as deserving electoral reciprocity in the form of a vote for those who provided them. Constituents understand demands made of their political leaders as of right and use such pressure to remind politicians about the need to fulfil electoral promises and responsibilities. Therefore, the provision of such benefits does not necessarily affect electoral outcomes.

This thesis argues that political accountability should be understood beyond the transparency of public officials. While transparency remains an important measure of

accountability, it can also be framed as the direct responsibility politicians have to support the wellbeing of the citizens irrespective of voting intentions. This thesis therefore contends that accountability which involves the retrospective scrutiny of public officials' transparency and the prospective actions citizens take to ensure they fulfil their electoral promises are not necessarily in conflict.

This thesis provides a nuanced interpretation and understanding of political accountability by exploring the cultural foundation of practices and ideas of political accountability in Nigeria, without assuming that "culture" is a specificity of Nigeria, or African politics. Deconstructing stereotypical narrative of Nigerian politicians' exchanges with constituents requires an approach that takes cultural practices into account without relying on "culture" as an explanatory value. Thus, the key to rethinking the ideas of political accountability in Nigeria requires the understanding of not only the outcomes of the relationships between politicians and constituents but also how such actions are negotiated. Similarly, we need to consider the interpretation of the values of accountability relationships and exchanges between politicians and voters. The demands people make of their political leaders are not only considered as legitimate but also fluid in nature. In a wider context, the demands constituents make of politicians reflect the objective needs informed by their cultural values and expectations of those in positions of authority. Therefore, accountability relationships and outcomes are better understood when studied against local cultural practices. This thesis used a semi-ethnographic approach to explore everyday performances of politicians and constituents-drawing attention to what people perceive as legitimate expectations other than patronage. It unpacked how different elements of performance including the role of historical repertoires, recognition of seniority and status, show of

respect, praise-singing, proverbs, caricatures, and figurative expressions and sometimes protests are used to make politicians do their jobs. This synthesized understanding helps us rethink the idea of redistributive politics more broadly beyond Nigeria to recognise practices embedded in historical and local culture of expectation.

DEDICATION

To my Amaka (Bombelek) and my wife.

For the countless moments I totally disconnected from you both. I would have quit but for your ceaseless encouragement. Thank you for giving me the mental strength to continue even when I was in despair. Your support and love made it happen.

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This work is the result of my childhood interest and curiosity about what politicians do. As a child I did not know what politician do but learned some of the songs they used to sing during electoral campaigns. I was made to believe that politicians were those that will make the society better, but no one ever told me how? This interest and curiosity further deepened as I grew up and formed the foundation of this journey that has taken a great part of my life over the past six years.

I would not have seen the end of this strenuous journey without the help and support of many people. Firstly, I give thanks to God almighty for his immeasurable grace of keeping me alive and seeing me through this despite all the personal challenges I faced over the period of this study. I would like to thank my beautiful wife for the enthusiasm, love and support that helped to sustain me during this journey. You not only encouraged me when I was low, you provided the physical, and psychological boost that I needed from beginning to the end. 'Mommy' I love you to the stars and back. Undoubtedly, without your positive energy I would not have reached the summit of this mountainous challenge. A big thank you also goes to my little angel, Olivia, Ugonwa, Amaka,-daddy's 'Bombelek'. Your journey in life started when daddy was fully engaged to get this work done and that meant that we could not play together enough as we both wanted but I am eternally grateful for your patience. What else could have kept me on my toes than your angelic voice that often would ask: "daddy are you working?" or "daddy have you finished?" In retrospect, these questions that formed part of the first set of words you learned as a child showed how much you missed daddy during this project as well as how patient and graceful you were with daddy during the difficult

moments. I am happy that I will now have all the time in the world to play with you once again. Ugonwa, “biko cheta na daddy furugi na anya!” I would like to thank my parents whose love and prayers were crucial in every stage of my life including undertaking this work.

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NOTES ON ORTHOGRAPHY

This thesis is based on information provided by my informants through interviews and survey responses. While many of the interviewees responded to the research questions using the standardised English language only, others responded in one of the major Nigerian languages, such as Igbo, Hausa or Yoruba and Pidgin English, or by including sentences or expressions from these languages. Equally, some performances I recorded included the use of these languages.

The Igbo and Yoruba languages are tonal, meaning they have unique stress patterns to differentiate the sounds and meaning of words which are indicated by grave and acute accents. Moreover, these languages mark different vowels and at least one consonant with diacritical marks (sub-dots) to distinguish different phonemes. Having grown up in Nigeria, I am confident of my working knowledge of these languages and believe I have provided workable translations in English. However, I have never formally studied any Nigerian language, and therefore do not have a clear understanding of these languages' transliterations.

As excluding the African language expressions would diminish the thesis's grounding in empirical research, I made the decision to include them in this thesis. Where possible, I have sought the help of formally trained speakers of Hausa, Igbo, Pidgin English, and Yoruba. However, there are very few formally trained speakers of Pidgin. Moreover, due to time pressure it has not always been possible to find the appropriate advice. I therefore represent all languages apart from Standard English to the best of my ability. Most African language words in this thesis are therefore written without stress and spelled as I understood them.

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Abbreviations

BBC	-	British Broadcasting Corporation
CDF	-	Constituency Development Fund
CIA	-	Central Intelligence Agency
CID	-	Centre for International Development
CLO	-	Civil Liberties Organisation
CPAHQ	-	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Head Quarters
DISC	-	Centre for Studying Imperfections in Democracy
EFCC	-	Economic and Financial Crimes Commission
EU	-	European Union
FOI	-	Freedom of Information
GBP	-	Great British Pound
GPAD	-	Governance and Public Administration Division
ICPC	-	Independent Corrupt Practices Commission
IDEA	-	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IJMSSR	-	International Journal of Management and Social Sciences Research
IMF	-	International Monetary Fund
INEC	-	Independent National Electoral Commission

IPSA	-	Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority
KIS	-	Keeping It Simple
MMD	-	Multi Member Districts
MP	-	Member of Parliament
NADECO	-	National Democratic Coalition
NAI	-	Nordiska AfricanInstitutet
NANS	-	National Association of Nigerian Students
NASS	-	National Assembly Secretariat Service
NCNC	-	National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroon
NCSL	-	National Conference of State Legislatures
NDDC	-	Niger Delta Development Commission
NDP	-	National Democratic Party
NEITI	-	Nigerian Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative
NGN	-	Nigerian Naira
NILLS	-	National Institute of Legislative Studies
NNPC	-	Nigerian National Petroleum Company
NYM	-	National Youth Movement
NY	-	New York
PAC	-	Public Accounts Committees

PDP	-	Peoples' Democratic Party
PLAC	-	Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre
PSA	-	Parliamentary Standards Authority
RMFAC	-	National Revenue Mobilisation and Fiscal Allocation Commission
SMD	-	Single Member Districts
TED	-	Technology Entertainment Design
UK	-	United Kingdom
UN	-	United Nations
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Program
US	-	United States
USA	-	United States of America
USD	-	United States Dollars
WB	-	World Bank

1 INTRODUCTION

Many discourses of African, and particularly Nigerian, politics offer a stereotypical understanding, which associates the exchanges that surround political activities and relationships with patron-client relationships or corruption. Yet this analysis is one-sided: by focusing on problematic forms of exchange, it exaggerates and misrepresents the realities of everyday lives (see Kristof 2009; Russell 2012). Consequently, such misrepresentation creates a single story of stereotypes. “And the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story” (Adichie 2018: 4). This thesis challenges the understanding of Nigerian politics as a narrow reciprocal exchange between politicians and constituents. Practices described as corruption exist across the world but are usually treated as an exception to the rule. The fact that corruption is often foregrounded in Nigerian and indeed African politics suggests a normative reading of diffused understandings of accountability, which however exist in many societies – both in Africa and beyond.

This thesis argues that notwithstanding genuine concerns about corruption and patron-client networks in Africa, not all practices described in this way are automatically seen as a sign of corruption or patron-client relationships. This understanding is supported by my fieldwork in Nigeria, which shows that the wellbeing and progress of Nigerians, both as individuals and collectively, is generally understood as the responsibility of political leaders. A survey I conducted in Nigeria in 2014 and 2015, as part of my research fieldwork, further confirmed this understanding: the majority of my respondents would accept private support from politicians as a matter of course, but

do not think that such goods deserve any personalised reward. This finding builds on wider research illustrating that when politicians engage in vote buying; its effect is largely limited because of enforceability problems, the role of brokers, and the attitude of voters (Muhtadi 2019; Vicente 2013; Bratton 2008). Rather than creating narrow reciprocal links, the practices described in this manner often address wider expectations of politicians' obligations to their constituents.

Expectations of politicians' support are not the same as patronage or corruption. Citizens' expectations of their political leaders are not new phenomenon in Nigeria or indeed Africa or elsewhere. They are part of historical practices that preceded and survived colonial rule and has continued to evolve in postcolonial Nigerian democracy. Precolonial Nigerians used different traditional measures to enforce leadership responsibility and guard against misrule. Therefore, the goods exchanged in this relationship have historical foundation. The bonds formed by such exchanges are not normally part of stable networks, and they do not necessarily influence elections. Rather, constituents' expectations partly overlap with constituency services provided in other countries, which are discussed as the 'hybrid social responsibility' of political leaders (Lindberg 2010)¹. My fieldwork shows that constituents' demands of political leaders are part of wider expectations of reciprocity in Nigeria, which associate status with responsibility. People have a sense of entitlement to the national wealth, and they feel they are 'owed' support and progress by those wealthier or more powerful than them, such as politicians. Such expectations have socio-cultural and historical

¹ Hybrid social responsibilities include informal contributions politicians make towards the wellbeing of relatively poor constituents. A hybrid political order is a pragmatic model where both state and non-state actors and agencies contribute to state-building. It draws on the strengths of social order and pragmatism instead of assuming that Weberian and Western models is the most appropriate avenue for good governance. It combines informal and customary practices as well as formal institutional procedures to address development needs of a society (see Stainer 2010).

foundations and are not always excluded from formal legal and constitutional provisions in Nigeria. They include the desire to get employment, contract, financial support, and access to social amenities like roads, electricity, and pipe borne water. These types of expectations are misunderstood by scholars from liberal democracies where political accountability is mainly associated with leadership transparency. As Lindberg noted, “In liberal democracies, accountability is primarily about public policies, political programmes and prudent use of public resources” (Lindberg 2003: 4).

In most contexts, the private support offered by politicians is understood as an appropriate contribution by wealthier people, including politicians, to the survival and improvement of the lives of relatively poor individuals. The aim of such support is also seen as helping the less fortunate to become independent of charity in the future. These expectations are linked to a performative culture of praise and criticism as well as embedded in proverbs and figurative expressions used in everyday life symbolic of the “weapons of the weak” with which ordinary people keep politicians on their toes and also fight oppression (Scott 1985). Constituents recognise and respect the seniority of their political leaders, but they do not necessarily collude with them as suggested by interpretations focused on patron-client relationships.

To appreciate this complex relationship between expectations and political practice, this thesis develops an understanding of politics as the “authoritative allocation of values” (Easton 1965: 5). Values are things a society considers as important, beneficial or holds in high esteem (Graeber 2001). These may be economic resources, political leadership positions or other aspects of social status, such as chieftaincy titles. This thesis recognises that all societies use formal, informal, legal, political, and socio-

cultural frameworks to allocate such values. Exploring how such values are expressed in the context of Nigerian politics, it also focuses on social expectations of politicians' accountability for their constituents' wellbeing. Such expectations are often negotiated in a highly performative way by constituents and politicians, whereby the recognition of politicians' power and seniority is understood to impel them to act in the manner understood as appropriate for leaders, namely by ensuring the wellbeing of those who are less fortunate. While some of these practices appear different from the way politics is performed in Western democracies, this does not mean that they always constitute patronage or corruption.

1.1 An Outlook of Nigerian Political Accountability

This thesis sets out how political accountability works by using the case study of Nigerian MPs and constituents. For this purpose, the rest of the introduction is used to explore different subjects that contribute to the general argument of the thesis. Section 1.2 discusses diversity of interests and demands which also cause tension between expectations and performance. Section 1.3 discusses constituents' expectations of support, which they do not consider as linked to an obligation to vote for politicians who provide such goods. Constituents consider multivariate factors before casting their ballots as against generalised perception of victims of vote-buying. Section 1.4 provides an assessment of literature on African politics. This section shows that corruption and patron-client relations often take centre stage in discourses about African politics. However, most of these analyses are overgeneralisations and misrepresentations of practices that deserve closer attention. Section 1.5 highlights the understanding of political accountability in Nigeria. It presents expectations of

support as accountability demands, or a legitimate distribution of resources (a process which contrast sharply with corruption or patronage networks). Section 1.6 discusses what it takes to navigate the field of Nigerian politics. It explores the importance of using mixed research methods, which provide the possibility of expanding academic discourses through multidimensional research insights. Section 1.7 discusses the usefulness and application of performance theory in the understanding of everyday life. It shows that observing the performance of political actors helps a researcher to uncover hidden information. Section 1.8 provides insights into the challenging task of researching high-ranking Nigerian big men such as senators, and section 1.9 sets out the organisation of the thesis chapters.

Accountability is the act of having an implicit or explicit expectation in a relationship where one may be called on to justify his or her actions to others. Such expectations also include rewards or punishments contingent upon the observation and evaluation of the person's behaviour or performance (Han and Demircioglu 2016). While some have described accountability as a virtue that drives a sense of responsibility or willingness to act in a transparent manner (Bovens 2005, Bovens Schillemans, and Goodin 2014), others understand it as a social, political and administrative mechanism through which an agent can be held to account by another agent or institution (Thakur 2020). Accountability is "an obligation to answer for the performance of duties" (Mulgan 2011: 1). According to Schedler (1999), accountability can best be described as a two-dimensional concept including answerability and enforceability. These two concepts connote that public officials are obliged by law to answer questions about their actions and are liable to punishment where wrongdoing is established (Schedler 1999: 14).

Accountability is thus constituted as an account-giving relationship between two or more parties.

The concept of accountability has evolved over the years, and to some degree remains “a nebulous concept” (Thakur 2020). Bovens notes that, “Accountability is one of those golden concepts that no one can be against. However, its evocative powers make it also a very elusive concept because it can mean many different things to different people” (Bovens 2005 in Thakur 2020: 1). Given its widespread appropriation and usage, the concept of accountability implies that “its field of application is as broad as its potential for consensus” (Schedler et al, 1999:13). Accountability revolves around how the grammar of responsibility, expectation, conduct and performance as well as the standards used to assess them is constructed (Day and Klein 1987; Newell and Bellour 2002). Therefore, the construction of what constitutes accountability requires a definition of responsibilities and the relationship between actors (Day and Klein 1987: 5). There cannot be accountability without responsibility because accountability and responsibility “are two-sides of the same coin, one fettering performance, the other enhancing it” (Peters and Pierre 2003; 346).

Accountability is most frequently associated with transparency and integrity anchored on “public institutions’ (...) use of their powers for officially authorised and publicly justified purposes (...), open-decision-making, citizens’ participation, transparency and good administration” (Panizza 2019: 1). Conventional wisdom suggests that accountability enforcement is performed retrospectively after the action being evaluated has been taken (Mulgan 2000; Lindberg 2009; Williams 2006). In democratic politics, accountability is a relational process that focuses on the ability of the principal (voters) to re-elect or de-elect the agent (political leader). Similar conceptions apply to

“political, bureaucratic, legal, professional, financial and societal accountability” (Lindberg 2009: 2). By constructing accountability solely from the point of view of reward and punishment, transparency, and enforceability, accountability appears to exist at the heart of a discourse centred only on moral values (Pesch 2008).

This understanding of accountability, however, is partial in that it does not take account of historical and political context where accountability is also, and in addition to the points above, conceptualised in terms of social and individual responsibility. Responsibility is defined as “a duty to deal with or take care of somebody/something, so that you may be blamed if something goes wrong (...), a moral duty to do something or to help or take care of somebody because of your job, position, etc.” (Oxford Learner’s Dictionary 2020). Through her “social connection model” of responsibility, Young (2006) explains that an interconnected world creates a shared responsibility of all citizens and institutions. She posits that structural injustice illustrates the failure of responsibility. She argues that rather than blaming specific individual agents for what they have done, what is required is the change of the structural processes that create unjust situations in the first place (Young 2011).

Young’s argument is relevant for Nigeria in the sense that many Nigerians believe that responsibility means that those in positions of authority should manage and distribute national resources equitably. A politician’s accountability can be measured by his or her level of transparency as well as adjudged by the performance of the responsibilities associated with the position being held. In the absence of a social safety net, voters expect their political leaders to provide private and public goods and services. Equally, politicians oblige the provision of such benefits where they can, not simply to be popular but mostly because they too understand the wellbeing of their constituents,

both individually and collectively, as their social responsibility. As noted above, such exchanges are often not part of politicians' formal responsibilities, but they are nonetheless seen as legitimate and even important by many, though not all Nigerians. In reflection of these widely shared understandings of accountability, such exchanges are conceptualised as accountability benefits in this thesis.

This thesis argues that accountability benefits play an important role in the context of Nigerian politics that is often seen as both legitimate and independent of the intention to abuse public office for private gains. But while Nigerian perceptions of legitimate exchanges reflect local social practices, they are not part of a static 'African culture'. Understandings of leaders' accountability as a form of responsibility for their followers have emerged along particular historical trajectories and continue to shift and be subject to debate. Moreover, it would be too much to say that there is general agreement on all of them, and several sections of the thesis illustrate the content and direction of debates about what legitimate exchanges of goods and services between politicians and constituents, i.e. 'accountability supply and demand' are. Similarly, there are different views about acceptable relationships constituted by the exchange of goods and services, which I describe as 'accountability relationships'. However, as the thesis captures some of the debates about what is legitimate, for example the changing nature in which Nigerian politicians and voters conceptualise benefits such as job creation (see chapter 6), it also shows that the thrust of political debate can also be towards a more explicit recognition of politicians' social responsibility. Where such exchanges are misread, practices that are in fact grounded in ethical debates may be misunderstood as aspects of corruption and patron-client relationships. As similar practices in many Western democracies are not subject to such misrecognition, that

suggests that while non-Western understandings of accountability are silenced, Western ones have been generalised and universalised.

Across the world, politicians engage in different practices to meet constituents' demands that conventional wisdom may interpret as patronage or even corruption. For example, the term "pork barrel" politics popular in the United States of America describes the practices of politicians aimed at channelling public money to specific constituencies based on political calculation at the detriment of broader public interests (Bickers and Stein 2003; Shepsle and Weingast 1981; Sharma 2017). Similar practices in Ireland are described as "parish pump politics". These practices recognise politicians' responsibility to their constituents; even though they do not necessarily reflect the programmatic interests the politicians stand for.

More generally, parties in power may use public funds to ensure re-election, a process described as election sweeteners in the United Kingdom, "kielbasa wyborcza" ("election sausage") in Poland, "cutting the cake" in Serbia and "Wahlgeschenke" ("election gifts") in German speaking countries among others (Lancaster and Patterson 1990; Thornton 2005; Irish Times October 19, 2000; Blackwell 2019). Again, such practices may be at odds with broader ideological or programmatic interests, but they are often justified by those who implement them as valid concessions because they enable a longer-term representation of particular interests through re-election.

As part of a narrow distributive politics, sometimes politicians use their positions to help constituents and other people within their social circle to secure political appointment or even public service jobs. Although this practice is often clandestine and hardly reported, it exists in both developing and advanced democracies. For example, the

appointment of District Judge Walker into the U.S District of Columbia's Circuit Court of Appeal, was said to have been influenced by the US Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (Kendall 2020).

In many societies, these practices may be derided, but they do not always imply corrupt or undesirable behaviour. Politicians represent the convergence of individual and collective demands of a constituency, whose members will hold them accountable at different levels. Thus, an election creates an accountability link between an MP and his or her constituents that extends beyond electoral gains (Lancaster 1986). Therefore, one could argue that both conventional and non-conventional practices including "pork-barrel" politics are parts of the political mechanisms for the distribution of resources along broader national and localised interests. Constituency demands are not only normative in nature, but also a predictor of constituency-focused legislative behaviour (Tromborg and Schwindt-Bayer 2018).

As accountability itself is not static but constructed in discourse and performance, a focus on the practices surrounding exchanges between politicians and constituents illuminates performative aspects of political life that are often ignored or overlooked, but which create space both for demands and needs understood as legitimate, and for wider exchanges about the nature of politicians' accountability. Overall, this thesis shows that, both individual expressions and public debates suggest that people recognise the importance of non-monetary 'accountability benefits' with broader public impact, such as infrastructural development and job opportunities in Nigeria. Even so, expectations surrounding more individual and monetised benefits remain high. Constituents expect both private and public goods as part of a politicians' acceptance of responsibility for their life chances. Moreover, private expectations of accountability

do not mean that other expectations do not exist: most recipients see individual goods simply as a stand-in for the wider opportunities that politicians are yet to create. Thus, accountability demands for private and public goods exist in a complex relationship and along a continuum.

1.2 Interpreting Accountability and its Implications

Through politics, diverse interests and expectations are expressed and negotiated. Therefore, focusing on the tension between expectation and performance will not only help us rethink the cultural foundation of politics, but also enrich our understanding of how constituents' ideas of rights and entitlements frame the encounters between politicians and voters. This thesis shows that politicians' provision of goods and services or the fulfilment of constituents' expectations does not necessarily translate to political support. It explores the concept of accountability by focusing on practices and performances of politicians and constituents in Nigeria. It describes and discusses what accountability benefits means to Nigerian politicians and constituents. Importantly the thesis explores the cultural foundation of political practices in Nigeria without assuming that such cultural repertoires are a specificity of Nigerian, or African, politics. Across continents, there are common traits of peoples' expectations of their government, yet they have diverse beliefs, ideas, values, and norms. Helgesen and Thomsen argue that all scholars who engage in interpretive work need basic knowledge concerning the values, ideas and norms that characterise the culture of the society that is being studied (2006: 4). They suggest that misinterpretations of politics often arise because it is studied and understood in relation to the social structure and institutions, and at the expense of political culture that shape them. Until recently,

political culture has either been neglected or used as a residual explanation when other explanations of political behaviour fail (Peters 1998:82).

This thesis rethinks ideas of political accountability in Nigeria through an examination of the cultural foundations of its politics. The types and legitimacy of demands constituents make of their political leaders and MPs are not just fluid but normatively determined. For example, depending on context, the offer of money by an individual could either be perceived positively as reflective of the kindness, selflessness, and generosity of the giver or as a negative sign of disrespect or arrogance. Similarly, the demands people make of their elected representatives reflect not only their objective needs and preferences which can be captured in generally applicable analytical terms, but also the cultural values and expectations held by both constituents and those with a political mandate.

This thesis shows that expectations of accountability relationships are linked to the performative aspect of Nigerian politics, in which the provision of visible support for others on an individual basis, reflects status and success, and is often taken as an indicator of good leadership. Therefore, the accountability relationship between politicians and their constituents ought to be studied through the lens of performance. So far, literature on the performance of political accountability relationships in Africa has been largely inadequate. Although some studies can be credited with signposting the importance of performance within African politics (Joseph 1991; Szeftel 2000; Van de Walle 2001), limited attention has been paid to understanding the reason or meaning of such actions, processes and outcomes involved. This thesis bridges the gap in the existing literature by focusing on the performance of accountability encounters between MPs and constituents, and by offering an account of the meaning

of their actions with regard to accountability demands and provision and by reflecting on the process and outcomes.

Overall, the thesis illustrates that the study of distributive politics in Nigeria, and by extension other parts of the world, requires an approach that goes beyond quantitative measurements of exchange or resource use. Moreover, it argues that stereotypical explanations of patron-client relationships in African politics provide only a limited explanation of a rather fluid and complex relationship. This thesis advocates the use of a qualitative method complemented by survey responses that indicate the trend of the political attitude of the research subjects. This combination creates room not only for a better understanding of the meaning of the actions of politicians and constituents during encounters, but it also measures their prevalence and significance. The effectiveness of this qualitative approach lies in the fact that I was able to observe the encounters and performances of the senators and constituents as they unfolded. In doing so, I learnt not just about the outcomes of such encounters between politicians and voters, but also about the normative practices that shape them.

In Nigeria, constituents regard their demands of MPs as of right, and the politicians also accept the supply of such demands as a “hybrid social responsibility.” “Hybrid duties” are non-formal and non-binding demands constituents make of their leaders. Although such demands are not part of an MP’s legislative responsibility, MPs consider them as important as their legislative duties.

1.3 Constituents’ expectation of private and public goods

Constituents may make as much in the way of demands of their MPs as of other politicians; however, the provision of such goods and services may not necessarily guarantee electoral support. Constituents may decide not to vote for an MP even after receiving benefits because they consider other multivariate factors before casting their ballots. This is an extension of the documented fact that during election, constituents may collect money from a candidate that seeks to buy their vote but eventually decide to vote for someone else with qualities they appreciate more – a case of voting with their conscience (Cheeseman and Klaas 2018). This thesis shows that constituents regard accountability benefits as the legitimate responsibility of politicians. In other words, there is an understanding that the government is responsible for the wellbeing of Nigerians through the provision of public goods to improve their condition. This responsibility is directly transferred to political leaders because most constituents perceive political leadership as being synonymous with government, especially when the government is not meeting their needs. This thesis shows that constituents consider their demands of political leaders as of right but receiving those does not necessarily translate into political support. While receiving goods might not necessarily translate into political support, yet not receiving benefits might most likely translate into constituents voting against an MP who is not seen as playing his/her role as a provider. As already said elsewhere, constituents consider the allocation of resources as of right, and receiving those does not necessarily translate to voting for politicians that provided them. While the provision of such benefits may influence peoples' voting behaviour, it does not do so as part of a reciprocal exchange. Equally a politician's inability to provide or fulfil accountability expectations also reduces the chances of receiving constituents' political support. At the same time, receiving them gives constituents a

sense of belonging. However, another dynamic to the unpredictable nature of this relationship is not only about whether constituents will vote for or against a politician that provides expected goods and services, but mostly about whether they will vote at all (IDEA 2019).

This argument adds to the work of Lindberg and Morrison (2007), which counters the overgeneralised perception of clientele networks in Africa (Chabal and Daloz 1999). According to them, Ghanaian voters largely cast their ballot based on their evaluation of the contestants and the political parties instead of patronage, ethnic or family ties. This thesis argues that the relationship between Nigerian politicians and constituents, which is often misinterpreted as based on patron-client ties, does not necessarily undermine democratic process and development. Therefore, it builds on the argument that the understanding of how Africa works needs rethinking (Pitcher, Moran, and Johnson 2009). This study shows that the provision of accountability benefits affects political participation because providing or failure to provide the accountability benefits creates an incentive for constituents to vote for or against MPs during election, it tends to increase voters' turn out.

Given the lack of recognition accorded to African political ideas and understandings, the thesis argues that the empirical approach to African politics needs re-thinking. In order to address the inadequate explanation of how patron-client/accountability relationships work in Africa, there is a need for an approach that takes cultural practices into account at a deeper level. To this end, it makes the case that an ethnographic approach is the most suitable option for studying accountability practices and encounters. But where it is difficult to get full ethnographic access to the informants, then a semi-ethnographic approach will be an effective alternative. A semi-

ethnographic approach involves interviewing and intermittently observing informants within a limited period of time.² An ethnographic or a semi-ethnographic study of the relationship between senators and constituents, as in the case of this thesis, provides an opportunity for the researcher to learn about the cultural practices and performances that shape outcomes. It allows the voices of those directly involved in such relationships to be heard (Auyero 2000, Baghdasaryan 2017). This thesis demonstrates that by so doing, we can explore the outcomes of political accountability relationships beyond political patronage reasoning. This provides a nuanced approach that addresses the socio-cultural, spiritual, psychological, and political ramifications of accountability demand and supply relationships between African politicians and their constituents. Instead of generalising, an ethnographic approach uniquely emphasizes the agency of the constituents who are considered as clients in this relationship, as well as the social embeddedness of the type of clientele relationship (Pellicer 2018).³

This thesis combines semi-ethnographic observations and interviews; complemented by the analysis of survey results involving 800 respondents in between 2014 and 2015. Through this means I gained insights needed to understand what the political actors do, the outcomes of their actions, and most importantly how they do what they do. Crucially, I observed how the senators' and constituents' demands and supply of accountability benefits were negotiated daily. By exploring the socio-cultural and ethnographic spheres of the interactions and performances between senators and their

² A semi-ethnographic approach is the closest qualitative research data gathering method to a full ethnographic research. It allows the researcher to collect qualitative data in a less intrusive manner. This approach was used in the work of Wilkinson (2016): "What do they think of me? A Semi-ethnographic Investigation into Student Stereotypes and Biases Towards Teachers".

³ This approach is also valid beyond Africa. Using ethnographic fieldwork in the study of a shantytown in the outskirts of Buenos Aires, it was discovered that problem-solving networks were one of the rational supports of heterogeneous political cultures of the urban poor (Auyero 2000: 75).

constituents, this study provides insights on how representative politics works in Nigeria. Building on the findings of Resnick (2012), who argues that patron-client relationships do not provide enough evidence of voting behaviour of Africans, this thesis challenges the hasty generalisation of political patronage in Nigeria. Therefore, the fundamental thrust of this thesis is not to question the existence of corruption or clientelism, but to provide an alternative narrative of accountability relationships that broaden the debate on African politics. Overall, this study complements existing literature on representative politics and at the same time provides critical insights that can contribute to the deconstruction of existing theories on patronage politics in Africa.

1.4 Assessment of Literature on African Politics

The thesis's findings challenge approaches that represent African and Nigerian politics as entrenched in corruption, with relationships and outcomes determined by patron-client relations or clientelism (Warf 2017, Transparency International 2019). Patron-client relations and corruption have been represented as the most visible aspect of African politics and are often associated with high-profile scandals with significant economic and human development consequences and examples of such representation abound (Pallister and Capella 2000; Thomas 2001; Vasaga 2006; Svensson 2005; Richmond and Alpin 2013; Amadi and Ekekwe 2014; Taylor 2004; Golden 2003; Marty 2002). There is a widespread perception that African politicians and citizens collude in fostering political corruption at the expense of genuine democratic accountability (Ojo 2018).

This literature suggests different reasons why patronage and corruption determine political interactions and outcomes in Nigeria and Africa at large. These reasons

include a lack of credible politicians (Keefer & Vlaicu 2008), the dominance of electoral machines (Tignor 1993), the autonomy of brokers (Beck 2008), the role of political machines capable of effective monitoring (Cox & McCubbins 1993; Stokes 2005), state capture (Gevisser 2019), the interaction of poverty and political competitiveness (Kitschelt & Wikinson 2007) among others.

But it appears that scholars and commentators alike have difficulty understanding the nature of the relationships between Nigerian politicians and the electorate. This is not peculiar to Nigeria: the ongoing marginality of Africa means that it is often particularly difficult for scholars of Africa to develop approaches that challenge the theories and epistemologies and dominate academic debates (cf. Nolte 2019). As clientelism, patronage and corruption have become the default terms for characterising politics; some have argued that the main cause of Western negative view of clientelism is due to the fact that most literature adopts a narrow perspective that focuses on instrumentalist explanations like vote buying (cf. Lawson and Greene 2014).

As Lemarchand and Legg noted, “political clientelism (...) may be viewed as a more or less personalized, affective and reciprocal relationship between actors, or sets of actors, commanding unequal resources and involving mutually beneficial transactions have political ramifications beyond the immediate sphere of dyadic relationships.” (1972: 151-152). Patronage political culture in Nigeria is largely perceived as the most pervasive in Africa. According to Monica Mark, Nigerian politicians often try to outspend each other during elections and inadvertently causing high foreign exchange rates against the Nigerian Naira (2015). Richard Joseph’s (1991) publication, *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria*, examined how the relationship between the pattern of political party formation and the mode of social, economic and political

behaviour create and sustain patron-client politics in a national scale. He demonstrates how the politics to attain, control and exploit public office is central to sustaining political power. Joseph's work suggests that Nigerians view state power as an array of prebends, which provides access to national resources that could be further appropriated along personalised, ethnic, religious, and patron-client lines. Joseph (1999:57) argues that "clientelism, patronage systems, patron-client and godfatherism are clusters of terms that are used interchangeably to refer to the same phenomenon".

Similarly, James Scott (1972) contends:

The patron-client relationship (...) may be defined as a special case of dyadic (two-person) ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in which an individual of a higher social-economic status (patron) uses his own influence and resources to provide protection or benefits or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance including personal services to the patron (Scott 1972:92).

Scott (1972) associates political clientelism with a mutual informal relationship where the wealthy politician (patron) finances the electoral aspirations and fortunes of a political office seeker (client) in exchange for economic support and political rights. Much of the literature on African politics suggests that all African countries especially Nigeria fits into the above descriptions where it is assumed that both patrons (politicians) and clients (voters or constituents) cooperate in an unending exchange of favours. The major logic behind patron-client relationship therefore is that voters (constituents) would enjoy direct benefits and upon receiving them would feel obliged to support (politicians) who provided such benefits (Young 2009).

To this end, Van de Walle (2001) argues that "political authority in Africa is based on the giving and granting of favours, in an endless series of dyadic exchanges that go

from the village level to the highest reaches of the central state” (van de Walle 2001: 51). Lindberg posits that “patron-client relations are primarily about providing material resources in exchange for personal loyalty,” and further argues that African MPs employ such practices like “attending to individuals’ school fees, electricity and water bills, funeral and wedding expenses; or distributing cutlasses and other tools for agriculture, or even handing of ‘chop-money’ (small cash sums) to constituents” (Lindberg 2003: 123-4). Instead of being held accountable by the electorate based on their capacity to deliver on their electoral promises of providing public goods such as roads, electricity and healthcare in an impersonal fashion through a formal political structure, political leaders are said to derive support and legitimacy by distributing deeply personalised patronage through informal, patron–client networks built upon mutual expectations of reciprocity (Eisenstadt and Ronigar 1984: 48-9; Piattoni 2001). Political patronage suggests a lopsided political system where the big man (patron) determines the outcome of the political relationship because they will always buy the loyalty of the clients (Chabal and Daloz 1999; Hyden 1983). Stokes (2005) argues that the patron-client relationship is easier to practice when voters are poor enough to value private goods more than the politicians value them. Dixit and Londegan (1996), Calvo and Murillo (2004) posit that clientelism appeals more to the poor than the rich because income has diminishing marginal utility as people get richer.⁴ Interestingly, Kitschelt (2000) contends that in the absence of a welfare state, clientelism mitigates instability

⁴ Kitschelt (2000) classifies such explanations as part of the “developmental school” of thought on clientelism, which emphasises that the more affluent and educated citizens are the more they will value their votes more as well as demand private goods that are too expensive for parties and politicians to provide.

caused by the fierce distributional struggles because it appeases the poor without hurting the rich and at the same time, benefits the politicians themselves.

These accounts of politics have been widely challenged; however, Lazar (2004), Zappala (1998) and Philp (2001) argue that the idea of labelling every political relationship in as a patron-client tie may be short-sighted. Even where such a relationship exists, these authors posit that it is a means through which the underprivileged gain access to state resources hitherto beyond their reach. In effect, any attempt at curtailing patronage politics may result into denying the less privileged access to productive resources which they deserve to have. They believe that both patrons and clients have strategic roles to play in this relationship; hence, patrons do not always have a monopoly of power because they provide material resources. They noted that clients too exercise an enormous amount of power in the exchange relations through the non-material resource they control.

It must be acknowledged that the over-generalisation of the patron-client discourse often blurs our understanding of political accountability mechanisms in Africa. While there are strong arguments about patron-client politics in Africa, it appears that some scholars find it convenient to assume that accountability relationships between political actors are mainly based on patron-client ties and therefore illegitimate. Chabal and Daloz suggest an endemic logic of patron-client reciprocal relationships in Africa. They argue in very general terms that the key aim of politics is the acquisition of power in order to accumulate resources, which are in turn used to purchase the support of the citizenship (Chabal and Daloz 1999:158). Implicitly therefore, a typical accountability relationship between an African MP and his or her constituents is easily assumed to be clientelistic in nature, whereby the MP (patron) provides personalised goods in

exchange for the votes of the constituents. Does such generalisation account for the realities of political interaction in contemporary Africa? Do Africans still care about political accountability? Are they all willing clients to big men politicians? Can constituents make legitimate demands regardless of the allegation of widespread political patronage?

Despite the logic of patronage politics, there is not much evidence to support the assumption that all poor constituents consider themselves as clients of big man politicians, and they are not strictly obliged to vote for politicians in exchange for personal goods. For example, Resnick (2012), suggests that patronage or clientele politics does not sufficiently explain the voting behaviour of the African urban poor. According to her, the “urban poor can accept the generosity of all the parties while still voting for their favourite candidate, or abstaining entirely, on the day of elections” (p.1355). Resnick’s remark as well as Cheseman and Klass (2018) suggest that many authors have failed to consider this critical fact when hastily analysing the vertical accountability relationship between politicians and constituents (voters). There is an assumption that voters targeted with cash handouts or other gifts behave in way that would not have happened otherwise (Guardado and Wantchekon 2017). Research findings as shown in Taiwan (Wang & Kurzman, 2007), Uganda (Conroy-Kruz & Logan, 2012), Mexico (Simpser, 2012), and Nigeria (Bratton, 2008), suggest that the offering of handouts is not sufficient to conclude that electoral results changed. Bratton and Bhavnani et.al found that the agency of the individuals needs to be considered when analysing of African voters’ behaviour (Bratton, Bhavnani, Chan 2012). Equally Guardado and Wantchekon (2017) found that voters across the number of African countries studied do not necessarily base their electoral support on the personalised

benefits provided by MPs. The study concluded that African voters are strategic in their electoral decision-making as against the generalised assumption that they are all swayed by patronage. Fundamentally, voters in Africa and elsewhere consider multivariate factors including economic factors (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2000; Dubois 2007), situational factors (Dubois 2007), political factors (Lewis-Beck 2005), personal variables of voter and candidate (Shin 2017), and institutional factors (Dubois 2007) among others.

Accountability demands and supply relationships in Africa centre on the distribution of societal values. Societal values are things that matter to people which they cherish, want, need or desire and consider worth competing for. These could be interpreted to include economic and political authority and power in the mould of “authoritative allocation of values” (Easton 1965: 3), as well as socio-cultural privilege or status. But Roelofs (2019) argues against the long-held perception and interpretation of African politics through the lens of programmatic versus patrimonial politics. She posits that the way scholars frame these concepts obscures the contested nature of what counts as a legitimate distribution. The essence of politics is about controlling the distribution of national wealth, who gets what, when and how (Lasswell 1936). However, the perception of legitimacy or illegitimacy of any particular distributive practice is mostly framed by complex but fluid normative ideas. The framing of a distributive mechanism also depends on the principles or values they embody. For example, according to Schaffer & Scheduler, (2007 in Roelofs 2019: 416):

Voters may regard material goodies given as patronage “as pieces of information that reveal the positive personal qualities of the giver, such as generosity, politeness, responsiveness, and respect...” or else demonstrating a “personal defect on the part

of the giver, such as arrogance and disrespect". Depending on its normative framing, vote-buying can be either a virtue or a vice.

There is a general sense that where politicians compete to deliver public goods, they embody accountability values, competitiveness, and responsiveness and that these promote democracy. On the other hand, the delivery of private goods is considered illegitimate because of the opportunity cost of spending less on public goods as well as short-circuiting democratic accountability through vote-buying (Lindberg 2013). Yet "patrimonial distribution may have its own internal logic through which it reflects important values, but that these are conceived as being incompatible with modern democracies as well as leading to anti-developmental consequences" (Roelofs 2019: 2). Accountability relationships between politicians and constituents are not necessarily corrupt and incompatible with democracy, and they may even constitute an instrumentally useful tool for development (Roelofs 2019: 419). The thesis builds on Roelofs' analysis by exploring how political leaders (MPs) and constituents (voters) negotiate the distribution of public goods or resources as a tool for development. The idea being advanced by Roelofs fits well into the central argument of my thesis, which is that it is inadequate to analyse African politics on the basis of patron-client (bad and undemocratic) versus programmatic (good and democratic) politics. What constitutes good and bad politics or legitimate and illegitimate distribution of resources should not only be contextualised but also viewed against a society's normative values.

In this context, it could be argued that where resources are well channelled, patronage (neo-patrimonial) distribution will not necessarily be incompatible with accountability and development, and its legitimacy is sustained by communal or affective values (Olivier de Sardan 1999). Again, here, this thesis draws on de Sardan's argument in the sense that it suggests that despite short-comings, informal distribution has the

potential to reflect accountability and drive development where resources are channelled into long term investments (see Booth & Golooba-Mutebi 2012 for Rwanda). The main idea here is that what matters is not the nomenclature or academic debates about how to evaluate politics from the outside, but what people expect and see as working for them. With all these in mind, development does not necessarily need to be defined from the outside, but according to the needs and expectations of constituents. This thesis builds on the argument that recognises that accountability relationships between politicians and their constituents can be positive and politically productive. But beyond this, my thesis shows that accountability relationships do not always suggest patron-client ties but reflect culturally legitimate means of distribution of public resources.

Most importantly, the attitude of most Nigerians implies that there is a fluid distinction between private and public goods provision because the individual and the community complement each other. While public goods are non-excludable, private goods appear parochial because they address the needs of relatively poor individuals in the society. However, in some contexts, private political goods contribute significantly to public wellbeing in the long run and are therefore durable elements of political accountability (Bratton and Lewis 2007). Therefore, there is an interrelationship between private goods and public goods, with the former promoting the subsistence of an individual while the later promotes collective wellbeing. This feeling of complementarity between private and public goods was reflected in the attitudes of the constituents who made demands of their MPs. Many of my informants did not seek any trade-off between the provision of public goods and private goods. Constituents seek both public goods (roads, electricity, hospital, water, etc.) and private goods (jobs, contracts, and financial

support). Moreover, they often seek such goods without believing that the fulfilment of personal accountability demands is an obligation to recognise a politician's patronage.

In the light of the above evidence, why do scholars so often associate political relationships in Africa with clientelism? From all indications, some scholars mainly focus on the outcomes of political interaction without considering the practices that lead to such outcomes. It is not plausible to simply infer that outcomes are produced by patron-client relationship when we do not have clear ideas of the norms and values that shape such practices. Mondlane, et al (2016) analysed the mechanisms and circumstances that facilitate and mitigate corruption in Africa. They argue that what people consider as corruption is limited especially where citizens engage robustly with public governance and accountability. They contend that corruption in Africa is not a cultural phenomenon, and that in some African countries, long-standing traditional practices can provide innovations in governance that reduce corruption. They concluded that:

wider citizen engagement in public governance strengthens 'voice and accountability', balances power asymmetries in decision-making processes of governments, and promotes 'socially conscious' leaderships committed to greater transparency and accountability in government (Mondlane et al 2016: 1).

The main reason most studies do not account for practices that produce positive political outcomes is because the methodologies used by their authors take little account of the socio-cultural elements that shape political behaviour in Africa. Similar methodologies are often used by scholars to study clientelism and patron-client relationships in Africa and elsewhere (see Manow 2002; Keefer and Vlaicu 2008).

This thesis confirms that patronage and clientelism remains a concern in Nigeria and Africa at large. However, it also contends that it is inaccurate to describe every contact or exchange between elected politicians and constituents as such. It contributes to bridging the gap between the academic literature and a more grounded approach to African politics by studying everyday encounters and practices between Nigerian senators and their constituents. Accountability relationships between politicians and constituents in Nigeria are shaped by their cultural practices and norms, and despite advances in the study of African politics, we still lack clear understanding of how accountability politics works in practice.

Most research on African politics focuses on political outcomes at the expense of paying attention to the cultural logic of African politics and the processes that underpin the functioning of the political system (Olukoshi 2004). By so doing, they end up missing crucial insights needed to understand not only the outcomes of such relationships but their normative drivers. Bruce Berman argues that for us to understand the workings of patronage and the African state, an approach that focuses on the cultural logic of African politics will be required. He however warned that such an approach must not fall into the narrow idealist or cultural explanations, but recommended that any investigation into this sphere of life in Africa must examine the cultural and cognitive factors as well as material, economic and political forces that shape them (Berman 1998: 308). What the explanations above entail is that the relationships between political actors, the process and their outcomes can better be interpreted by the historical and cultural practices and values that shape them. Cultural interpretation clarifies political behaviour and illuminates political realities that emerge through social practices which are often taken for granted (Van Donge 2006).

Therefore, focusing on the outcomes of such relationships without understanding their socio-cultural dimensions produces more questions than answers.

1.5 Researching Political Accountability in Nigeria

African countries are increasing their democratic credentials, but questions remain over the responsiveness of politicians to the desires and interests of the citizens. At the core of genuine democracy is the principle of democratic accountability, which is a process of calling politicians to give account to sovereign electors (Mkandawire 2010). Accountability relationships between politicians and constituents are often ideally represented as the re-distribution of wealth to support different political visions and contrasted sharply with Africa-wide patronage (Bissell 2015, Kroeger 2012, Arriola 2009, Berman 1998). As noted above, the relationship between elected politicians and voters in Nigeria is often represented as a particularly egregious case, with patronage politics described in many different terms, including: prebendalism, patron-client relations, clientelism, cronyism, and even godfatherism (Joseph 1991, Omobowale 2007, Hoffman 2006; Onyibe 2018). It is alleged that patronage permeates African politics because people do not see accountability as a moral imperative but rather as an undesirable element of democratic system (Mkandawire 2010).

On the contrary, Nigerians expect their MPs at all levels to perform their responsibilities transparently and actively seek answers to their various accountability questions. According to the House of Commons' Brief Guild, "there is no statutory job description for MPs" (House of Commons Information Office 2010:8). However, legislators in every democratic system have generic functions: political representation, law making, oversight functions and constituency service (Barkan 2009: 6-9; Diamond and Plattner

2010: 33-35). In the context of these functions, the MP and the voters form a relationship of a principal and agent, where the agent (MP), is accountable to the principal (constituent). MPs are expected to give account of their legislative, representative and oversight responsibilities; however, in less developed economies including Africa, constituency service is given greater priority by the voters (Barkan 2009: 6-7). MPs are expected to provide legitimate benefits to constituents that may take different forms of material and non-material supports as well as tangible community development projects. Norton (1994) identified important constituency roles for MPs that allow citizens to express their views, e.g. the role of local dignitary, where MPs are invited to various local events in their constituencies, and the role of the benefactor. A benefactor is “a person who gives money or other help to a person or an organization such as a school or charity” (Oxford Advanced Learners’ Dictionary). The role of an MP as a benefactor to particular individuals, groups or the entire community has been grossly under-reported in the African political debate (Norton 1994: 707, Barkan 2009, Lindberg 2010).

Despite the number of studies of accountability relationships in Africa, especially in Nigeria, limited attention has been paid to the meaning of political actors’ actions. At best, research has focused on what politicians do in relation to their accountability relationships and the outcomes thereof (Young 2009, Lindberg 2010). Usually accountability relationships between political leaders like MPs and their constituents have both formal (conventional) and informal (non-conventional but not unlawful) components, and as such they produce multi-relational networks that ought to be investigated critically. Questions about why and how these complex informal accountability relationships are formed need to be asked to avoid running the risk of

creating buzzwords that reduce the complexity of the issue. Peter Newell (2006) argues that for us to understand accountability associations broadly four basic questions need to be answered. Such questions include: what it is for? Who benefits? And how is it practiced and where it is practiced?

To produce a valid account of what happens in an informal relationship; one must be in a vantage point to directly observe the performance of the actors. Through participant observation, one can observe the actors in their element, interacting in often drama-like scenes that may avail the observer(s) insights that cannot be captured using only quantitative research methods such as surveys. The detailed engagement with politicians' everyday interactions used in this thesis made it possible for the observer not only to learn more about the material exchanges in accountability relationships but also to study their emotional, psychological, and cultural implications. In the context of Nigeria, as elsewhere in Africa, these elements are intertwined, and we need to better understand them through the lens of informal accountability interactions. While this study examines the outcomes of political accountability relationships between senators and constituents, it also focuses on their expectations and motivations.

Although perverted forms of patronage and clientele benefits remain huge obstacles to good governance, it is worrying that contemporary narratives suggest they remain the only way to explain political stability or instability in Africa (Arriola, 2009, 1339-1340). There seems to be a notion that Africans are passive about holding their leaders accountable, resulting in unmitigated abuse of political power and state resources. However, a 2016 Afrobarometer survey found that Africans prefer accountable and democratic governance (Bratton, Mattes, & Gyimah-Boadi, 2005; Olowe 2019), and

that they insist on accountability in multiple ways. An MP's political survival will depend on how successfully he or she navigates these multiple accountability channels. This narrative has been missed or ignored by studies that deployed only the concept of patronage in explaining political outcomes in Africa, without addressing the practices that shape them as well as how it indirectly affects political stability. Arriola (2009) has suggested that deeper insight and critical empirical investigation will be required to understand how patronage is used to manage political relations instead of asserting that African leaders are merely venal or myopic in deploying resources. Evidence from southwest Nigeria suggests that while the distribution of clientelistic goods is common, this does not necessarily undermine the mechanism of democratic accountability in elections (Hoffman and Nolte 2013). Contrary to claims that voters in new democracies sell their votes to patrons providing private or small-scale club goods, which are monetary or material resources provided for the benefit of members of a group, voters in Ghana were found to engage in economic voting despite benefiting privately from their MPs (Lindberg 2012). Equally, in the case of the distribution of Tanzania's Constituency Development Fund, voters are less likely to feel obliged to reciprocate to MPs in elections because they may consider such benefits as one type of public service provided by government (Tsubura 2014).

Semi-ethnography explores the performance element of observed actions, interactions, and encounters in socio-political relationships to gain better insights. By observing real-life negotiations through a semi-ethnographic approach, this study contributes towards understanding the trajectory of accountability relationships in Africa using the case study of Nigeria. This study further explores whether the relationship of accountability demands, and supply affects constituents' political

participation, especially voting. Beyond the above, the study also explores whether social factors such as education and age affect people's choice of accountability benefits. To understand whether these variables affect political behaviour as well as the push and pull factors of such practices, I analysed survey responses of 800 constituents randomly selected across Nigeria's six-geopolitical zones.

I observed accountability practices involving the senators and House of Representatives members at the National Assembly, but I decided to interview only the senators. One of the reasons I interviewed only the senators is because they cover the largest constituencies when compared to the House of Representatives Members, House of Assembly Members and Local Councillors. Senatorial zones are evenly distributed among the thirty-six states. Each state has three senators while the Federal Capital Territory has only one senator which brings their number to 109 senators (Federal Republic of Nigeria National Assembly, 2020). On the other hand, the House of Representatives Members are elected on the principle of population numbers, which means that the number of House of Representatives Members from states depends on their population. The Federal House of Representatives is made up of 360 members representing different population sizes across the 776 local governments in Nigeria (The World FactBook CIA 2020, also see 1999 Constitution as amended). The Nigerian legislature plays a vital role in ensuring that executive appointments reflect federal character. Federal character is aimed at ensuring that different interests, ethnicity, and religion are represented. At the same time, political representation at the Federal House of Representatives requires that states get representation as nearly of equal representation as far as possible, provided that no constituency falls within more than one state (Nigerian 1999 Constitution, as amended, Part 1, Section 49). By

implication, states therefore get more or less representation at the Federal House of Representatives depending on their population. For example, Lagos State and Kano State that are jointly the two most densely populated states have 24 seats each in the Federal House of Representatives while the smallest state of Bayelsa has five seats as shown in the table below:

Table 1 showing the seats of senators and House of Representatives Members⁵

No of States in alphabetical order	State	Senators	Federal House of Representative Members
1	Abia	3	8
2	Adamawa	3	8
3	Akwa-Ibom	3	10
4	Anambra	3	11
5	Bauchi	3	12
6	Bayelsa	3	5
7	Benue	3	11
8	Borno	3	10
9	Cross River	3	8
10	Delta	3	10
11	Ebonyi	3	6
12	Edo	3	9
13	Ekiti	3	6
14	Enugu	3	8
15	Gombe	3	6
16	Imo	3	10
17	Jigawa	3	11
18	Kaduna	3	16
19	Kano	3	24
20	Katsina	3	15
21	Kebbi	3	8
22	Kogi	3	9
23	Kwara	3	6
24	Lagos	3	24
25	Nasarawa	3	5
26	Niger	3	10
27	Ogun	3	9
28	Ondo	3	9

⁵ For detail structure and organisation of Nigerian National Assembly, see: <https://nass.gov.ng/>

29	Osun	3	9
30	Oyo	3	14
31	Plateau	3	8
32	Rivers	3	13
33	Sokoto	3	11
34	Taraba	3	6
35	Yobe	3	6
36	Zamfara	3	7
37	Federal Capital Territory (Abuja)	1	2

In this arrangement, a senator represents a larger demography that is normally inclusive of the constituencies covered by several House of Representatives Members. Senators oversee agencies of the executive arm of government with the capacity to influence federal contracts, political appointments and employment. They also receive higher salaries and allowances than other legislators. According to Senator Shehu Sani, who represents Kaduna Central in Eight Republic, Nigerian senators receive a monthly sum of 13.5 million naira (£27,000; \$37,000) as a “running cost” for their Senatorial Districts as well as the sum of 700,000 naira monthly (£1,400; \$2,000) consolidated salary and allowances. He explained that there is no specification on what the money is meant for, but senators are mandated to provide receipts to back up their expenses. He goes to say:

But what I am saying is that that money (N13.5 million per month) must be receipted for what you do with it. But what you are given to go and spend without any accountability is N700,000 (Shehu Sani 2018).⁶

⁶ Senator Shehu Sani Representing Kaduna Central in Kemi Busari. 2018. Confirmed: Nigerian senators receive N13.5 million monthly, apart from salaries. Premium Times, Saturday, December 15, 2018. Available at <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/261085-confirmed-nigerian-senators-receive-n13-5-million-monthly-apart-from-salaries.html>.

It will take someone on £35,000 annual salary roughly eight years and ten months to earn a Nigerian senator's annual income.⁷ Because the status, influence and financial capacity of senators are far higher than those in the House of Representative they attract more constituents' demands than the honourable members. Based on these reasons, I decided to interview only the senators while observing the accountability demands and supply encounters and practices involving both senators and honourable members of the lower chamber.

Apart from observing the accountability performance of senators, I used semi-structured interviews and survey questionnaires to capture the responses of constituents. I interviewed 17 constituents along with 800 constituents randomly selected across the Nigerian six geopolitical zones. The purpose of adding questionnaires and interviews to ethnographic evidence is that together they provide separate but interlinked and mutually reinforcing insights. On the one hand, questionnaires can provide evidence of patterns amongst large populations, but on the other hand, qualitative interview data tends to gather more in-depth insights on participant attitudes, thoughts and actions (Kendal 2008, also see Harris and Brown 2010). Four core questions were used to gain insights needed to answer the main research question: Is the relationship between Nigerian MPs and constituents patron-client in nature?

1. Do accountability demands and supply affect constituents' political participation?
2. Are the accountability benefits constituents receive an incentive to vote for an MP?

⁷ See Nigerian senator salary calculator: "How do you compare? Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-43516825>

However, as the fieldwork data were being collated, it became apparent that understanding the effects of demographic factors like age and education on constituents' behaviours was necessary. Two more questions were used to explore these key enquiries:

3. Does age affect constituents' choice of accountability demands?

4. Does level of education affect the type of accountability demands constituents make of their MPs?

While the semi-ethnographic approach sought to gain insights into cultural explanations of accountability practices, the quantitative data illustrates some of the patterns surrounding accountability demands amongst the Nigerian population. The study utilised open-ended questions while interviewing the senators to allow them to provide varied qualitative information. On the other hand, the study employed varieties of questions including closed-ended and open-ended questions for the constituency surveys. However, both qualitative interviews and survey questions were guided by the main research questions, viz:

What accountability pressures do senators receive from constituents?

Why do accountability demands and supply take place?

How are accountability demands and supply performed?

Where does accountability demand and supply take place?

Does accountability demands and supply provide incentive for constituents to participate in elections?

What are the outcomes of accountability demands and supply (effects)?

How do constituents prioritise their demands and why?

How do senators adapt to constituents' accountability pressures?

These questions were not strictly asked in sequence during the interviews but were expanded in an open-ended format as the interview progressed. On the other hand, the questionnaire was designed with additional questions to consistently seek answers to the main research questions as shown in the appendix (2) of this study. Special attention was given to what people said or did and how they did it, their use of language, tones, volume, body language and other physical evidence that may support their positioning in the relationships of accountability expectations. These observations were analysed alongside the responses the subjects (senators and constituents) provided to interview questions and survey questionnaires during the fieldwork. The survey responses of constituents were used to complement semi-ethnographic findings. The reliability and logic of this method is based on the fact that social animals, including humans, provide vital clues to social issues through their performances. The electoral results in the United Kingdom and United States of America in 2016 for example, were said to have defied pre-ballot opinion polls because people tend to act differently from the answers they provide to pollsters when they feel emotionally attached to the issues at stake. Therefore, by being a standby observer, and at times an undercover constituent, I was able to critically capture the emotions and normative forces that characterised accountability relationships between senators and constituents. Based on the ratio of representation to population, and equality of states, the activities of 36 Nigerian senators out of the total of 109 senators, especially returnee senators, were analysed thoroughly to determine how multi-accountability demands works. Out of this estimate, only 18 senators were successfully interviewed,

and their transcribed responses formed an integral part of evaluating how accountability relationships truly work.

Apart from visiting selected constituencies, I observed how people organised informal groups to go for praise-singing, job seeking, and other private constituents' demands missions to the MPs and gained important insights into the process and outcomes of these relationships. I also monitored electronic, print, and social media throughout the period of the fieldwork in order to gauge public attitudes towards the activities of MPs on a daily basis. The responses of the interviewees and the survey responses were jointly used in the research analysis.

By using interview responses, survey responses and semi-ethnographic information through participant observation, this study demonstrates that accountability relationships between senators and their constituents are culturally inclined but not based on patronage. Crucially, I observed how senators and constituents' accountability demands and provision were negotiated daily.

Overall, the study complements existing literature on representative politics and at the same time provides critical insights that can contribute to the deconstruction of existing theories on patronage politics in Africa.

1.6 Navigating the Field of Nigerian Politics

As noted above, the method for gathering data for this study drew on a mix of qualitative and quantitative research techniques. At the core of the fieldwork is the use of semi-ethnographic data that included in-depth interviews and participant observation. Equally, survey questionnaires were used along with archival resources

to complement the real-life observations. The views expressed by my informants during interviews and participant observations are extensively represented in this study, often through quotes. However, such views also emerged from my fieldwork notes. Prior to this study, I worked briefly as a Research Officer at the National Institute for Legislative Studies in Abuja. Although I did not have many interactions with MPs during this time, I was a regular visitor to the National Assembly either as an interested observer of legislative politics from the galleries or as a young graduate looking for job (1999-2003). Subsequently, I enrolled as an informal intern in the office of the House of Representatives Member representing my electoral district. This position offered me the opportunity to learn about how Nigerian MPs carried out their daily activities, interacted with members of the public and the civil service. Above all, I gained useful insights into the accountability relationships between MPs (Senators and House of Representatives Members) and their constituents. These experiences convinced me that the narrative of corrupt patron-client relationships between Nigerian politicians and constituents does not always represent the reality. As I observed then, constituents felt a sense of entitlement when they made demands on their MPs. On the other hand, MPs obliged the supply of such demands where they could because they saw it as part of their informal responsibility. Although the performance of MPs in relation to constituents' demands can increase their recognition as benefactors, it cannot guarantee that constituents they helped will always vote for them. There is an understanding among would-be patrons that people they have helped can move on without reciprocating. For example, many MPs often do not get re-elected despite providing different benefits, including financial support, to their constituents. My inference from these experiences is that most of the perceived clientele networks are

fluid relationships of allocating or distributing social values with an understanding of expectations, responsibilities, accountability, and boundaries. I also learned that many people derive high levels of satisfaction from helping others without reciprocal expectations because they believe they are doing so for “God and mankind”.⁸ This aspect of political culture is often overlooked by the patron-client narrative in Africa. Therefore, my intention through this thesis is to bridge the gap between real life performance and existing literature on African politics.

Over the course of research for this thesis, I conducted a total of six months of fieldwork in Nigeria, including carrying out a survey and interviewing senators in 2014. The interviews with senators were conducted in the month of October 2014. While some of the interviews were held on the days some of the senators agreed to originally, others had to be re-scheduled because such senators either changed their minds or were dealing with other priorities. Majority of the interviews were held in their offices at the National Assembly Complex while others were either held in their hotel rooms or homes. In addition, I conducted the survey covering the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria from October 2014 to April 2015. I monitored the 2015 electioneering campaigns and debates with a keen interest in the National Assembly election results. I visited the National Assembly Abuja after inauguration of the 8th Assembly in June 2015 as a follow up on my interviews and discovered that 27.8% of the senators I had interviewed (5 out of the 18) had not been returned. Surprisingly, four of them were among the most popular and high-ranking ones and were said to have helped their

⁸ Many Nigerians are very religious, and many refer to God during conversations. People believe that helping others where you can such as giving alms to the poor are essential tenets of godliness. Equally, there is a sense of communal spirit where people can help each other without the expectation of being paid back because those they help could go on to help others where they can. For an observer, in politics, this culture could easily come across as patronage.

constituents in many ways. For me, the electoral failure of such celebrated senators with high likeability ratings among the public provided a litmus test about the logic of patron-client interpretation of African politics. Beyond the interviews and surveys, I closely monitored and observed how post-2015 election accountability demand and supply relationships between senators and constituents unfolded. This approach ensured that the non-factual aspects of the actors' interactions, such as expressions of politeness, affirmations of status, and emotional expressions, could be observed first-hand.

Joseph's fieldwork approach prior to his 1991 publication, *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria*, mirrors some elements of my fieldwork. He sought the views of those he said were actively involved in Nigerian politics, observed political debates between 1976 and 1979 as well as 1983 and 1984. He also sought the views of Nigerian politicians, higher civil servants, military officers, journalists and academics and his professional colleagues from 1976-1979. According to him, the analytical framework of his book was unconsciously provided by those Nigerians who he said, conveyed the nature of the dynamics of their society and its politics. However, Joseph's methodology lacks direct ethnographic evidence of how the prebendal culture was performed, which is the cornerstone of my research. His study was a top-middle approach that did not represent the views of those at the bottom (voters) whose support would be needed by the politicians. My study used a bottom-up and top-middle-bottom approach that identified the primary informants of the research subjects senators and constituents and closely observed them interfacing. The parallel that could be drawn between Joseph's work and this thesis is the fact that they both relied on a broad range of informants. However, unlike Joseph's work, this thesis not only sought the views of

informants directly involved in this relationship (senators and constituents), but most importantly explored how the negotiation of the outcomes of the relationship are performed.

Given the difficulty of a full ethnographic access to high-ranking Nigerian politicians like the senators, this study used a semi-ethnographic method that involved participant observation. To this end, I monitored a series of public accountability encounters between selected senators and their constituents. In addition, I actively participated in accountability encounters with some senators by joining several groups seeking accountability benefits from some of the senators within and outside the National Assembly Complex. Interactions between the selected senators and their constituents were closely observed in a way that their actions and reactions were naturally displayed without being influenced by the researcher. The aim was to keep the validity of the evidence as raw and as natural as possible and in a way that would not be compromised by the observer(s). The core part of the research involves observing and understanding the performance aspects of constituents' interactions with senators and their minders.

Going to Nigeria is always an adventure that can expose anyone to unexpected reality checks, even a Nigerian by birth, like myself. I started planning for the fieldwork over a year before I travelled. Knowing how challenging it could be to see a Nigerian politician, and especially a senator, I had to consider some logistics for my journey. A typical Nigerian senator regards an ordinary citizen who comes to him or her as someone who will potentially demand for one favour or the other. The first challenge I had was how to differentiate myself from a constituent who has come to ask for money, a job, or a contract. Since I knew that most Nigerian big men do appreciate official

correspondence that respects their titles and positions, I decided to send my would-be interviewees an official introduction letter from my supervisor six months in advance. Because of the unreliable and inefficient postal service in Nigeria I arranged for the letters to be hand-delivered. Written on the official letter-headed paper of the University of Birmingham, the letter introduced the researcher and clarified that the interviews were purely for academic study. Because many Nigerians cherish official recognition and respect, sometimes requests written on official letter heads facilitates access to big men. As explained elsewhere, members of the community who are wealthy or occupy social, economic, or political positions of importance are often described as big men.

Despite all the effort, Nigerian big men such as politicians are not easy to access, especially those that fear excessive public pressure by those begging them for help or security concerns. Therefore, I relied on previous friendships and ingenuity to gain access to the senators for my interviews. Overall, my helpers and the senators saw the research as a form of progress, in that it takes Nigerian politics seriously and will allow Nigerian voices to be heard. Many of them felt that the interview was an opportunity for them to put the record straight and the negative narrative about them. The goodwill I received from both my helpers and the interviewees (senators) was important, but I also had to come up with ideas and performances that encouraged my informants' engagement. I therefore ensured that I dressed well, arrived ahead of time scheduled for the interview, and waited patiently for as long as it took the senator to attend to me. I also recognised the position of the senator's personal assistants, have influence over who sees the big man. When speaking to the senator, I used the official title(s) such as "Distinguished Senator" as a mark of respect. Nigerians believe that

everyone deserves respect, but the higher people move up the social ladder, the higher the level of respect society accords them. This is shown not only by the titles that are bestowed on them, but by how the society uses such titles to address them during formal and informal encounters. These performances are rituals in many Nigerian contexts and used to form and effectively navigate social relationships beyond politics. They are never emblematic of patronage. These theatre-like performances of everyday encounters between senators and their constituents provide deep insights for the understanding of the fluid and complex nature of accountability politics in any society, including Nigeria.

1.7 Performance Theory

The approach of this thesis is based on performance theory. Performance theory is used in the explanation of everyday practices and encounters in different settings. This theory arose from an interdisciplinary field that studies performance and advocates the use of performance as an effective lens to study the world. It evolves from the amalgamation of practices and disciplines such as performing arts, anthropology and sociology, literary theory, and legal studies. Performance theory emphasises that human action and interaction are based on several shared and often implicit understandings. We perform through the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the language we speak, the conversations we hold. Goffman (1969: 28) suggests that “all these performance examples are designed as a signal-system to us and to others of our place within our social group”. Butler (1993) and Derrida (1990) argue that our identities are constituted by repeated performance-not merely expressed by them.

When an individual plays a part, he or she implicitly requests his or her observer(s) to take any information communicated seriously. Therefore, the impression created by a performer is to convince the observer(s) that the character they see possesses the attributes he or she appears to possess. Equally, a performer would aim at ensuring “that the task he or she performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it, and that, in general, matters are what they appear to be” (Goffman 1969: 17).

The concept of performance thereby enables us to critically assess how people situate themselves in the world, for themselves and for others. Performance studies provide an opportunity for us to examine how people act and react in society. This is also made possible by a related area of study which Butler (1997: 8), termed 'performativity.' Butler (1997: 23) expanded on this subject and emphasised the ability of words and language to exploit, resist and assist individuals. She said, it might appear outlandish to claim that our words influence our material, mental or physical condition but we often speak of how the words of others for example, hurt or helped others.

Performance asserts and justifies the existence of a relationship between the performers (concretely or abstractly). A performer may not necessarily require a spectator(s) to perform; nevertheless, spectators sometimes act as witnesses to any performance. Sometimes, the observer(s) may not necessarily hear or even understand what the actors said or did, but the virtual clues they gained through observation may provide important insights to make sense of events as they unfold. Performance mirrors the culture of a society, but on the other hand, performance is shaped by the culture of a society. Although performances take place many times, its significance could be felt more when people are engaged in things, they have interest in or shared values. That is true of this study because my fieldwork observation shows

that the body language, language, tone of voice and the speed of the speech of senators and constituents changed when they were passionately interested in the subject being discussed. As I noticed during many interactions between the senators and constituents, an observer(s) of political performance in Nigeria, just like an artistic performance, might be able to make sense of the message being relayed by the actors through their language, tone of voice and emotions. This connection is mostly possible because “as performance becomes intense, and the boundaries between the performer(s) and the audience or observer(s) are blurred, the audience will become immersed within the performance world” (Hunter 2015:192).

Because of the application of performance theory in this study, I was able to observe culturally patterned practices. During such interactions, people were aiming to create good impression but whether they succeeded in doing so leaves for more reflections. I was not only immersed within the world of the actors (Nigerian senators and constituents), but I was able to see the world through their respective lenses. The effectiveness of this approach lies in the fact that I was able to observe the performers (senators and constituents), relate freely which availed the spectator/or observer (me) the opportunity to witness and accurately present events as they unfolded. The accountability demand and supply practices and encounters of the (senators and constituents) in this thesis mirror the cultural practices that shape Nigerian society beyond politics. As Richard Schechner noted, “each culture has its own way of encoding, using, contexting, and making into art the multi-channelled systems of non-verbal and paraverbal expressions” (Schechner 2003: 306). I will further argue that for the observer(s) or spectator(s), especially in an informal setting, performance provides deeper insights into the culture and values of the society as in the case of this study.

Goffman (1969) likens everyday face-to-face interactions to a theatrical performance. He contends that when someone meets another person, he or she will try to control or guide the impression the other person will form of him or her, by altering his or her own behaviour, setting, and appearance. On the other hand, the second person will also attempt to form an impression of, and collect information about, the first person. He believes that those that engage in social interactions come up with performances that help them to avoid embarrassing themselves or others. The heterogeneity of the society suggests that peoples' acting is informed by the settings they found themselves in. Through his dramaturgical analysis, Goffman drew a connection between the type of performance that people put on in their daily lives and theatrical performances. He claimed that social interaction is like a theatrical performance that has two stages: the onstage and the backstage. The onstage is the area where actors (people) appear before the audience; this is where positive self-concepts and desired impressions are performed. On the other hand, there is a backstage-where the actors are hidden away from the audience with the opportunity to let their guards down and drop their societal roles and identities. This thesis builds on Goffman's analysis to understand the "acts" of Nigerian politicians and constituents.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

At the beginning of the thesis, I intended to interview 36 senators, that is 33% of the 109 senators in the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, with a view to ensuring equal representation of each of the Nigerian states. Eventually, I was only able to meet and interview 18 senators, i.e. 50% of my initial projection. But because of the difficulty of getting an audience with highly placed Nigerian politicians I realised that it was a

significant success even to have interviewed 18 senators. Due to the distance between the home constituencies (senatorial districts) of my potential interviewees and survey respondents, I settled on covering the existing six geo-political zones in Nigeria rather than trying to cover all 36 states. I also interviewed fewer MPs (senators) from the North Eastern and South-South Zones due to the problem of insecurity perpetrated by Boko Haram terrorists and Niger Delta militants during the period of my field research. The insights from that coverage form a solid basis for the insights presented in this thesis, and they were achieved not only by tracking down senators in often difficult circumstances, but also at the relatively high cost of conducting such fieldwork amidst political tension and insecurity.



Map 1 Nigerian States and Geo-political Zones.⁹

⁹ Source: <http://collections.infocollections.org/whocountry/en/d/Js7928e/4.1.html>

Equally, there were fewer female than male senators interviewed during the fieldwork because there were only seven female senators as against 102 male senators. I was able to access three out of the only seven female senators in the Eight Republic, i.e. 42.9% of the female senators in Nigeria but out of this number; I could only interview one. Perhaps the ability to carry out more interviews would have offered me better insights into whether female politicians are being treated differently in the male dominated world of politics. This shortfall also makes it difficult to make wider comparative comments on the accountability relationship with constituents between male and female senators.

1.9 Organisation of Chapters

This thesis is divided into seven chapters that respond to the research objectives.

Chapter One has discussed the danger of relying on stereotypical narrative of African and particularly Nigerian politics which associates the exchanges that surround many political activities and relationships with patron-client relationships or corruption. Such exaggerated stereotypes not only misrepresent reality but also limit our understanding of how African and indeed Nigerian politics works. The chapter therefore challenges the understanding of Nigerian politics as a narrow reciprocal exchange between politicians and constituents. It underscores the understanding that practices described as corruption are in most cases medium scale supports that support the wellbeing of relatively poor individuals in the society. Because corruption is often foregrounded in Nigerian and indeed African politics suggests a normative reading of diffused understandings of accountability, which however exist in many societies – both in Africa and beyond.

Chapter Two discusses how the accountability relationships between Nigerian MPs and constituents are formed as well as where they take place. This analogy is presented in a way that challenges the assumption that Africans (constituents) do not care about the political accountability of their leaders. It explores the geography of political representation in Nigeria using the National Assembly as the place where accountability relationships are performed. While showcasing the Nigerian National Assembly as a suitable place to observe the performance of political accountability, it critically evaluates conventional views of clientele and patronage politics against how Nigerian politics truly works. The chapter critically reviews existing scholarly works on African politics and draws attention to the contrast between Eurocentric and Afrocentric literatures on African political accountability. It explains the importance of studying accountability relationships between politicians like senators and the constituents (voters), the theoretical leaning of the study, and the research methodology and its limitations.

It is also descriptive of the details of what it takes to embark on a research whose subjects are African big men, the preparations, and the challenges. It explores the social, cultural and political atmosphere in Nigeria and how these factors shape the outcomes of each fieldwork encounter.

Chapter Three briefly narrates short precolonial historical overview of African and particularly Nigerian political administration and accountability. Africans including those living in present Nigeria had different mechanisms of political accountability. The chapter explores not only the way colonial administration dismantled the precolonial political accountability mechanisms in Nigeria but also how it laid the foundation of contemporary ones. It discusses the various constitutional developments that gave rise

to contemporary Nigerian legislature and explores the structure and functions of its officials. It explores how the legal/constitutional provisions justify certain public accountability expectations of political leaders. The chapter discusses how constituents' expectations of accountability arise from a diverse historical experience as well as how engagement with power in various precolonial contexts was often both validated and transformed by the colonial state and in particular by indirect rule. As argued in the early part of this introduction (page 13), ideas of accountability are products of Nigerian history, and in this section I outline how ideas of accountability have been historically constructed in Nigeria.

Chapter Four examines the language of political accountability relationships between Nigerian politicians and members of the public as exemplified in the case of this study. It explores how the language of accountability relationships between the research subjects (MPs and constituents), helps to shed more light on the cultural and psycho-emotional reasons behind what they do, how they do it and why they do it. It seeks to reveal the importance of sociolinguistics to understanding the nature of accountability relationships in Nigeria. The chapter also helps us learn more about how the society uses humour to deal with their poor socio-economic conditions. It provides insights into what Nigerians think about their political leaders and how they use proverbs and figurative expressions to air their feelings.

Chapter Five describes what it takes to be a Nigerian senator and the challenge of dealing with desperate constituents' demands daily. Using real life events, it argues that MPs (both senators and house members) may be more credible, hardworking, and resilient than they are often credited with being. It examines a typical legislative plenary session in the Senate Chamber as well as how a senator juggles his or her over-

crowded engagements. It uncovers how senators manoeuvre challenges as well as the craftiness it might take any individual to access them. It puts different encounters with those senators interviewed during the fieldwork into perspective and at the same time describes what it takes to navigate the National Assembly security before accessing the senators.

The chapter thoroughly evaluates life inside The Three Arms Zone (an exclusive zone where the three arms of government: Executive, Legislative and Judiciary are located). It further demonstrates how public officials in this affluent zone of Abuja are perceived as out of touch by the public. It explores the constitutional and political oversight powers of MPs as well as the consequential allegation of corruption. The chapter also illustrates the importance of performance for the understanding of accountability relationships between politicians and constituents, and for social research in general. It provides insights that could hardly be gained without an ethnographic or semi-ethnographic approach.

Chapter Six explains the nature, performance, and the outcomes of accountability relationships between constituents and politicians in Nigeria. The chapter explores the types of demands constituents make of their MPs in detail and focuses in particular on the degree to which these expectations contrast with patron-client relations. It explores the interpretations of accountability relationships that legitimise constituents' expectations. Using a randomised survey, the chapter captures the trend and types of accountability demands constituents make of their MPs. It demonstrates the contested nature of accountability expectations in Nigeria, as well as the tension created by the imbalance between demands and available resources.

Chapter Seven examines senators' views on the expectations of constituents' accountability pressure in order to illustrate in detail how they themselves perceive these pressures. It shows that senators share the views of constituents that their contributions promote the wellbeing of constituents. There is an understanding that support given to constituents allows them to progress and make positive contributions to the community in the long run. They therefore do not primarily understand their financial or other contributions to individuals and communities as patron-client relations but rather as an acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the expectations constituents have on them to provide both public and private goods.

The chapter highlights the awareness among politicians that people want to see the impact of their governance, irrespective of whether they voted for them or not. It signifies that not only do many politicians accept the "hybrid responsibility" of providing varied supports to constituents but demonstrates how politicians also pressurise others provide different supports to the constituents.

Chapter Eight summarises the original contribution of this thesis to the understanding of African politics. It critically analyses the feelings and views of the senators that face accountability demands. It underscores the fact that although senators face an uncomfortable level of accountability pressure from constituents, they consider the supply of such demands as a "social responsibility" other than patronage. It underscores how this thesis uses the outcome of in-depth semi-ethnographic fieldwork to analytically deconstruct the existing narrative of accountability relationships between African politicians and their constituents. It shows that the accountability relationship between African politicians and voters, as represented by senators and constituents in this thesis, is informed by their culture. What this portends is that accountability

between political actors requires a sociological lens to understand the way things really work. A depiction of all accountability relationships between politicians and members of the public as symptomatic of patronage or clientelism is Eurocentric, hasty, and largely lacks evidence. The chapter clarifies that Nigerians are indeed interested in the political accountability of their leaders. The process of achieving that may include private or group benefit demands as well as constituency demands. As shown in the case of contemporary Nigeria, people make demands of their political leaders, but such benefits do not necessarily determine political support because both the voters and the elected see it as the legitimate social responsibility of the latter. The chapter re-emphasises that accountability demands, and supply pressure affect peoples' political participation and that age and education also affect the type of accountability benefits that constituents demand.

2 THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY

2.1 Introduction

Prior to the commencement of my fieldwork, I overheard two Nigerian gentlemen discussing matters concerning their community development:

My brother, we need help to bring electricity to our community, but the government is not doing anything about it, what else can we do? One of the men asked. What about going to see senator... in Abuja? I know of other communities that their senators help to build roads and even get jobs for the unemployed, the second man assuredly replied. But how and where do we see him in Abuja? He asked. Of course, we would go to the National Assembly, his friend loudly announced with a sense of certainty (Conversation between Constituents Owerri, 2013).¹⁰

Listening to them, I could sense anger and the passionate resolve to confront a senator they deemed unaccountable and unresponsive to their needs. This emotional encounter demonstrates how constituents express their frustration when their legitimate expectations are not being met by politicians.

During my fieldwork at the Nigerian National Assembly Abuja and across many senatorial districts I observed that constituents were seriously making or seeking to make demands of their senators. A typical day at the National Assembly often starts and ends with the dramas of either constituents running after senators to make varied demands or senators dodging potential constituents. Outside the National Assembly,

¹⁰ This was a private conversation between two constituents on 12th December 2013, in Owerri, Imo State. This conversation was a typical example of how constituents express their frustration with politicians. People are always open about saying how they feel to each other and in a short while more people will join. On this occasion, they were discussing about how to approach their senator who they claimed has not been making any contribution to their community. As these two were discussing their options, others by a vendor could be heard angrily discussing a newspaper headline.

people do besiege their senators whenever they can as there may not be another opportunity. Why are these pressures on senators taking place? How can we explain such development in contemporary African politics?

For those cynical of African politics, the above conversation and the subsequent interactions I witnessed between senators and constituents depict a prelude to the establishment of patron-client relationships between representatives and their constituents, where it is assumed that goods are exchanged for voters' support (Arriola 2009, Schaffer and Schedler 2007). Because of such relationships, it is often implied that Africans do not and cannot hold their MPs accountable.

This chapter presents a bird's eye's view of the conception, perception, and the building of accountability relationships between politicians, for example senators and their constituents in Nigeria. It discusses the critical strategy required by constituents to successfully make accountability demands. It advances the argument that access to making demands is a form of accountability because access to politicians facilitates the opportunity for constituents to make demands. The chapter also demonstrates that access itself is built upon significant element of performances to enable constituents succeed.

2.2 The Nigerian National Assembly and the Geography of Political Accountability

There is hardly a better venue to study the relationships between Nigerian senators and their constituents than the Nigerian National Assembly in Abuja. The National Assembly complex of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is a stage where MPs (senators

and House of Representatives members), other politicians and members of the public play their roles. Like its artistic counterpart, this theatre showcases performances, but of political accountability relationships. It is an eye-catching architectural edifice that houses a bicameral legislature established under section 4 of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution (as amended), consisting of 109 senators and a 360-members of House of Representatives. Adorned behind by the iconic Aso Rock, the magnificent building was modelled upon the federal representative's architecture of the Congress of the United States, aimed at guaranteeing equal representation of the component states irrespective of size in the Senate and proportional representation of population in the Federal House of Representatives. Geographically, it is located at the heart of The Three Arms Zone, alongside the Presidential Villa and the Supreme Court which makes this area the most fortified zone in Abuja. Being one of the most important national treasures, the building is linked by a highly secured road free from traffic congestion about 30 minutes' drive from Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport Abuja. Its iconic presence and dominance of the Abuja landscape is visible from most elevated parts of the city and would be a magnet for tourism but for the strict security policy.

The National Assembly complex is a melting-pot of Nigerian elites, and a place of opulence and affluence, as government officials, politicians, celebrities and big men occupy the ground. Car enthusiasts are known to gather around nearby Eagle Square relishing the chance to see the latest expensive supercars driven in and out of the complex. These alluring masterpieces and the performance of big men and other actors could simply mislead a visitor to believe that all is well with Nigeria. Unfortunately, the image portrayed around the National Assembly does not truly mirror Nigerian society; at best, as some have said, it represents what is wrong with Nigeria

(Mala, 2010). On the one hand, politicians and other big men entertain us with shows of power, splendour, and affluence while on the other hand, a multitude of less privileged and opportunity-seeking, but often well-presented Nigerians, intermingle with the big men. These performances provide a close observer the typical flash points that make Nigeria a paradox. We may likewise contrast the beauty and security of Abuja city with conditions in its suburban settlements, where like many other Nigerian slums life is often insecure and short.



Picture 1 National Assembly Complex, Abuja, Nigeria.¹¹

Apart from providing shelter for the senators and honourable members of the Federal House of Representatives to perform their representative and legislative functions, the National Assembly is a venue where national resources are allocated. Because it legislates, appropriates funds for the national budget, and oversees government

¹¹ Source: Author's Picture of the Nigerian National Assembly Complex Abuja. Part of the collection of pictures I took during my fieldwork in 2014.

agencies, MPs and constituents, government officials, politicians, lobbyists, big men, poor men, religious and ethnic groups, corporate bodies, domestic and foreign pressure groups, compete to protect their interests. But the ever-changing accountability relationships settings, the unfolding dramas, the unpredictable outcomes of people's interactions, the tone, volume, pitch and speed of the language of performance used by these actors and the poetic undertone of their speeches, are revealing and fascinating. As I observed during my fieldwork, the rawness of the characters, the fluidity of events and the twists and turns of the encounters at the National Assembly, demonstrate that African legislative assemblies are indeed suitable environments to gain deep insights that can help us to question the current lopsided narrative of how African political accountability works.

2.3 Overview of African Political Accountability Literature

According to Bratton, Africans may now participate in elections; many are still passive voters who do not think that they have the democratic rights to enforce leadership accountability (Bratton, 2013). Despite significant improvement in democratic participation many African states, as (Bratton and Logan, 2006) noted, are still totally lacking in "vertical accountability". For there to be any meaningful advances in political accountability, Africans, Bratton (2013) argue, must claim, and use their democratic rights. The 2011-13 Afrobarometer survey results suggest that while Africans show exciting commitment to selecting their leaders through elections, relationships of accountability remain abysmally undeveloped because Africans do not monitor and sanction their leaders in the long intervals between elections. The study suggests that "accountability remains incomplete because of individual's conception of political

rights, of reasonable expectations, and of their own public roles and responsibilities” (Afrobarometer Survey 2011-13:1; see also Bratton and Houessou 2014). Bratton and Logan (2014) conclude that the costly implication of this type of passive political behaviour is that African voters often end up re-electing incumbent corrupt political leaders, instead of ejecting them.

Similarly, Little and Logan (2009:18) through the Round 4, 2008-2009 Afrobarometer survey, which investigated how vertical accountability works during the long intervals between elections in Africa, claims that accountability demands were quite weak. According to the survey, only a little over one-third (38%) of respondents across 15 countries thought that voters “should be responsible for making sure that, once elected, MPs (...) do their jobs”. The survey claimed that about 25% of the respondents said the president or the parliament (19%) is responsible for making legislators do their job, while 10% believe it is the responsibility of the political parties to enforce MPs’ accountability.

From the foregoing, one could infer that Africans enjoy unprecedented freedom and opportunities to cast their votes, but that the promise of democracy and accountable governance remains a mirage. The findings also suggest that political leaders are seldom rewarded for good choices or sanctioned for bad ones, and that policy performance is abysmally poor. Bratton and Logan (2006) suggest that democratic governments in Africa even exhibit less accountability than the authoritarian regimes that often preceded them. The appalling nature of politics in low income countries, some argue, makes the question of politicians’ accountability to citizens’ needs and preferences a central concern in studies of the political economy. This is especially true in the absence of market opportunities, when vulnerable citizens need to rely

heavily on the state for subsistence (Basley and Burgess, 2002). But despite its popularity, accountability is often ill-defined. For example, Mulgan (2000, p.555) defines accountability as a “complex and chameleon-like term”. Schedler (1999, p.13) also notes that “accountability represents an under-reported concept with an evasive meaning, fuzzy boundaries and a confusing internal structure”. For Brinkerhoff (2004: 372), a worrying consequence of its lack of conceptual and analytical clarity is that “accountability risks becoming another buzzword in a long line of ineffectual quick fix”.

Politicians the world over use the concept of accountability to evoke an aura of responsibility and credibility, but some have argued that it has become an enduring buzzword often used by African politicians and governments to attract votes or to impress foreign aid donors. African politicians including legislatures that ought to be the beacon of hope for good governance across the continent are said to be unaccountable and lacking representative qualities. Many African leaders are said to have failed to deliver on their promises because of their inability to “access their own ignorance and lack the skills to engage in meaningful dialogue with those around them” (Kalungu-Banda 2012:1). As Barkan (2009), noted, apart from Botswana and Mauritius, legislators elsewhere in Africa were often seen as lackeys and well-paid spongers rather than functional members of a dynamic, egalitarian, appropriately separated, and well-resourced members of an important political institution (Barkan 2008; 125; Barkan, 2009, 1, 12-15s). There is also a notion that until effective accountability procedures are in place manipulation of funds will continue to be an issue (Claasen and Alpin 2010: 200-203).

The lack of accountability is therefore often associated with the prevalence of either corruption or patron-client relationships, which are, as noted above, also discussed in

terms including clientelism (van de Walle 2007, Lindberg and Morrison 2008, Stokes 2013, Larreguy 2015), patronage (Lindberg 2003, van de Walle 2001), prebendalism (Joseph 1991, 1996) and neo-patrimonialism (Lindberg 2003, Young and Turner 1985, Erdmann and Engel, 2007). From my fieldwork point of view, politicians, what they do or fail to do were at the centre of political discourse in Nigeria. Politicians used public engagements to make promises or advertise their achievements. However, apart from where they have ethnic, religious, or partisan supporters, people were critical of them. Often, people could be heard using demeaning language such as: “Ole, Onye osi, Barawo” (three different words that mean thief in Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa languages) whenever politicians appear on national television. Similarly, national newspapers’ headlines equally castigated politicians as corrupt. The feeling of many of my informants is captured by the response of an Abuja resident I spoke to:

Every Nigerian politician makes promises from local government councillors to the big men politicians here in Abuja. But when you compare the promises to what they deliver, you will get an idea that making promises is just a means to get into office. If you look at the reality across the 36 states and scan through the front pages of newspapers you will understand that they promise to provide jobs, food, electricity and good roads but deliver political corruption (Personal Communication with an Abuja resident June 20, 2015).

2.4 Corruption, and Patron-Client Politics

Corruption and patron-client politics are among the most common reasons adduced for lack of political accountability and good governance in Africa. Joseph (1991) identified prebendalism and clientelism as vital parts of any political discourse in Nigeria. He observed that merit does not count in political appointments, but an individual’s association with ethnicity, city, town or village. As a result, every level of

political administration he posits is structured in a way that represents constituents' ethnic/cultural group interest, otherwise termed federal character in the Nigerian 1999 constitution. In most cases, access to political office is dependent on the influence of patrons. Beneficiaries are expected to be loyal to the patrons while also extending goodwill (goods) to their own clients through the patronage networks that facilitated their appointment (Omobowale and Olutayo 2007; Omobowale 2006; Olurode 1986).

A commonly shared opinion in reflections on clientelist politics in Africa, especially Nigeria, is that vertical accountability, i.e. peoples' right to retain or remove politicians through ballot, is inseparable from patronage because people tend to associate good leadership to those that supply different types of benefits. It is therefore difficult to enforce leadership accountability because both the clients and politicians (patrons) enjoy a mutually symbiotic relationship. The politicians (e.g. MPs) will provide as many benefits as possible to the clients (e.g. constituents) in exchange for their unalloyed political support. Therefore, the size of a politician's clientele network will often determine his/her electoral successes, political influence, and access to state resources. A clientele network is "undertaken between individuals or networks of individuals in a vertical fashion (the simplest manifestation of which is a strong dyadic one), (...) patron-client relations are based on a very strong element of inequality and of differences in power between patrons and clients" (see Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984:48-9). It also revolves around a relationship based on reciprocity with "the patron providing clients with access to basic means of subsistence and the clients reciprocating with a combination of economic goods and services (...) and social acts of deference and loyalty" that enlarges the political fortune of the patron (Mason 1986:489). Thus, people simply use their votes to sustain the position and privileges

of their patrons and are rewarded with protection and personal assistance (Jonathan Hopkin, 2006: 406-407). Unlike vote-buying, clientelist transactions are easier to enforce or take advantage of due to the long-term symbiotic relationships between politicians and their clients (Robinson and Verdier, 2013 & Vicente and Wantchekon, 2009). Some have argued that clientelism is more prevalent in countries with low technological development, inequality, and poverty; conditions that make the political allegiance of clients cheaper to buy. These features make clientelist redistribution a more attractive strategy because the patron can easily reverse the benefits promised or offered to client in the event of disloyalty (Robinson and Verdier, 2013:263).

Some scholars have argued that, in Nigeria, as in many African societies, power is not necessarily a function of territorial control, but a consequence of the numerical strength of clients that political actors possess. This can also be described as a 'wealth in people' political culture, where networks of patronage and clientelism determine not only the success of the big men, but also of ordinary citizens (Bledsoe 1990; Jorgel and Utas 2007:13). The structure and working of patron-clientele network control are vividly narrated in the account of Omobowale et al. (2010) on how clientelism worked in Ibadan, South-West Nigeria, using the case study of Alhaji Adelabu and Lamidi Adedibu:

During Nigeria's Second Republic (1979-83), Ibadan's clientelistic structure was similar to the arrangements of the 1950s. This time, the poor majority became the clients of Alhaji Adedibu, a prominent Ibadan indigene. He was popularly called Eruobodo (the river is never afraid). Whoever won or lost elections in Ibadan was dependent on Adedibu's clientelistic structure. Adedibu perfected the means of extending goods to clients and injury and/or death to political opponents. In spite of his fierce and open display of thuggery and violence, he remained a respected politician and patron in political circles and was thus beyond the reach of the law. Adedibu's structure only

collapsed after the military toppled the Second Republic on 31 December 1983. Adelakun was arrested along with several other politicians and died in prison in 1986.

Again, during the Third Republic (1991-3) and the present Fourth Republic (since 1999), Ibadan's political structure was and is predicated on clientelism. The structure was dominated by Chief Lamidi Adedibu until his demise at the age of 84 in 2008. Adedibu's palatial mansion provided succour to (...) poor clients whom he fed daily with amala and gbegiri (amala and gbegiri is a Yoruba staple food prepared with yam flour and bean soup), besides the provision of other basic needs. With his towering political influence and large client base, he was regarded as the Alaafin (...) of Yoruba politics (Omoowale and Olutayo 2007). His huge clientelistic influence was pivotal for any politician who sought to clinch power in Ibadan. Like Adelabu's before him, Adedibu's excesses and brazen utilization of thuggery and violence to fashion political power were largely overlooked by the political class, who benefited from his patronage and compensated him from the state treasury (p.453 & 454).

Utas (2008) observed that being independent and lacking a big man patron will limit an individual's access to different resources. Building clientelistic networks may take different forms including propagandas built around collective identities like ethnicity or religion which makes people more vulnerable to exploit by politicians (Figueiredo and Weingast 1999; Gurr 2000; Horowitz 1985, Bledsoe 1990). Because elites often seek to create networks of dependants that allow them to express and manifest power, networks can almost be described as a synonym of what is commonly referred to as patron-client relationships (Jorgel, 2011).

Clients are expected to work hard, fight and vote for a big man (patron) in anticipation of rewards with different benefits such as economic resources, other personal gains or security (Bledsoe 1990). As Jorgel and Utas (2007:15) noted, the big man controlling such networks can easily take advantage of such relationships to achieve multiple targets like engaging in politics and economic exploitation or warfare. Post-independence African elites therefore are said to be primarily less amenable to

progressive change because they pursue ideas that are contradictory to a democratic ethos.

African political gatekeepers are presumed to be motivated by insidious political opportunism and many are said to be ready to go the extra length to attain and retain political power. Quinn (2015) observed that self-interest is the main reason African elites seek political power. He warned that this will however continue to create “tension or conflict with the other norms and institutions militating for the fragmentation of the political and economic power” (p.300). To achieve such ends, African political actors will characteristically rely on patronage, personalised and centralised political power, crony capitalism, privatised violence, and a constrained civil society (Kiwuwa 2013: 267). This political order demands that the beneficiaries would seek to maintain a status quo politics which is tantamount to an issue of safeguarding one’s interest (Mwenda and Tangri, 2005). Some also assume that African countries, typified by Nigeria, operate a highly complex informal system that Villal & VonDoepp (2005) have described as an intricate network of patronage and spoils politics that feeds rent-seeking groups, a system, they said, has the capacity of even co-opting the upright individuals to join the ‘sinners’. African incumbents, it has been claimed, use patronage networks to sustain power for as long as it guarantees the provision of employment with adequate perks privileges or returns (Villal & VonDoepp 2005)

Some scholars of patron-clientele politics in Africa argue that it creates kleptocratic and felonious states that are often engulfed by warfare. For them, African states are framed by a host of informal political, economic, and military organisations that distort civility and political accountability (Bayart et al. 1999). Using a historical analogy, Bayart and his fellow authors summarised their position on Africa:

Africa is resistant to every conditionality and its democratisation remains a great leap into the unknown. Considering the degree to which popular sovereignty is alienated and the systematic creation of shadow networks of power is being precipitated by the privatisation of both the state and the economy. But Africa is busily recreating itself, and in this process, crime is not shorn of all 'usefulness' (Bayart et al.1999:116).

Chabal and Daloz (1999) demonstrate at length that the African political order is not only defined by specific exchange relationships framed by instrumental rationalities, but how it is intricately caught up in them. In their opinion, the African political order is framed by a complex metrics of dependence and survival on one hand, and profit and power on the other. For the enthusiasts of good governance, the question of vertical and horizontal accountabilities in this arrangement is merely academic. In many instances, government agencies that ought to control impropriety and abuse of power are at best said to be stooges of the big men in power, while the general public become praise-singers with a view to making ends meet (Utas, 2012). Some in Nigeria have argued that politics and economic survival are two sides of a coin, in a survival of the fittest contest. As I observed, during the fieldwork, it is difficult to proof the existence of corruption because it is a clandestine activity but certainly disingenuous to dismiss its existence. Despite the difficulty apprehending corrupt officials, as well as adherence to bureaucratic due process, a record number of 603 people were convicted of corruption under Buhari's government from 2015-2018 (Campbell 2018, 1). In all these, there is hardly enough evidence that ordinary citizens collude with corrupt big men politicians as clients. Instead, there seem to be pockets of ethnic and religious sympathy for officials accused of corruption than patron-client collusion and cover-up (Adegbami and Uche 2015). The larger picture shows that people make demands of politicians and at the same time condemn those found wanting.

Alongside official performance of accountability, Africans, some have argued, base their accountability ratings on the office-holder's ability to supply different categories of informal demands made by constituents such as private, club and group needs (Lindberg 2009). Therefore, the type of support a politician receives may be relative to how he/she performs on the constituents' formal and informal accountability scale or expectation. Many Nigerians seek connections with political office holders because they are wealthy, in official position or can influence those in such positions. The worsening living conditions of many people across Africa do compel those who are wealthy enough to engage in philanthropic gestures to provide the underprivileged members of the society with basic subsistence needs.¹² Similarly, constituents have higher benevolent expectations of public officials because they have the responsibility to better the lives of the citizens.

Because endemic corruption makes horizontal accountability, i.e. checks, and balances by government agencies, ineffective, the public is said to seek to enforce political accountability through direct legitimate demands of politicians and balloting. This model of accountability pressure enables constituents to hold elected office holders accountable through ballot as well as ensuring that people are rewarded with private benefits. The advocates of this approach believe that it will show how accountability pressures affect the behaviour of an office holder that may in turn affect the variation in provision of public, semi-public, collective and club goods, as well as private goods (Kitschelt, 2007; Olson, 1965; Lindberg 2009).

¹² See the story of Barwah Yaw "Young philanthropist rescues the rural poor". A Ghanaian from the Ashanti Region who is also known as roaming philanthropist has been carrying out humanitarian mission to provide basic life necessities to the underprivileged in Ghana, South Africa and Togo. <https://www.myjoyonline.com/news/young-philanthropist-rescues-the-rural-poor/>

Other studies also claim that many African democracies exhibit neither horizontal nor vertical accountability (Erdmann 2007, Gyimah-Boadi 2007, Lindberg 2003). They argue that accountability in Africa is hampered by the existence of a neo-patrimonial culture that allows state resources to be personalised and distributed in a patron-client relationship. Horizontal accountability allows governmental agencies to render accounts of their activities which also ensure checks and balances of the arms of government. In many African countries, the ideal accountability structures of governance are lacking because agencies of government are under-developed and grossly corrupt. In the absence of genuine horizontal accountability, Africans are expected to use their rights of vertical accountability demands (votes) to compel their political leaders to perform their duties transparently. There is also the argument that vertical accountability remains elusive because political contests result in the winner taking all, and Africans often resort to patron-client reward bargains to protect their own interests (Gymah-Boadi 1999).

A study in Uganda has shown that as state institutions are personalised, communities will similarly develop highly personalised and particularistic views of services delivered by the state. These services are neither universal nor equal but result from competition for the resources provided by the big man who wants political support. This study suggests that big men (e.g. MPs) are expected to provide public goods for the community as well as financial and material assistance to private individuals. In such cases, patronage is not seen as a corrupt exchange but a system where formal institutions become invaded by political struggles that give room for public resources to be delivered on a group or personal basis (Golooba-Mutebi, 2016; The Conversation, 2018). There is often very low investment in public goods and politicians

use other incentives like patronage to consolidate political power. Wantchekon (2003) shows that candidates in democratic Benin employ patronage appeals to great effect, whereas platforms constructed around investment in public goods yield few electoral rewards.

2.5 Democracy and Political Accountability

Democracy is often measured by the level of citizens' political participation and regular free and fair elections. However, at the heart of democracy is the very ability of electors to make legitimate demands of those elected and to retain or remove those elected based on their performance (vertical accountability). Lindberg (2009) theorised that repetitive elections, even when flawed, are one of the important causal factors of democratisation. As the wheel wind of democracy blows across Africa, people not only feel entitled to make demands of elected politicians but to enforce such rights through accountability demands. Accountability pressures stems from lack of recognition and promotion of citizens' rights to good quality of life through the provision of social goods like roads, electricity, healthcare, water, and employment. While democracy creates room for rights in theory, accountability pressures confers rights to make demands in practice to citizens. These rights in practice, Newell, and Wheeler (2006), observed, are secured through multitude of informal and formal creative strategies of accountability.

Joseph (1990) argues that accountability is the most fundamental principle of good governance which is the goal of democracy. Accountability in the case of Nigeria and other African countries is about the ability of the government through elected political leaders to use state resources to empower citizens socially and economically. Where

this pre-electoral social contract is not accomplished by the elected, citizens do feel obliged to legitimately demand these public goods individually and collectively. It is increasingly becoming clearer that in Nigeria and many other African countries, not all interactions between elected politicians and their electors are based on patron-client politics. Constituents can make demands, but elected politicians for example, senators may or may not provide them and some are said to completely abandon their constituency after being elected. This means that despite its virtuous nature, periodic elections do not bring about political accountability in Africa and elsewhere, as claimed by liberal theorist (Ihonvbere 1996). Nigerian constituents' demands of their MPs appear to be re-enforcing their legitimate right to seek for the dividend of democracy instead of acting as clients to political patrons.

But as the pendulum of democracy in Africa swings, it either produces good leadership thereby reduces informal accountability demands or produces poor and corrupt leadership that reinforces accountability pressures. Cheeseman (2015) produces a nuanced analysis of democratic accountability in Africa. He explains why democracy has thrived in some African countries and not others. Although he emphasises that democracy is improving in Africa, but he notes that in recent years, on average, democracy is getting worse rather than getting better. He argues that Africa not only demonstrates "the fragility of democracy" but also "its difficult pathways through which even the poorest and most unstable countries can break free from authoritarian and tyrannical rules" (p.4-5). He ultimately disapproves of the sceptical claim that democracy will not excel in Africa.

2.6 An Alternative Theory of African Politics

Chabal and Daloz (1999) argue that African political processes need to be viewed with a lens that can capture how Africa works, and they argue that happens through the instrumentalisation of indices which Western/Weberian theories conceptualise as disorder. African states, according to Chabal and Daloz, do not operate like Western nations because their states are non-emancipated from the society. Consequently, the state is “ill-managed to conceal the primordial and particularistic nature of power” (Chabal and Daloz 1999:2). While discarding the loaded notion of development, they conclude that “Africa is not degenerating, nor is it “blocked”, but that it is forging ahead, following its own path, although assuredly at great variance with existing models of development” (Chabal and Daloz 1999:135). As a way of explaining African political accountability, they recommend the theory of “rhizome state”, where institutional models are of little importance because informal-patrimonial and clientele relations determine access to state resources and influence.

What Chabal and Daloz’s argument imply is that political accountability and control may be expressed through both formal and informal means, as in the case of many African countries, including Nigeria. Western societies have stressed the negative effects of informal politics or clientelism for democracy because it has failed to link political representatives to citizens and does not provide mechanisms for constituency service (Cain et al; 1987; De Sousa 2008). Many Nigerians do not see informal exchanges as clientelism per say. When asked, they may unsurprisingly yield two answers, “yes” and “no”. On one hand, clientelism represents corruption, but on the other hand it creates access to benefits and opportunities.

Lindberg (2009) studied de facto duties with which the office of an MP is associated as well as the informal meanings attached to the formal duties of the office holder. By so

doing, he explored the varieties of formal and informal accountability demands that seem to make the office of Ghanaian representatives (MPs), a “hybrid institution”. His approach shows how accountability pressures “affect the behaviour of an office holder that may in turn affect the variation in provision of public, semi-public, collective and club goods, as well as private goods” (Lindberg, 2009, p.2).

Unlike the assumption held by some scholars, Young (2009) does not believe that personalism and clientelism structure all voting behaviours in Africa. Combining data sources survey responses from the Afrobarometer project that were merged with constituency-level election returns, he tested the relative power of two interpersonal, clientelist interactions between voters and members of parliament, vs. how often MPs visit their constituency, in predicting election outcomes. His work was consistent with a finding that African voters are more interested in local public goods than private goods, even after collecting private benefits from politicians. His study revealed that:

neither being offered a gift in return for a vote, nor being in direct contact with an MP makes voters more likely to support their MP, but that visiting the constituency helps an incumbent’s re-election bid. These results contribute to a burgeoning agenda on voting behaviour in Africa that focuses on the agency of individual voters (ibid, 8).

There is an assumption that “the ultimate purpose of the modern state is to provide citizens with public goods” (Bratton & Lewis 2007:4). This understanding means that the provision of private goods is the responsibility of the individual citizen. While this objective is true of any government, it is difficult to argue against citizens’ demands of private goods when politicians are accused of corruptly enriching themselves (Liedong 2017). Research findings point to the fact that many Africans prefer democratic government which is a prelude to political accountability and positive change in human

development. According to the findings of Afrobarometer (2014), 75% of Africans prefer democratic government to any other type of regimes (Bratton & Mattes 2016). In contrast, 11% prefer a non-democratic regime and 18% either did not know what a better option is or simply do not care-an evidence of either complacency or total abandon to fate. It is also noteworthy that the same study revealed that “several African countries – notably Cameroon, Cote d’Ivoire, Nigeria, Uganda and Zimbabwe – continue to experience a deficit of democracy in which popular demand for democracy greatly exceeds the amount of democracy that political elites are willing or able to supply” (ibid: 3). Consequently, these countries are also “accountability deficient”, hence citizens feel obliged to make democratic accountability demands of politicians not as clients but as citizens with legitimate rights to make such demands. Where the public feels short-changed by politicians, especially following allegation of corruption, citizens can protest peacefully and sometimes violently (Terngu, 2017). As one protester noted:

Nigerians are tired of bad governance; I believe that time has come for us to take our destiny into our own hands. I still have good memories of how people protested against military juntas, so we will match-on in solidarity against bad governments (Communication with a Protester in Abuja, 20 August 2015).

Since true democracy creates the foundation for accountability, it will not be inconsistent to argue that peoples’ demand for democracy creates legitimate expectation of the provision of goods and services by those elected. Vertical accountability exists where electors have the power to elect or reject a political leader through the ballot box and horizontal accountability is where agencies of government maintain checks and balances on each other. Democratic deficit creates a vicious circle of accountability deficit which when combined with other multivariate factors may

block all avenues of social wellbeing, thereby leading people to seek alternative means of making ends meet. The existence of conventional accountability deficit (when the amount of accountability demands citizens make exceeds the amount supplied by their political leaders), increases non-conventional opportunities for people to make legitimate demands of politicians.

2.7 Nigerians and the Atmosphere of Hospitality

Getting to know Nigerians provides a researcher with the opportunity to learn about the people and their values. Generally, Nigerians are kind-hearted, hospitable, and sociable. Although statistics suggest high levels of illiteracy, the level of intelligence demonstrated by an average Nigerian, both educated and uneducated, is nevertheless admirable. Irrespective of their social, economic, and political problems, Nigerians hardly allow difficulties to affect their sense of humour during conversations because every interaction with others creates an opportunity for them to express how they feel.

Some of the constituents I met made it clear that simple acts like leaving money on the table after dining and going out of the restaurant might end up with the money being stolen. During one of my visits to a restaurant for a dinner with a guide, I tried to leave the money on the table for the waiter to pick up later but our driver hilariously reminded me how things work in Nigeria by saying: “Oga (sir), this is Nigeria O! Please do not leave money on the table; it will grow wings and fly away” (Personal Communication, October 18, 2014). This sarcastic statement is a euphemistic reminder of how deeply the society frets about corruption that unfortunately masks the beauty, warmth, kindness, and hospitality of most Nigerians.

2.8 Accessing accountability benefactors

An observer may consider MPs who are difficult to access as inhuman and out of touch, but the fact remains that MPs all over the world are more exposed to more danger than politicians in executive positions because they have more grassroots contacts with little or no protection. That is the reason even the most advanced liberal democracies like United Kingdom are beginning to consider measures to boost MPs' security, especially in the wake of the murder of MP Jo Cox in June 2016 (Booth et al 2016).¹³ In Nigeria, depending on their ranking and political clout, some MPs especially senators are entitled to an official security officer and many have a massive number of police officers and private security to protect them.

With few exceptions, visitors to high-ranking big men such as senators face the scrutiny of gun-wielding policemen and the senator's employees as I witnessed during my fieldwork. In order to convince the stern and often overzealous policemen and bodyguards, I had to show them that I was not a threat to the senator and often the initial official letter I sent to the senators for an interview was very useful in convincing them to allow me access to the MP. Equally, legislative aides that help to facilitate a meeting with an MP also expect to be recognised and respected. In the wider Nigerian society, people not only seek to be respected, some also make demands of others that do not always need to be reciprocated. The fact that you look decent or rich is usually an excuse for uniformed men to beg you for money, as it happened in some places I went, especially at check points. It is common to hear such expressions as: "Oga wetin you bring for your boys now"? (Sir, what do you have for us?). For a foreigner, this

¹³ British MP Jo Cox Murdered on the street by an angry constituent on 16th June, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/jun/16/labour-mp-jo-cox-shot-in-west-yorkshire>

might appear reprehensible and indecent behaviour, but in Nigeria, both the person begging and the person giving the money do not necessarily see anything wrong in it. It is not only an accepted way of facilitating an informal economy but a way of building bridges. Upon my taking the security officer to one of the senators out for a lunch, he ended up giving me more information that I found useful in getting access to more senators. As he puts it:

You see my brother, you [rub] my back, and I rub your back. I am going to speak to inspector Sule who can help you see more senators. It may not be easy, but surely it will be easier when you get more help.” (Personal Communication Abuja October 19, 2014).¹⁴

As already discussed elsewhere in this study, democracy revolves around political accountability. Elected politicians like senators get scrutinised on their representative, legislative and oversight functions. They are also asked to give account of their constituency project funds as well as on the promises they made during electoral campaigns. The most crucial part of accountability process is the ability of the accountability-seeking constituent(s) accessing the big men. Since accessing big men for accountability demands may be a bit difficult, therefore I make a case that access on its own should be considered as a type of accountability. There are many reasons why gaining access to see a high-ranking politician could be considered as an accountability on its own merits. Firstly, due to the increasing insecurity in Nigeria, visitors to the National Assembly are subjected to serious security checks at four different security posts. Secondly, one may require an appointment with the senator whose diary is jam-packed with appointments before or after plenary sessions. Thirdly,

¹⁴ Moses, a police officer to a senator showing appreciation for a lunch I gave him and therefore offered to give me more help to see other interviewees (senator). This is a typical example of how informal networks and economic activity are built in Nigeria, 20th October 2014.

the role of a legislative aide could increase or decrease the chances of a constituent seeing the senator. Sometimes senators delegate some of their roles to their legislative aides, so they become key players in the accountability demands and supply chess game.

Surprisingly, despite the perceived and real difficulties, reasonable number of constituents still gain entrance into the National Assembly galleries, lobbies, committee rooms and offices of the senators and honourable members of the lower house. The secret lies in the fact that constituents do a lot to prepare and make sacrifices that often enable them to meet with their MPs. As my own experience and those of many others have shown, early preparation, making contacts with legislative aides, securing appointments, being proactive, and above all, dressing well, are all important elements of performance required. The National Assembly is highly secured, and people are often checked, queried and sometimes, the unlucky ones get turned back. But even when on strict instructions not to allow people without appointment, security personnel sometimes let constituents in without appointments. There seem to be a general understanding among the security staff and senators that some people might have genuine need that only their MPs' could help with. Many Nigerians are coached on how to prepare including details of the dress code required and what to say when queried by security and legislative aides.

2.9 Performativity of Nigerian life

Generally, a good outfit makes it easier to get through the tough security arrangements in the National Assembly. Sometimes, if you are well dressed, security officers may mistake you for a member of a big man's entourage and allow you in without any

questions. Unfortunately, an attempt to disguise oneself as part of a big man's entourage will not only backfire easily if you do not dress well but will be met with serious security breach consequence as I witnessed in an encounter between a casual dresser and policemen on duty at the National Assembly's security gate 2 in Abuja below:

Police Officer: Hey who are you and where do you think you are going to?

Casual dresser: Good afternoon officer, I am here to see the Senator....

Police Officer: Who do you say want to see the senator, you or someone else?

Casual dresser: Of course, it's me officer, he is expecting me.

Police Officer: Look my friend you are obstructing the way. (Re-positioning his gun), get out of here.

Police Inspector: Look my friend, come this way. I am going to arrest you if it turns out that you are trying to trick us by following those officials.¹⁵

As I passed by the poor man, I could see deep desperation, anguish, exhaustion, and a sense of injustice in his eyes. He was feeling victimised for belonging to the poor strata of the society. This saddening performance of two worlds - the world of the rich and affluent that have the right to walk through the National Assembly gates uncensored and the less privileged ones who are considered as nuisance – represents a reality which looms large in Nigerian society and the imagery hunted me throughout my fieldwork.

From my experience, sending an official introduction letter was an effective strategy to secure an appointment with the senators I interviewed. Some senators may be easy

¹⁵ Witnessed conversation by the author between Police Officers and casually dressed man trying to go through to National Assembly security without invitation. October 22nd 2014, Abuja.

to access while others may turn out to very difficult. Even the easy-going and friendly senators do not grant audience to accountability-seeking constituents every time. Therefore, people would need to plan to book appointment to see their senators or honourable members. This is particularly evident in the fact that I was only able to interview 50 percent of those that received my introduction letter. Apart from the question of security, a senator, like other Nigerian politicians, is concerned about political enemies infiltrating his/her camp through journalists, and little wonder the first set of questions some of the senators put to me during encounter with them were: "Are you a journalist? What newspaper are you reporting for? What political party are you supporting?" Answers to these questions are expected to be reassuring because a senator would not be willing to talk to his/her political enemies who may likely twist his/her thoughts as exemplified in the exchange I had with one of my interviewees (Senator_16 Abuja):

Me: Good afternoon Distinguished Senator.

Senator_16: Good afternoon. How are you?

Me: I am very well Sir.

Senator_16: So, tell me, what newspaper do you write for? Punch, Vanguard? Which one of them?

Me: I am not a journalist, Senator, I am a research student from University of Birmingham United Kingdom and I did send you an introduction letter six months ago and your Special Assistant said you are happy to speak to me.

Senator_16: Yes, I am willing to be interviewed if it is truly for research, so do you have your student ID card?

Me: Yes Senator, but unfortunately, I left it in the hotel.

Senator_16: I am sorry young man, I was once a victim of impersonation, and Nigeria is full of people pretending to be who they are not and, in most cases, working for your political opponents. I will not speak to you now, but I will do you a favour, re-book your appointment with my Personal Assistant and come tomorrow with your student identity card and I will be ready to

grant you audience after plenary session (Personal Communication Abuja, Senator_16, and October 22, 2014).

On the second day, the senator's facial expression, mood and body language changed as I showed him my student identity card. In this encounter, he felt he was not only in control of the interview, but that he had created a sense of difference and respect which I had to abide by as the interview progressed. To use his words: "You see; now I know who you really are and where you are coming from" (Personal Communication Abuja, Senator_16, and October 22, 2014).

One of the strategies I used to position myself to get the attention of the senators was by dressing formally and corporately even when feeling the heat of the sun because the better and more official you look in Nigeria the more respect and decorum people will show you. Beyond protection and covering their nakedness, people dress for other reasons including for protection as well as enhance their looks among others (Arubayi 2004). An individual's dressing pattern is a sign of language through which he/she communicates a set of complex information and the basis upon which impressions are formed (Foster 1990 & Arubayi 2010). Therefore, these performances of dressing during encounters between political actors were signposts for what Arubayi (2010), called "the tangible expression of unique value system" of Nigerians (p.1). Indeed, as a common Nigerian parlance goes: "you are addressed the way you are dressed". That means if you dress well people will respect and offer you the right help, including easier access to big men. On the other hand, if you dress poorly, you would not be surprised to see that people may not show you due respect but will knowingly or unknowingly liken you to a poor member of the society. As awkward as this behaviour may be, it is evident that Nigerians do dress formally when on official outings. Thus, a typical day at the National Assembly not only creates an atmosphere of political drama and

glamour but also produces a national gallery of fashion. Apart from varieties of traditional forms of attire, many like to dress in black suits because it gives them a sense of confidence and the opportunity to see an MP, and one could see people sweating profusely in their dark suits under the scorching Abuja sun.

This bias is illustrated by my own experience of the manner I was received by the personal assistants to the senators depending on how I dressed. On the days I wore suits with ties, the personal assistants greeted me with courtesy and quickly offered me a seat, while on the days I went to see some senators while casually dressed I was reluctantly told to go and sit down and wait. Because not only do people need to dress well for official appointment such as job interviews, people generally believe that the better your physical outfit, the better the chances of being accepted into the circle of “bigmanism” and ultimately the better accountability benefit opportunity you may have.

2.10 Conclusion

Nigerians are deeply aware of their right to political accountability. Constituents and politicians intermingle in unending formal and informal interactions that shape accountability politics in Nigeria. Not only is accountability relationship a social responsibility of politicians, it is also an invaluable element of representative democracy. The accountability relationship in Nigeria is linked to democratic values and practices that transcend patronage or clientele politics. Evidence from my fieldwork suggests that accountability relationship between contemporary Nigerian senators and their constituents provides new frontiers for studying African politics. However, access to accountability benefactors is the key to understanding the dynamics of the relationship between politicians and their constituents. In the case of

Nigerian senators and their constituents, access to demand accountability may be difficult. Even so, many constituents still gain access through networking and other form of performances.

3 THE EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIAN POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the political representative structures of African societies before colonialism. It describes the structures of several political systems that existed across precolonial territory of current Nigeria and reflects on the various forms with which many societies maintained political accountability. Political leaders like chiefs or kings were praised or condemned based on the leader's performance, and many had to face culturally embedded mechanisms of accountability. These included the deposition and even killing of unaccountable or tyrannical rulers. While the creation of the colonial government subverted the local accountability of such positions, it did not fully dismantle the expectations that surrounded them.

Colonial powers not only altered the traditional accountability structures they met but also laid the foundation of contemporary political structures of Nigeria. This chapter discusses the various strategies Nigerians deployed to demand for political accountability during British colonial rule. It demonstrates that local understandings of political responsibilities and expectations have a historical foundation. Following on, this chapter also explores legislative structure, processes and roles of MP's and other officials. By doing so it discusses the moral and social considerations of accountability expectations in the context of a legal rationale, given the provisions of legislative responsibilities in the 1999 Constitution (as amended). This lays the foundation for exploring contemporary public attitudes towards MPs and other Nigerian politicians reflecting cultural and historical trajectories.

3.2 A Short Overview of Political Accountability in Nigeria

Many Western narratives portrayed Africa as an uncivilised, primitive, isolated, anarchic and barbaric place without any form of political organisation.¹⁶ But centuries before European colonization, African societies created different forms of political institutions and mechanisms to govern themselves (Ekeh 1975; Ayittey 2010; Fagbadebo and Ruffin 2017).¹⁷ Across precolonial Africa, there existed different political administrations with centralised and decentralised structures.¹⁸ The variety and complexity of African political systems challenges the notion that political complexity only exists in centralised states (Shumway 2013). In most societies, political leaders were expected to provide leadership services that were subject to checks and controls (Busia 1951). This included the authority of kings, rulers, and other leaders (Palagashvili 2018; Mandani 1996; Ayittey 1991; Moncrieffe 1998). Apart from the tradition of belonging to a royal lineage, kings in many parts of precolonial Nigeria were selected because of their benevolence, selflessness, philanthropy, intelligence, wealth, strength, wisdom and valour (Van Zeijl 2016; Ajayi 1992; Ikime 1980).

¹⁶ The above description alludes to how the European adventurers and subsequent colonial masters perceived Africa. For example, quotations from Joseph Conrad's poem published in 1899 "The Heart of Darkness" as narrated by (Lombardi 2019) talked about how everything he saw in Africa including "the heart of the people was share darkness". Chinua Achebe posits that Conrad's representation of Africa as an antithesis of Europe and Civilization, a place where man's vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality (Achebe 1977). Such distasteful narrative ignores the true realities of the social, economic and political processes that occur in Africa (Jarosz 1992); to justify oppression and delivery of a continent full of savagery and some believe that these are racist attitudes that Western press have continued to use in a modified format.

¹⁷ The works of many scholars provide substantial evidence of not only the existence of effective self-governance but also structures that facilitated trade and other forms of economic opportunities among heterogeneous tribes See (Cohen 1969; Gellar 2005; Davidson 1965; Davidson 1970; Leeson 2007, 2008; Ayittey 1992).

¹⁸ Both federated/pyramidal or constitutional monarchy and centralised systems were led by kings or chiefs (states or chiefdoms) such as the Yorubas of Nigeria, the Fati of Ghana, Swazi and the Zulu of South Africa among others. On the other hand, there were other groups like the Igbo of Nigeria, the Kru of Liberia, the Tallensi of Ghana, the Fulani of Nigeria, and the Jie of Uganda who had acephalous or stateless with democratic features (Ayittey 2010).

As in other parts of the world, real or perceived accountability problems could lead to the collapse and overthrow of governments. For example, when the rulers of the northern Nigerian Hausa states were insufficiently dedicated to Islam, many of their subjects supported the cleric Usman Dan Fodio. From 1804-1810, Dan Fodio and his followers successfully conquered all the Hausa states and created the Sokoto Caliphate (Kew 2016). While the reason(s) that led to the jihad is still been contested, there was “a complex mix of religious, ethnic and socio-economic causes” that drove many of the citizens into the revolution (Philips 2017: 20). The revolution was not only a rebellion against the rulers, but also an attempt to cleanse the society of corrupt and manipulative Islamic scholars (Ulama) who were accused of aiding and abating, corruption, exploitation and oppression of the weak (Abba 1979; Bunza 2013). Dan Fodio allowed the creation of smaller emirates and appointed other emirs based on their Islamic scholarship and moral qualities to run the affairs of the confederate units (Burnham and Last 1994; Chafe 1994). He sought to establish a government based on consultation and respect for peoples’ opinion and feeling with advisers led by (Wazir) (Bunza 2013 (Bunza 2013:92 Ajayi 1972; Lenshie and Ayokhai 2013). The Sultan’s power was guided and checked by not only Islamic principles but by the contributions of his ministers and advisers.

In the South-Western region, centralised political authority existed in larger geopolitical areas like the Oyo Kingdom. The Alaafin, or ruler, of Oyo was having divine powers (Gbenga and Akanle 2015). But while the position of Alaafin of Oyo was revered, he did not have tyrannical powers because the Oyo-Mesi and Ogboni Councils provided balance of power and sought political accountability of the Alaafin (Akuul 2010; Jacob 2014; Fagbadebo and Ruffin 2019). He had clear responsibility of keeping his citizens

safe from external aggressors, mediating, and settling disputes between sub-rulers and their people (Stride and Ifeka 1971). Bound by highly ritualised restrictions, the Alaafin was also required to consult his councils before making any political decision (Hyattraction 2015; Akinjogbin & Ayandele in Ikime 1980). The councils were to act in the interest of the people while (Law 1982; Adejare and Akanle 2015), an unpopular Alaafin could be commanded to commit suicide by the Bashorun (Fyle 1999: 93). There were also other smaller towns or communities in pre-colonial Yoruba land that operated participatory governance through assemblies (Nolte 2009).

Precolonial Igbo societies did not have kingdoms with powerful kings. They had largely acephalous political administrations with an egalitarian decision-making process where all male adults would assemble at the village square to make decisions based on direct democracy (Anuka 2018). Councils of Elders carried out legislative, executive, and judicial functions. In addition to the role of Council of Elders, institutions like the Ozo title holders, Age grades, and priests ensured that political accountability was maintained. But not all Igbo societies were segregated (Ajaegbo 2014), centralised political systems with democratic features existed in Onitsha, Nri, Ugwuta and Aboh (Nzirimo 1972; Ajaegbo 2014). According to Isichei (1976), traditional Igbo kings or chiefs were not necessarily absolute rulers, they took decisions in conjunction with different groups of titled men, and representatives. She posits they could be challenged and deposed by the people. Political leaders were expected to listen to people's demands to ensure peace and tranquillity or risk being overthrown (Kew 2016).

3.3 Indirect Rule and Colonial Politics

Indirect rule, introduced to Nigeria by Lord Lugard, was a British colonial political administrative structure built on political continuity through indigenous leaders (Lugard 1922). The colonial government supported traditional rulers that were favourable to British rule. They included Hausa emirs and Yoruba obas into government and imposed warrant chiefs in areas without dominant rulers, such as Igboland (Apter 1961; Pratt 1965; Onyeakaegbu 2018). But the system was not successful everywhere: many Igbos resisted the imposition of warrant chiefs because they felt the colonial chiefs were unaccountable to the people (Ajaegbo 2014: 21). The protests generally known as the 'Aba women's war' is a good example of Nigerian demands for accountability arising from the system (Matera, Bastian, and Kent 2011). African civil servants were accountable to the colonial officers, but many helped interpreting and translating local languages, customs and traditions and local citizens' expectations and demands (Lawrence et al; 2006). One of the most potent measures Nigerians took during the colonial period was the use of press freedom to publicise public mood and desires. As Omu (1968) notes, "there was no democratically elected government, the press became the most effective constitutional weapon for ventilating grievances and influencing the trend of events" (1968: 279). Apart from newspapers, nationalists pressurised British colonial government for independence through political activism and set up political parties to contest elections to increase citizens' political participation.¹⁹

¹⁹ Herbert Macaulay was referred to as the father of Nigerian nationalism because he was the pioneer of Nigerian nationalism movement. He formed the first political party, the Nigerian National Democratic Party which contested three Lagos seats in the Legislative Council. In 1934, the Nigerian Youth Movement was formed to intensify agitation for the end of British colonial rule. In 1944, Herbert Macaulay and Nnamdi Azikiwe led the merger of over forty different groups to establish the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) which became a flag bearing symbol of the demands for independence. See (Okonkwo 2020).

Nigerians also made direct demands of colonial administrators. However, because the power relations created under indirect rule affected most conflicts at the community level, Africans often sought to gain direct or indirect access to their local representatives. In many societies, that meant that Africans adapted local practices of showing respect – or criticism – for their purposes. Where such leaders were not trusted, people protested through petitions, court cases, but also demonstrations and – as shown above – riots or ‘wars’ (Osuntokun 1971).²⁰

As colonial rule stabilised, many educated Nigerians, led by Herbert Macaulay, started making demands for a greater say in government (Uche 1989). The nationalists sought to Africanize the public service and increase political participation. In the 1940s and 1950s, new mass-oriented political parties also appealed to less educated men and women. Their agitation culminated in the demand for independence. These fierce demands led to more Africans becoming petty colonial government employees, granting of constitutional concessions, the expansion or creation of local legislatures and extension of African representation in the national parliaments (Sharkey 2013).

After independence, public protests were often a key indicator of dissatisfaction, and they remained important despite the military regimes’ repressive tactics. Since the return of democratic governance in 1999, public protests against poor leadership have surged from few dozens to over 400 per cent, with an estimated 524 protests, a trend that has persisted since 2014 (Itodo and O’Regan 2018). But there has also been an

²⁰ In the case of Nigeria, rioting or political violence is often a last resort to political oppression, mismanagement, electoral manipulation, and political corruption. Rioting were used to protest colonial imposition as shown in the case of Aba Women Riot in 1929 and has continued to be used to resist all forms of political, social, and economic injustice in contemporary Nigeria. See (Boahen 1989).

increase in the level of interest among young Nigerians to engage directly with politics (Kazeem 2019). In the last decade, Nigerians have increased the rate at which they seek to meet their MPs personally to make demands of them. Many are using the opportunities that social media provides to intensify accountability expectations. More politicians are now being held to account in the court of public opinion, live public hearings or court trials following allegation of corruption (Eboh 2020).

3.4 Chieftaincy and Community Development

Since the 1960s, traditional rulers have become more active in partisan politics as well as attracting development projects to their communities through chieftaincy title conferment on politicians (Teniola 2017). Chieftaincy is an integral part of African pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial history and development (Geschiere 1993; Lindeman and Goodfellow 2013; Ajaegbo 2014). Traditional institutions in Nigeria have gone through several reforms under civilian and military rule, especially in 1976 and 1978, but they still have the right to confer chieftaincy titles on individuals as an acknowledgement and appreciation of their contributions to the community (Orewa 1978; Sani 1977; Ekong 1985; Ade-Lawal 1984; Oladosu 1985; Uwalaka 2014). Traditional rulers are the custodians of tradition, political mobilizers, and peacemakers, but they also act to legitimise political leaders through the confirmation of traditional chieftaincy titles (Vaughan 1991). Equally, politicians at the national, state and local governments tend to politicize the chieftaincy institution with a view to mobilising support for their governments (Iheanacho 2006; Usoro 1995).²¹ Big men and women

²¹ Iheanacho 2006, and Usoro 1995, critically captures the politics of traditional chieftaincy titles in Nigeria. It is a common practice that politicians through the local and state governments seek to legitimise their authority and boast their popularity through the support of traditional rulers. Often times,

now demand for chieftaincy title because it is a means of seeking power, status and influence in the society (Ukpokolo 2009; Uzuegbu 1997).

Despite the constitutional question surrounding the role and position of traditional chiefs, chieftaincy titles have become a source of recognition for wealthy individuals. They are also a viable source of revenue for communities conferring such titles (Harneit-Sievers 1998; Uwalaka 2014; Knierzingern 2011). Some have argued that chieftaincy titles hold cultural value in Africa, and indeed Nigeria.²² Conferring and accepting chieftaincy titles symbolises community recognition or acceptance, and it is an incentive to make community development contributions. This creates an ongoing process of corporation and assimilation between traditional leaders, party politicians, and other big men and women (Bayart 1993; Nolte 2002; Geschiere 1993; Miaffo and Warnier 1993; Harneit-Sievers 1998; Nyamnjoh 2014; Nwangwu 2012). In many cases the blurred lines between traditional chieftaincy and party politics means that many people express appreciation, or make demands, of elected politicians in the same ways as they would when interacting with chiefs.

3.5 The Legal & Political Framework of the Nigerian Legislature

The drafters of different Nigerian constitutions believed that having elected representatives at the National, State and Local Government levels would be the most

the conferment of chieftaincy title is a way traditional ruler show loyalty to the government and also attract development projects to their communities. However, politicians use the instrument of government to punish traditional rulers who criticises them. Also see BBC news March 9th, 2020, for the story of Emir of Kano who the state governor dethroned because of his alleged involvement in politics.

²² See Kwame Poku Annor 1985's Cultural and Social Identities in Africa: Chieftaincy and Political Change in Ghana *Verfassung und Recht Ubersee/ Law and Politics in Africa, Asia and Latin America* Vol. 18. NO. 2 (1985), pp. 153-158.

effective way to enforce leadership accountability. At the apex of this representative democratic structure based on the 1999 Constitution (as amended) is the Nigerian National Assembly, which has superior legislative powers over the State Houses of Assembly and Local Government Councils. This superior legislative status is provided for in the 1999 Constitution, where Section 4 (1-9), gives the National Assembly the exclusive power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the federation or any of its component parts. This provision implies that only the central government through the National Assembly can legislate on such matters. Any regional or state legislation in conflict with National Assembly's legislation will be declared null and void and unconstitutional.²³ The section under sub-section 4 also provides for a concurrent list where both the National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly can legislate, but the caveat in this co-legislative responsibility is that any state legislation that is inconsistent with those of the National Assembly will be rendered null and void and unconstitutional. However, the State Houses of Assembly have residual (reserved) powers under Section 4, Sub-section 7 of the 1999 Constitution to legislate on items not listed under the exclusive and concurrent powers. Typical examples of the items under the residual list are matters that relate to chieftaincy titles or customs and traditions. While the constitution clearly granted the State Houses of Assembly powers to make laws under this list, it is interesting that the National Assembly tends to breach the constitutional powers of the state governments by making laws that aim to render state laws under this section ineffective.

²³ See Section 4 (1-9) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended for detail legislative powers of the National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---ilo_aids/documents/legaldocument/wcms_127563.pdf

The creation of the local government's legislature falls under the jurisdiction of the state government and such legislative structure is aimed at grass-roots political representation and accountability. The local government is the third tier or level of government in Nigeria's federal structure. Local councillors are elected directly from the smallest electoral districts called 'wards' and their activities replicate the legislative process at the National Assembly and State House of Assembly at a grassroots level. The ultimate function of a typical local government under the 1999 constitution is to drive development in the rural areas of Nigeria. The process of creation and expectations of local governments in Nigeria are clearly provided under Section (7) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

But the State Houses of Assembly are still subservient to the National Assembly when exercising their constitutional powers. There have been several conflicts arising from both tiers of governments' exercising their respective powers which have been widely blamed on the ambiguity created by Section 8 of the 1999 Constitution. Although conflict of legislative responsibility is not peculiar to Nigeria, there is an underlying tension about how public expectations and demands could best be met.

Through section 4, the constitution identifies the "promotion of peace, security and good governance of Nigeria" as the cardinal responsibility of any government and goes on to specify the responsibilities of each of the levels of government. In this context, the National Assembly, State Houses of Assembly and Local Government Council are to legislate within their legislative powers. It is within the rights granted to Nigerians under this constitution to not only expect legislators to do their jobs, but to also scrutinise their performances (Ewang 2019). How Nigerians take advantage of this provision is the subject of this thesis.

3.6 Functions of the Legislature in Nigeria under the 1999 Constitution

Nigeria operates a presidential system with different arms of government, namely the executive, legislature, and judiciary. The 1999 Constitution provides for the roles of the legislature (National Assembly) in Section (4) before those of the executive and judicial arms. The federal government operates a bi-cameralism while the state and local government operate unicameralism. The National Assembly performs important functions as provided for in different section of the 1999 Constitution.

As in every democracy, the legislature is responsible for enacting laws for the good governance of the society and the quality of laws made during a particular legislative tenure forms part of the accountability criteria that MPs are adjudged. The National Assembly is entrusted with the legislative powers in the Part II, Section (4), and Sub-section (3) of the 1999 Constitution: “The legislative powers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be vested in a National Assembly for the Federation, which shall consist of a Senate and a House of Representatives”. Most legislative sessions in Nigeria, especially the 7th and 8th sessions have had great success in introducing and passing many bills into laws.²⁴ While poor legislative oversight and the lack of a transparent and accountable system of law execution remain an obvious setback, the thesis explores the way in which politicians have increasingly engaged with these issues in the face of their own understandings of accountability.

²⁴ Some of the landmark laws made by the National Assembly include: Nigerian Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (NEITI) Act, National Health Act, Violence Against Person Prohibition Act, Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) Act, Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offence Commission (ICPC) Act, Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) Act, Administration of Criminal Justice Act, Evidence Act, National Human Right Commission Act, Public Complaint Commission Act, National Agency Against Trafficking in Person Act, among other important Acts (Jimoh 2015).

There is no shortage of laws or desire among Nigerian parliamentarians to pass useful laws, but execution remains an obvious shortfall. As many observers have noted, there has been an increase in conflict between the legislature and the executive with respect to budgetary allocation and oversight responsibilities (Chidiebere, Ahmad and Jawan 2016). Some attribute this conflict to the fact that, due to long periods of military rule, the legislature is still relatively young (Etim and Ukpere 2012). However, the conflict equally reflects the tension that arises from inadequate resources to promote the wellbeing of Nigerians. It is noteworthy that the conflict is also a direct consequence of increase in the rate of checks and balance (horizontal accountability) the National Assembly (legislature) and the Presidency (executive) now have on each other. The increase is said to correlate with public demands for good governance (Itodo and O'Regan 2018). But despite allegations of legislative and executive complacency, abuse of power and corruption, the conflict also demonstrates that politicians and other public officials are pressurising each other in response to public expectations.

The legislature is an institution of political representation where directly elected MPs represent the interests of their constituencies. In the case of Nigerian National Assembly, senators and honourable members of the House of Representatives are elected from senatorial and federal constituencies for a period of four years. In view of the multicultural and demographic nature of Nigeria, legislative activities are expected to articulate and aggregate diverse interests of the represented constituencies into the policy process. For their process to be transparent and democratic, MPs are not only expected to represent the interest of their constituents but must involve them through consultation and other feedback mechanisms. Legislators are elected by constituents and are accountable to the constituents because the MPs are agents of the people

who in democracy are sovereign.²⁵ The MPs also represent the social, developmental and political interests and aspirations of Nigerians, and to do so, they are required to be attentive to expectations of their constituents. The Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC 2016) noted that:

The legislature is expected to act as the ears and voice of the people as it listens to them and articulates their views, yearnings and aspirations into good laws and/or government policies. It is the eyes of the people as it oversees the execution of projects by the executive arm and reviews the utilization of public funds by Government agencies and departments (p.16).

The extent to which constituents are involved in shaping how their MPs behave or vote during legislative proceedings remains a big accountability question in contemporary Nigeria. All the senators I interviewed during my fieldwork claimed they do consult their constituents one way or the other, with the majority citing periodic Town-Hall meetings as a way to give account to constituents. However, many interviewees and surveyed constituents said they were not consulted by their MPs.

The legislature either at the local, state or federal government levels is responsible for overseeing the executive arm of government and its agencies. It can summon any executive agency to give account of how appropriated funds were used or whether they recourse to due process in the implementation of government policies and or projects. Therefore, all legislative functions apart from law making and political representation of the constituents can be categorised into oversight functions, including having the power of the public purse (Sections 80 to 84 of the 1999 Constitution). The oversight function of the legislature over the executive also extends

²⁵ This fact is unequivocally reinforced by Section 14 (2) of the 1999 Constitution which states, "Sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom Government through this Constitution derives all its power and authority."

to its constitutional powers of confirming the appointment of government officials including some members of the judiciary. Such powers allow the MPs to ask questions on behalf of their constituents about whether public officials have performed their duties as well as transparency questions that relate to such activities. In a parliamentary system, oversight usually occurs through a process of questioning in parliament by which members of the cabinet are asked to provide details of activities of their respective agencies. In the Nigerian presidential system, oversight functions are more complex and exercised through specialised legislative committees.

The legislature has the power to conduct investigations into the activities of individual public officials or government agencies as it may deem fit. According to Section 88 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), the National Assembly is empowered to carry out investigations into the affairs of Government.²⁶ In the course of exercising its powers to conduct investigations, each chamber of the National Assembly uses various committees such as appropriation committee, standing committees, ad hoc committees, audit committee and various others to investigate executive agencies to ensure due process and accountability. It was through such investigative activities by the National Assembly and the wilder fight against corruption launched by Buhari which revealed that some public officials were stealing and keeping public funds in undisclosed bank accounts in Nigeria and abroad (Eboh and Onuah 2016).²⁷

²⁶ This power covers (a) any matter or thing with respect to which it has power to make laws; and (b) the conduct of affairs of any person, authority or Government Department charged, or intended to be charged with the duty or responsibility for (i) executing and administering laws enacted by the National Assembly (ii) disbursing or administering moneys appropriated or to be appropriated by the National Assembly.

²⁷ Camillus Eboh and Felix Onuah described how President Muhamadu Buhari's campaign against corruption uncovered \$9.1 billion stolen by government officials. Their revelation is said to be a tip of the iceberg regarding the depth of corruption in Nigeria.

The Senate of the National Assembly is empowered by the constitution to screen and approve all, or disapprove of certain presidential appointees such as judges, ministers, and ambassadors,²⁸ and chairmen of certain executive bodies as listed in section 153 and 154 of the 1999 Constitution. The State Houses of Assembly are also constitutionally empowered to screen some of the State Governors' appointees.

The National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly have the power to remove the President and Vice President, and the Governor or Deputy Governor respectively, through the process of impeachment.²⁹ However, the legislature is only required to use this power when there is executive gross misconduct. Unfortunately, some state legislatures do sometimes use their power of impeachment to settle political scores with their State Governors and this has been severally successfully challenged in courts. The Supreme Court in *Adeleke & Ors V. Oyo State House of Assembly* provided clarity about the limitation of legislative power of impeachment when it declared the Oyo State House of Assembly's impeachment of the Governor null and void.³⁰

All these provisions convey that constituents are justified to scrutinise the performance of political office holders. The legislature is the nearest arm of government to the constituents; hence people expect MPs to provide them with various benefits. As a result of the intense public expectation of good governance as provided in the 1999 Constitution, politicians, especially MPs are taking the performance of their responsibilities more seriously. One might argue that MPs do not have the access and

²⁸ See Sections 147, 171 (4) 154 (1), 231, 238, 250 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

²⁹ See Sections 148 and 188 of the Constitution, for details on procedure for impeachment procedure at the National and State Assembly levels.

³⁰ <https://nigerialii.org/ng/judgment/supreme-court/2007/55> from Nigeria LII, 2007 January, 12.

power to expend state money under the 1999 constitution, yet, the same constitution gave them oversight powers over the executive agencies. Apart from having input into budgetary allocation, MPs have annual constituency funds for the benefit of the districts they represent. Therefore, constituents have a legal, democratic and socio-cultural sense of entitlement to expect good governance and its benefits from political leaders.

3.7 MPs' Responsiveness to Public Expectations

One of the most challenging problems facing African countries today is how to ensure that governments work for the people. In many African countries, systems of checks and balances have not lived up to expectations in making state institutions deliver such public goods-horizontal accountability (Aiko 2014). In Nigeria, as in many other countries including developed economies, citizens contact their leaders through different channels to ask questions about performance. Constituents in Nigeria, as elsewhere, attend constituency outreach meetings, town hall meetings, and plenary sessions, courtesy visits to politicians, social gathering, and private invitations to express their expectations. Through such audiences political leaders learn more about individual constituents and local needs and priorities

While many people have strong views on accountability, there is no unanimity when it comes to who should make MPs do their jobs. For example, a 2014 Afrobarometer survey conducted across four East African countries including, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Burundi, revealed an upward trend in peoples' views that it is the voters' responsibility to make elected MPs do their job (Aiko 2014). However, there are still respondents who feel that other institutions should make MPs do their job (see chart

below). The significance of this finding is that the more people are aware of their democratic rights and willing to use such rights to enforce political accountability on the elected politicians such as MPs, the higher the chances of politicians delivering good governance, public goods and services.

As shown below, 66% of those surveyed in Kenya said the voters should make MPs do their job, followed by 45% of those surveyed in Uganda who also thought that voters should make MPs accountable. There is no comparable survey result regarding this question in Nigeria yet, however, voters’ attitudes to politics across many African countries often mirrors the result in the four East African countries. Therefore, this result may not represent an empirical evidence of Nigerian voters’ attitude to the question of who should hold MPs account, but it signposts a trend in other African countries that needs to be taken seriously. It also demonstrates that the effectiveness of political accountability expectations depends on the level of pressure constituents exert on politicians.

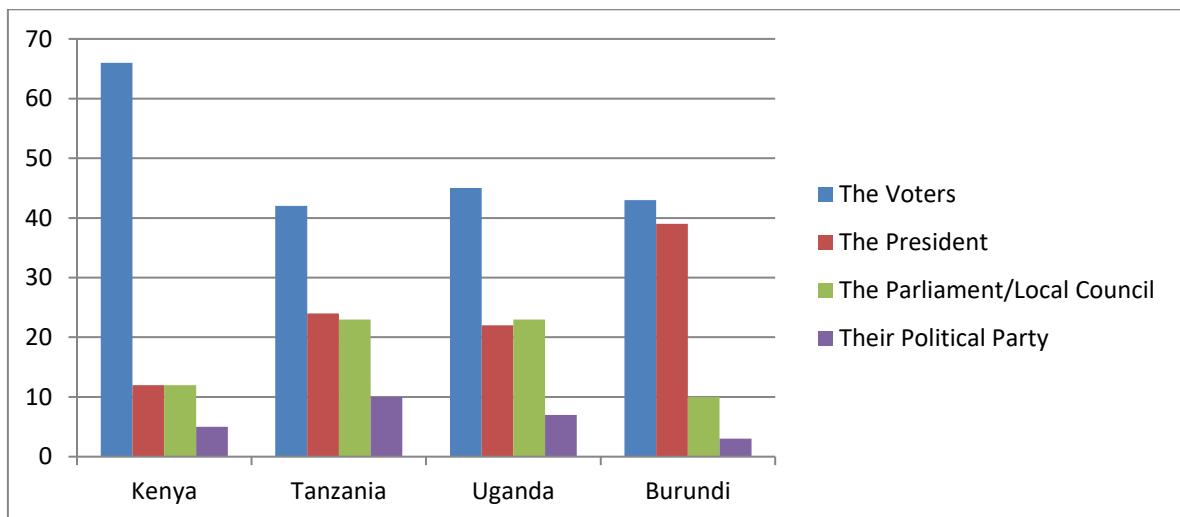


Figure 1 Percentage of survey responses to the question: who should make MPs do their job?³¹

3.8 What are MPs' Responsibilities?

In addition to the above contemporary African MP's including Nigeria are increasingly coming under pressure to perform additional hybrid functions like providing jobs to the unemployed, financial support to the poor, government contracts and constituency development projects like roads, electricity and pipe-borne water. People expect MPs to make laws for good governance, represent the interest of their constituencies in parliament and oversee executive agencies to ensure the equitable and judicious use of public funds. But the most important expectation of MPs is to provide jobs, financial support, contracts as well as constituency development projects.

Available secondary sources on African representative politics suggest that many voters do not have confidence in their MP's performance. Apart from the survey for this thesis, there is little primary information about what Nigerians want from their MPs. The Afrobarometer survey of 2014 provides the closest examples of what Africans think are their MPs' responsibilities (Aiko 2014). Although this survey relates to constituents from Malawi, the attitudes of Malawians can be taken as partly indicative for Nigeria.

³¹ I adapted data listed on the Afro barometer survey 2014 to produce this graph that summarises how those surveyed in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Burundi feel about whose duty it is to make MPs do their job. If we equate these responses to potential action, one might imply that those that accept the responsibility to make MPs do their job might likely be more actively involved in making demands of their MPs than those that say it is the duty of the President, Parliament, or Political Parties. Afrobarometer Despatch No 4, 25 November 2014, http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Dispatch/ab_r6_dispatchno4.pdf (accessed 23 February 2019).

Table 2 Showing the Percentage of what Malawians Feel are the Most Important Responsibilities of their MPs. ³²

MP's Responsibilities	Percentage
Make law	1%
National security	2%
Rule/govern	3%
Improve agriculture	5%
Listen to the people	7%
Important education policies	8%
Help the poor	9%
Implement healthcare policies	10%
Improve infrastructure	11%
Represent people	22%
Deliver development	26%

³² Source: adapted from the page 24 of All Party Parliamentary Group 2008. See Rose Aiko Political accountability in East African countries: who should make MPs and Councillors do their job? Afrobarometer. Despatch No 4, 25 November 2014, http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Dispatch/ab_r6_dispatchno4.pdf (accessed 23 February 2019). The real survey question being responded to by surveyed Malawians is: what do you believe are the most important responsibilities of an MP? These responses are typical representation of the kind of accountability benefits constituents feel their MPs should supply and this may differ according to the varied need of each constituency.

The table shows that Malawians believe that the MPs should perform. This is indicative of current trend in Africa where constituents would likely expect their MPs to provide services associated with their position. Malawians believe that MPs are responsible for delivering development projects in their constituencies. They also rank political representation as the second most important responsibility of their MPs. Law making was the least ranked responsibility of an MP. This suggests that Malawians consider constituency development as the most important role of their MPs rather than law making. In Nigeria, peoples' attitudes towards what they think is the most important thing that government should address include unemployment (26%), state of the economy (19%), government corruption (15%), fuel scarcity (14%), security (13%), electricity (10%), and infrastructure (3%) (Chesapeake Beach Consulting and the International Republican Institute 2016).³³ The inability of the government to provide basic public goods and services to citizens often results to lack of trust of those in political positions. According to the Afrobarometer Round 6 Survey of 2014/2015:

Across 36 African countries, fewer than half of all respondents say they trust their MPs (48%) and local councillors (46%) "somewhat" or "a lot". Among 12 public institutions and leaders, MPs and local councillors rank eighth and ninth in public trust (Aiko et al; 2016: 1).

However, trust in parliamentarians varies across African countries. More than 70% of citizens said they trust their MPs "somewhat" or "a lot" in Namibia (74%), Niger (73%), Tanzania (72%), compared to less than one in three citizens in Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Gabon, Morocco, Algeria, Liberia, and Sierra Leone (Aiko et al; 2016: 3-4). This finding shows that trust is an essential element for measuring citizens' attitudes

³³ National Survey of Nigerian Public Opinion, April 18 to May 6, 2016. Available at https://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/2016-28-06_iri_nigeria_poll_.pdf. Accessed 7 April 2019.

towards politicians and participation in politics. Trust in a politician will increase where there is evidence that he/she has performed his or her duties responsively which can also attract goodwill and more political support. On the contrary, mistrust can cause constituents' despondency which may result to accountability deficit when people become disinterested in politics. This survey result supports the evidence from my fieldwork which suggests that trust increases a constituent's understanding and show of empathy towards an MP.

3.9 Constituency Development Politics

Constituency projects are conceived as developmental infrastructures that benefit all constituents. Funds for such projects are made available from the central government in countries like Ghana, Malaysia, India, Papua New Guinea, South Sudan, Honduras, Malawi, Liberia, Nepal, Rwanda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, United States of America and recently Nigeria (Baskin 2010). Constituency development projects are increasingly becoming the most important accountability demands for Nigerian MPs, especially in more marginalised parts of the country. However, constituency intervention projects and funding remain a divisive issue because it causes legislative and executive conflicts and creates negative public perception of the legislature. As Busari noted:

The lawmakers premised their arguments on the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy, as provided in Section 14(3) that: "The composition of the Government of the Federation or any of its agencies and conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity.." Often times, They cite Section 15(4), section 16 (1) (2) , Section 13(1) and other sections of the constitution to justify that it is a significant constitutional duty and responsibility of a legislator to ensure that

projects are evenly distributed to all federal constituencies in Nigeria.³⁴

Constituency project funding controversies are not limited to Nigeria. Constituency Development Funds (CDFs), raise fundamental questions about the separation of powers between the executive and legislature. Despite popular pressure to the contrary, some politicians and observers argue that the public should be better educated about the role and the limits of the legislators, to remove the constant pressure of constituency projects.

Justifying constituency project funding in Nigeria, Ohwovoriole (2017), argues that two years into President Muhammadu Buhari's administration, people demanded to know what he had achieved and that ministers pointed at roads and other projects, confirming the importance of constituency projects. Overall, the fact that Constituency Development Funds (CDFs) are available increases public scrutiny of what MPs do with such allocations. A typical example is (CDF) across 12 countries:

Table 3 Constituency Development Funds (CDFs) as a Tool of Decentralised Development, 56 Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference Nairobi, Kenya 10-19 September 2010.³⁵

³⁴ Kemi Busari, April 22, 2018. Analysis: How Nigerian lawmakers share N100 billion zonal intervention fund annually. She articulated why how the constituency intervention politics started and how Nigerian MPs are cutting corners to misappropriate their constituency funds. She pointed to the proliferation of constituency project marketing billboards that senators and House Members normally erect in strategic locations to advertise how they use their constituency allocation. Often, many of these billboard claims are lies as they would divert the money with little or no evidence of any project executed.

³⁵ Available at: www.cpahq.org > CPAHQ > CMDownload

Accessed on 6th April 2019. Amounts allocated per MP in selected countries in USD

The IBP paper does not indicate for which year the allocation took place – a matter of some importance as each parliament employs a different formula for awarding these funds, but the chart does capture the wide national variation in amounts awarded. to CDFs. Also see: Albert van Zyl, “What is wrong with the Constituency Development Funds?” International Budget Partnership Budget Brief, III, no. 10 (2010), p. 1.), <http://www.internationalbudget.org/resources/briefs/brief10.pdf>

Countries	Average Amount Allocated per MP (USD)
Philippines	\$ 4,270,001
Bhutan	\$ 43,000
Solomon Island	\$ 140,000
Kenya	\$794,464
Malaysia	\$ 577,951
Jamaica	\$ 456,361
India	\$ 420,790
Sudan	\$ 317,543
Pakistan	\$ 240,000
Malawi	\$ 21,352
Tanzania	\$ 13,761
Uganda	\$ 5,187

In Nigeria, constituency projects and allocation tend to dominate what MPs do. There are a lot of complains about the excessive money Nigerian MPs receive and how some of them mismanage their constituency funds. But the above table shows that MPs from other countries receive constituency project allocation to help them provide grassroots

development services. Therefore, the funds MPs receive across different countries differ according to resources available, size of each country's economy and electoral district among others.

3.10 How MPs Manage Constituents' Pressures

Nigerian senators are constitutionally mandated to represent the interests of their respective constituencies, oversee the activities of the executive arm of government and "make laws that reflect the collective will of the people or part of it is articulated, expressed and implemented" (Okoosi-Simbine 2010:1). The Nigerian National Assembly, which, consists of the Senate and House of Representatives, is vested with the legislative powers of the Federation.³⁶ People converge at the National Assembly for different reasons, including the need to express their views during public hearings preceding the passage of bills into Acts of the National Assembly or to monitor how their MPs are performing on the legislative floor.

My research suggests that many Nigerians converge at the National Assembly also to make various personal, group or communal demands of MPs. Sometimes, the National Assembly lobby does get jam-packed with people waiting by the entrance of the Senate or House of Representatives chambers for the emergence of particular MPs or running between the galleries of the two chambers to monitor events. Without doubt, many of the visitors have full knowledge of each chamber's legislative calendar, because fewer

³⁶ Section 4(1) under Part II of the Constitution states inter alia: The Legislative powers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be vested in a National Assembly for the Federation which shall consist of a Senate and a House of Representatives". It goes further, in Section 4 (2), to state as follows: "The National Assembly shall have power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the federation with respect to any matter included in the Exclusive Legislative List.

people visit the National Assembly Complex whenever the MPs are on recess. As Tsoka (2009) notes for South Africa, even if African constituents do not know the names of their MPs, this does not prevent them from contacting their senators or honourable members.³⁷ My fieldwork record shows that the situation in Nigeria is similar. Knowing the name of an MP helps a constituent to gain access to an MP. However, even those that do not know her, or his name can often still locate the relevant office.

At present, there is no Afrobarometer survey that captures attitudes of Nigerians towards their MPs. However, the South African findings resonate with my own survey in Nigeria. For example, 65% of the constituents I surveyed did not know the names of their senators, but this did not deter them from making contact or expressing the desire to contact the senator for personal or communal development issues. The continuous convergence of both invited and uninvited people exerts enormous pressure on the MPs, to the extent that they do not have any alternative other than to come up with ways to reduce the pressure. MPs use different strategies that they deem fit to reduce or avoid the pressure from prospective constituents and non-constituents.

³⁷ Afrobarometer Briefing Paper No. 76 November 2009: The Proportional Representation and Popular Assessments of MP Performance in South Africa: A Desire for Electoral Reform? "South Africans are less likely to know their MPs than respondents in any of the other 11 countries. A mere 3% of South Africans could correctly name their MP, compared to a 12-country average of 41%. Based on this, the critics would seem to have a strong case. Yet when we turn to the question of how often people contact MPs, the picture changes. It shows that twelve percent of South Africans claim to have contacted an MP in the past year "about some important problem or to give them your views". This means MPs are contacted at about the same rate as officials of government agencies (14%) and traditional leaders (13%), but much less than local government councillors (27%) or religious leaders (25%). But this 12% contact rate in South Africa exactly matches the 12-country average. In sum, South Africans may be far less likely to know the name of their MP, but they are just as likely to contact an MP about an issue as citizens in any of the other 11 countries "(Tsoka 2009: 2). See <https://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Briefing%20paper/AfrobriefNo76.pdf>

One common strategy I observed during my visits to the National Assembly was that many senators appear to be friendly and receptive to all those waiting for them in the lobby, but that they attend to them selectively. Unless dealing with a constituent a senator would like to meet, he or she will appear in haste and will give different excuses designed to avoid them. Statements as “I am late for Senate Committee meeting”, “We are holding a joint committee meeting”, “I am already late for public hearing”, “We have a party caucus meeting and hopefully I will see you some other time” are very common. MPs rarely lose their temper, even when one can see that they are visibly angry and frustrated with the number of people pressurising them. Some MPs are known for attending to the needs of constituents and this disposition often creates more pressure as more people converge for similar reasons. As I observed throughout my visit to the National Assembly, some MPs do try to discharge their constituents as soon as possible but others are either referred to wait in the office or at the constituency office.

3.11 MPs and the Quest for Self-esteem

Nigeria is a hierarchical society. Age, wealth, qualification, and position(s) indicate seniority and attract respect. Generally, people believe that age is synonymous to wisdom, wealth is a product of industry, and qualification is the outcome of intellect. In effect, those that possess these qualities are often the ones that occupy political offices as well as reap the material rewards that are associated with them. As noted above, communities also often confer chieftaincy titles on those with such attributes of seniority. The importance of these characteristics is underscored in the way people are greeted. All over Nigeria, people are initially referred to by their academic, professional or honorific titles followed by their full names. People compete to outdo each other in

wealth acquisition, academic qualification, political positioning as well as other social titles. These acts are evident in the way big men competitively acquire chieftaincy titles and non-academic doctoral degrees. The academic and other ancillary requirements for the position of senators and honourable members are vividly stated in the Chapter V, Part I, sub-section C, 106 of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution:

A person shall be qualified for election as a member of a House of Assembly if:

- (a) He is a citizen of Nigeria;
- (b) He has attained the age of thirty years;
- (c) He has been educated up to at least the School Certificate level or its equivalent; and
- (d) He is a member of a political party and is sponsored by that party.³⁸

Although the Nigerian constitution provides that secondary qualification is enough to contest for the position of Senator or House of Representatives Member, the pressure of having an edge over other contestants often pushes some politicians to acquire higher qualifications criminally where they are unable to earn one legitimately. Over the years, there has been an increase in the number of politicians accused of forging different qualifications and some Nigerian MPs have been caught in scandals about this practice (Agboola 2018). This was epitomised in the resignation of the Speaker of the House of Representative in 1999, who confessed to lying about his age as well as forging a certificate from Toronto University.³⁹ Because attaining qualifications is often difficult, those who attain the pinnacle of success, such as senators, do not hesitate to emphasise their difference.

³⁸ Nigerian Constitution 1999 Chapter 5, Part 1, Sub-section C, (106 a-d).

³⁹ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/410906.stm> BBC, World: Africa, Nigeria's disgraced Speaker fined \$20, BBC Tuesday, August 3, 1999.

Like an average Nigerian, a senator would not hesitate to inform you about his or her achievements. One of them proudly reminded me before answering my questions that:

For me, it has been a much of experience, I come from a background of law practice, I was in litigation, for 26 years before moving over to this one, I moved from law practice to making law, so in my background you are expected to deal with the society at large so for me it has not been much of a change (Personal Communication Senator_3, Abuja, October 18th, 2014).

During the interviews with me, many senators set out how their previous political positions and privileges not only made them different but also how they prepared them for the challenges of political accountability. All the senators interviewed had previously held other positions they believed equipped them to manage the pressure of constituents.

3.12 Role of Legislative Aides

Broadly speaking, Nigeria's legislative aides perform duties akin to their British and American counterparts, i.e. including general duties, communication, public relations roles and legislative duties. Generally, what a legislative aide does is at the discretion of an MP. Some senators for example who have the means can afford to have more legislative aides than officially funded by the National Assembly. Whether they are strictly performing formal or informal roles, they are the life wire of an effective political representation because they act as liaison between the MPs and their constituents as shown below. The role of legislative aide provides additional dimension to the understanding of how MPs manage a complex relationship with their constituents. They also serve as the legislator's representative and liaison, a personal assistant to the legislator, handling and scheduling travels, and as office or operations manager.

They monitor legislation process, track issues specific to the legislator's constituency, attend meetings and hearings and perform other information-gathering duties that an MP may delegate to them.

A legislative aide performs a variety of communication and public relations duties with constituents, media representatives and individuals and other organizations involved in the legislative process. They may oversee inquiries from constituents, draft and respond to correspondence, create and resolve cases, and attend community and constituency outreach events. They communicate with other legislators and their representatives, state officials, government personnel and media outlets. Legislative aides may assist with writing press releases, newsletters, website content and speeches. They sometimes arrange for public appearances or special events for the legislator.

Legislative aides monitor legislative activities in the area(s) they are required to cover. They conduct research to inform the position of their boss (MP) on proposed bills, work with committees to develop bills, garner support for the legislation and coordinate introduction of bills. In addition, they track the progress of proposed and pending legislation and brief the legislator and staff. Depending on their knowledge and skills of legislative drafting, they may assist an MP to write or proofread drafts of legislations, amendments, memoranda and legal documents. Aside from that, their duties may include writing briefing reports, arranging for committee testimony, securing legal and supportive documents and preparing materials and presentations for committee meetings. General Constituency demands vetting and other miscellaneous duties.

Beyond law making, executive oversight and representation, constituency service has become an important accountability responsibility of Nigerian MPs. But the ability to showcase one's endeavours or achievements depends on the power of communication and this is where a good legislative aide can make a difference. MPs with a functional constituency service plan would usually have both constituency offices and constituency legislative aides working at the grassroots. Such staff would coordinate constituency outreach programs and bridge any communication gap between the constituents and their MP. As a public figure who represents everybody within a constituency, an MP is expected to support and attend most social occasions and where this is not feasible, the MP may delegate his/her legislative aides.

Through these kinds of cheerleader's responsibilities, legislative aides use the opportunity to show performances that underscore their power and influence. Because of how important and influential legislative aides are becoming, people add the names of legislative aids to their invitation cards as such names, in the absence of the big men, can potentially raise the social status of the celebrant. Again it is a common practice in Nigerian social events for big men to be represented by lower ranked individuals and in this case, MPs do send their legislative aides to represent them at such events and to symbolize their position, they are usually given the seats meant for the MP at the high table.

As senators occupy highly influential and financially/materially rewarding positions, and many people compete to become their legislative aides. The benefits of being a senator's legislative aide entice many people to leave well-paying jobs in the private sector, including banks. Legislative aides to senators were among the most "well-fed", well-catered-for, well-connected, well-paid and most boastful employees I observed at

the National Assembly during my fieldwork. While some of their behaviours may be frowned at, the truth is that many of them are well-resourced and powerful and use their positions as a launching pad for their own future political ambitions. To this end, hundreds of thousands of people compete to take one of the 2,750 legislative aide positions that are officially needed to serve the 109 senators and 360 members of the House of Representatives in 2015.⁴⁰ Each MP (senator or house member) is entitled to five legislative aides, which may include a senior legislative aide, legislative aide, special assistant, personal assistants and secretary. But the list of legislative aides increases with one's official positioning in either of the chambers. Perhaps in response to this demand, some senators and honourable members of the House of Representatives employ more aides than statutorily approved (Premium Times 2016).

3.13 Legislative aides manage access to politicians

Legislative aides also perform the important role of managing the number of visitors MPs receive on a daily basis. They are responsible for screening constituents before they can meet with senator. In some occasions, the special assistants to the senator also act on behalf of the senator to resolve a problem. For example, the special assistants are usually in charge of drafting introduction letters for constituents looking for work or contracts in government departments where the senator has influence. Normally, senators may request the special assistant, personal assistant, or secretary to draft such official letter for him/her to sign. However, sometimes a senator might mandate his/her legislative aides to offer constituents' pre-signed official introduction

⁴⁰ Jide Babalola, Over 2000 Aides for new NASS Members. The Nation, 28 June 2015. <http://thenationonline.net/over-2000-aides-for-new-nass-members/>

letters to those that merit it in his/her absence. In Nigeria, some legislative aides can act on behalf of senators and such positions make them big men in their own right. While exercising such power some will not fail to make every visitor to the senator's office know how important they are. The power, pomp and pageantry with which some legislative aides perform this type of role in Nigeria were captured in the brief conversation I had with the special assistant to Senator_5, which I include below:

Me: Good afternoon.

Special Assistant to Senator_5: Good afternoon and how can I help you?

Me: I am here to see Senator_5, as a follow-up to my previous interview request letter which he accepted and promised to grant me interview today.

Special Assistant to Senator_5: Okay, I can grant you the interview because I work closely with the distinguished senator.

Me: Sorry, I can see that the senator just walked in and I would prefer to speak to him directly. Please can you let him know that I am here for the interview? I do appreciate your help, but it is important that I hear from him directly.

Special Assistant to Senator_5: Look my friend, the senator will not necessarily say anything different from what I will tell you. If you do not know, nobody sees him without my prior approval and issues like yours I can handle very well as I am in charge of all the demands people make on him.

In another encounter, the senior legislative aide to Senator_3 told me that some of his peers do have the confidence of the senators and often determine whom the senator sees. When I visited the office of the senator following my initial interview request letter to her, I was referred to her senior legislative aide who said he was happy with my request and would convince the senator to grant me an interview because that would help project her work. According to him, although the senator is open-minded and does a lot to assist people, he sometimes must intervene to protect her from being lynched. In most cases he knows some issues that he would need to manage on her behalf,

including giving people job and recommendation letters as well as money designated to assist people in need. This feeling of authority and sense of being in control are clearly evidenced in his own words:

As you may know, she (Senator_3) is one of the most respected ranking senators, and of course that offers a lot of influence and also responsibilities. If you go around all the senators' offices, you will agree with me that more people come to her and she does her best to help people and her magnanimity makes it worse by the day. But I have been working with her for a long time now and I am glad that she trusts me to manage some of these pressures on her behalf. I can tell you, I am able to screen different demands and do know the genuine ones. As I said before, I will tell her about your interview request, and I can assure you she will attend to you. If she can't do it, I promise you I will do it for you because my ideas and hers are intertwined but for sure she will attend to you. Come here and wait for her on Tuesday and after plenary I will make sure she sees you first (Personal Communication, Senior Legislative Aide to Senator_3 Abuja, October 19, 2014).

Soon, I was able to comprehend how true the claims made by the legislative aide were when I met Senator_3 on Tuesday as planned. As I opened the door to her office and said Good afternoon Distinguished Senator, she said: "Are you the person that requested to interview me? When I said yes Distinguished Senator, she went on to say, "I was not quite convinced about granting you interview, especially that I was not sure who you are, but you are lucky my senior staff approved your request".

Such statements and promises made by the special assistant in the above encounter signify authority. People in position of authority have the expectation that others, especially those that need their help, should show them respect, and treat them differently. Special assistants with the trust of a senator are big men and women in their own right and do expect curtesy from visiting constituents. Big men like recognition and people can herald somebody's success and status by visiting the

individual as in the case of senators. People visit big men privately or in groups to chant their praise, most times generating an atmosphere of carnival.

This cultural practice has roots in pre-colonial societies and is part of showing respect to political leaders. Indeed, many of the rich individuals acknowledge and even mastermind such gatherings because they are a mark of recognition and respect for their status. In return, many wealthy people are happy to share money or other gifts like food to those that flock to their homes. Remarkably, there is no evidence that suggests that the help a politician renders to the praise-singing constituents translates into reciprocal support during elections. In many cases, praise-singers may not even be registered voters from the politician's electoral district. What this means is that different performances that facilitate what Nigerians consider as legitimate entitlements could easily be misinterpreted as patronage.

It will not be out of place to see a big man react furiously if you address him/her without adding his/her title. Titles like Professor, Dr, Chief, Chief Dr, Engineer, Lecturer, Architect, and Accountant to mention but a few are admirably in use, and those who do not have one are not accorded the respect of sitting on the high table during social events. Nigerians' craziness for title hinges on the fact that people believe it elevates them to the upper echelon of the social strata, Luke Ogedegbe, in 2007 (Uwalaka, 2014).

3.14 Public Attitude and the Paradox of Recognition

Although people address the big men by their titles and through praise-singing, many of them are unhappy with the practice and only do so because it facilitates an audience

with the big man and increases the chances of accountability returns. As soon as some of these people get what they want, or even just something, they become more sober. In such circumstances, one should not be surprised to hear them justify their behaviour, e.g. by saying, “Yes this is my own share of the national cake”, “How much did he give us out of all the money they are stealing?”, “This is better than nothing but it’s still our money” and “We will spend this one and another time we come again and gradually we would collect all from them”.⁴¹

Many Nigerians show their misgivings and dislike for politicians in public gatherings by inventing negative language that lampoons the praise-singers, and big men and their titles. I witnessed such behaviour during my visit to a senator’s constituency outreach in South Eastern Nigeria. Following a lavish chieftaincy title conferred on the senator by the traditional ruler of one his constituencies; the crowd were admonished to acknowledge his title by collectively shouting, “Chief, chief”. Astonishingly, one could clearly hear a mixture of people shouting ‘ “Chief, chief” and those shouting, “Thief, thief”. In the background one could hear people saying, “Are we going to see you again?” and, “What have you done for us?” According to some of the villagers, the senator in question was an evasive politician who had helped nobody.

Verbalisations are one of the ways in which people can show their resentment of politicians. Yet this occasion offered an opportunity for the constituents to make both personal and community demands. Many of them gathered around him and presented him with various personal problems including the shortage of money for food, school fees and treatment of ill-health. In return, the senator gave the community a lorry load

⁴¹ These are some of the negative statements that I witnessed; Nigerians make to show how much they resent their political leaders who they feel get into politics to loot the public fund.

of bags of rice and salt to share, promised them bags of fertilizer for farming, offered to build roads, provide them with electricity, pipe-borne water as well as extending a youth empowerment scheme to them.

3.15 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that expectations of political accountability preceded colonial rule. Africans including those living in present Nigeria had different accountability mechanisms, which were related to pre-colonial concepts of power, and colonial trajectories surrounding indirect rule and chieftaincy as well as education and the press.

The main key point in this chapter is that in Nigeria, the expectations of accountability arise from a diverse historical experience: Nigerians' engagement with power in various precolonial contexts was often both validated and transformed by the colonial state and by indirect rule. As a result, some performative ways of engagement with power continued to evolve. The colonial period also introduced its own ideas and technologies of accountability, for example in the press, and in its legal and administrative traditions, which often also expressed local sensibilities. These were further transformed in the postcolonial period. Therefore, the engagement of Nigerians with their current legal and constitutional provisions also has to be understood in the context of the country's longer political history.

4 THE LANGUAGE OF ACCOUNTABILITY PRESSURE

4.1 Introduction

This chapter critically examines the use of language in the art of political performance. In other words, it explores how the use of everyday conversations and utterances forms part of a performative understanding of political accountability. As the previous chapter has shown, demands for accountability existed in precolonial societies, and have continued to influence colonial and postcolonial political practices. In everyday life, people can create a barrier or build a bridge by virtue of the language they use in any relationship; thus, this chapter explores what people say and how they say it, and considers how that shapes accountability demands and supply outcomes. This chapter will build on the insights gained from the fieldwork to highlight the widespread legitimacy of, and support for, accountability demands in everyday exchanges. While demands for accountability are often linked to generalisations about corruption, they also affirm that politicians are expected, or even obligated, to improve constituents' lives through material wellbeing. Importantly, this expectation is rarely conceptualised in a manner that confirms conventional ideas about patronage. Rather it emphasises that demands are based on the political relationship between politicians and the electorate, or even highlights the dependence of politicians on their constituents.

By discussing diverse exchanges about political accountability, this chapter illustrates that accountability demands are voiced differently in separate contexts or encounters. Ranging from general social discourse and stereotypical views of the relationship between ordinary people and their leaders to the importance of persistence and respect in gaining access to such leaders in order to make demands. This chapter

illustrates the differences between accountability demands in a controlled environment, such as the National Assembly, and in crowds or during large-scale events. While very few demands take place in established patronage networks, individuals often address politicians respectfully in person, and one could occasionally interpret their speech as recognising politicians as real or potential patrons. However, like the popular discourse on politics, the demands voiced by large crowds illustrate that constituents see the relationship between politicians and constituents as part of a social or political contract and base their demands on what they see as the politician's responsibilities. As this chapter will show, most Nigerians have a strong sense of having contributed to the success of their leaders, and of being 'owed' progress/benefit in return.

4.2 The Social Linguistics of Everyday Life

Language is the basis of the relationship between individuals and a society (Hudson 1990, Holmes 2001). It is by language that "social functions, co-constructing social reality between and among individuals (...) such as conversing, arguing, cheating, and telling people what they should or should not do" (Hung Ng and Deng 2017: 2) are performed. It is an indispensable guide to the socio-cultural and political values and identity of a group of people. Culture is an important element that shapes human relationships and as such it has been variously defined in different ways, creating simplified diffused meaning as well as complex ones (see Keesing 1974; Lowie 2008). For the purpose of this thesis, I will align with Geertz's understanding of culture. According to Geertz, culture "denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embedded in symbols, inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and

attitudes towards life” (1973:89). Since politics determines human socio-economic and cultural conditions, one may argue that it makes sense to examine how the language of a given society shapes its political culture and development. Joseph (2006) argues that language is politics from top to bottom and exemplifies many ways in which politics and language intermingle and infinitely depend on each other. He goes on to posit that man, being a political animal, is exceptionally endowed through the power of language and speech to shape his destiny. For individuals and groups to survive in a highly competitive world, they will need to be able to interact, engage in conflict, recognise their friends and foes and be able to engage in political competition and discourse.⁴² The power imbalance created through human linguistic relationship also results to imbalance of political power in the political community and this explains the complex but dynamic model of relationships. Through language, humans develop the capacity to generate, impose and maintain political power on others (Anastassov 2017).

Language therefore is not only an instrument that mirrors the political culture of any society but serves as a barometer to measure its political temperature and pressure as well.

Through the use of language in everyday conversations and accountability encounters, one begins to understand how constituents feel about politicians, politics and the mood of Nigerians’ at large. A typical discussion with a Nigerian can be fun and can include unpredictable drama that may provide great insight into the problems that the society contends with. In a glowing but frank description of what a first-time visitor to Nigeria

⁴² This analysis is more of Schmittian understanding of the political, as enemies, foes and friends. Arendt, via Aristotle, has a potentially more positive understanding of politics, not much as competition between enemies, but more as interaction, open-endedness. This idea further, appreciates how language sits in the political depends on how one conceptualises the political in the first place. See Schmitt (2008) for his influential but controversial analysis of the concept of the political.

might expect when meeting a Nigerian, The Centre for Intercultural Learning, Cultural Facts on Nigeria states:

Meeting a Nigerian for the first time could be easy and fun. Nigeria as a whole could also be one big drama and soap opera unfolding before your eyes and everybody seems to have one thing or another to talk or complain about. They are very happy when someone shows interest in what they have to say (...) most times such discussions is often very passionate and dramatic [sic]. Don't be surprised if a third party cuts into your discussions without invitation to defend his or her interest (Centre for International Learning 2014: 1).

Observing how people construct and coin their language when interacting formally and informally will provide anyone following such conversation a vivid image of their political culture. Apart from interviewees and survey respondents (senators and constituents), a curious first-time visitor to Nigeria may notice how social discourse is heavily saturated by politics. People from all walks of life, including the airport staff, taxi drivers, fellow passengers, hotel staff, customers at the restaurants, public servants, students in higher education, newspaper stands free readers, and those buying and selling in the market place, enjoy talking and being listened to and by so doing use languages that have direct or indirect political undertone. Indeed, many Nigerians do not only demonstrate deep awareness of how genuine democracy works and drives development in other countries but also of the democratic deficit that exists in their own country. They lament the chronic and crippling culture of corruption and some might even give a keen audience the account of how much money has been stolen, by whom and how such illicit monies are being stashed in foreign bank accounts or used for sponsoring others as political godfathers. Often, they will point out that more than 70% of Nigerians are living in poverty, that hospitals are more like mortuaries, that electricity and water are not consistently available, that higher education institutions,

including universities, are becoming glorified secondary schools, and that the number of criminal activities including arm robbery, drug and human trafficking, as well as advance fee fraud, known as 419,⁴³ has become unfathomable, not to mention the phenomenon of Boko Haram terrorism in the North and kidnappings by Niger Delta militants in the South.

One of the most striking things to an observer or listener to a conversation between Nigerians might not only be how easily their discussions move from private issues to political discourse but also how proverbs and standing expressions are used to buttress specific points. Indeed, just like poets, Nigerians use literary licence to invent words and phrases, including metaphors and innuendoes, which satirically illustrate how things are perceived. While such linguistic artistry may be misinterpreted to indicate that the people do not care, it offers an easy way of making a point about everyday politics. Satirical language is not a new thing in Africa; it was widely in use during the colonial period, and as Mbembe (2001) demonstrates, Africans in postcolonial states including Cameroon, Nigeria, Kenya, Togo, and many more often make a mockery of their countries and their political leaders as a way to relieve themselves. The politics of suffering and smiling in Africa has been well articulated in the work of Chabal (2009). He posits that understanding of how Africa works requires

⁴³ This refers to section 419 of the Nigerian Criminal Code. This section explicitly states: "Any person who by false pretence, and with intent to defraud, obtains from any other anything capable of being stolen, or induces any other person to deliver to any person anything capable of being stolen, is guilty of a felony, and is liable to imprisonment for three years". Section 419 of the criminal code became popularized following the increase in the wave of corruption allegation, especially financial crimes involving Nigerians. People associate this section with scammers seeking to defraud recipients foolish and greedy enough to fall for their trickery, but it also covers a wide range of crimes. Therefore, those suspected defrauding others home or abroad and often showing off ill-gotten wealth or those convicted of such crime are called "419ers" and any scam within this context is called "Four One Nine". The creation of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has been relatively more effective in tackling domestic corruption and other forms of fraud including internet scammers known as "Yahoo Boys".

a different approach of enquiry. Chabal discusses the existence of limitations of the conventional political theories used for analysing African politics. He argues that African politics requires an approach that recognises that political thinking ought to be driven by the need to address the immediacy of everyday life and death. He argues that the complexities of African socio-political and economic condition suggest the need for an interpretive approach that offers insight into contemporary realities from the point of view of those who live through them.

Overall, Chabal is against the school of thought that pretentiously assumes that African politics could easily be explained using one simple framework. As could be inferred from some of his publications, any meaningful inroad into understanding African political systems requires the need to confront three problems. The first problem is the scholars' ability to recognise the importance of historical scope, secondly the comparability of research findings and thirdly, the generalisability of research findings (see Chabal 1992, Chabal 1999). While Chabal's account is a germane argument about the complexity of African politics, I will contend that such an approach should not be limited to Africa because every society has its own uniqueness that deserves the understanding of those studying it. Many believe that the late Fela Anikulapo's legendary music painted the most colourful and philosophical attitude of Africans especially Nigerians towards bad leadership. A clear example is contained in his "Shuffering and Shmiling" lyrics where he described how Nigerians suffer daily but still smiling:

Chorus

Shuffering and Shmiling!

Every day my people dey inside bus (Every day my people are on the bus)

Every day my people dey inside bus (Every day my people are on the the bus)

Forty-nine sitting, ninety-nine standing (Forty-nine sitting, ninety-nine standing)

Them go pack themselves in like sardine (They will pack themselves like sardines)

Them dey faint, them dey wake like cock (They faint, they wake up like a cockerel)

Them go reach house, water no dey (When they get home, there will be no water)

Them go reach bed, power no dey (When they go to bed, there will be no electricity)

Them go reach road, go-slow go come (When they are on the road, there will be slow traffic)

Them go reach road, police go slap (When they get to the road, police officers will slap them)

Them go reach road, army go whip (When they get to the road, soldiers will whip/flog them)

Them go look pocket, money no dey (When they look into their pockets, they are empty/ they have no money)

Them go reach work, query ready (When they get to work, they will be queried)

Every day na the same thing (Everyday it is the same thing)

Every day na the same thing (Everyday it is the same thing)

Every day na the same thing (Everyday it is the same thing)

Every day na the same thing ((Everyday it is the same thing)

Suffer, suffer for world... (Suffering, suffering for the world...),

(Anikulapo-Kuti 1978: 2-3; see also Alimi and Iroju 2013).

Many citizens tend to energetically, loudly and passionately engage one another when it comes to what politicians, especially MPs, do. Sometimes, a simple exchange of pleasantries and asking about one's work and family can snowball into an hour-long conversation of how politicians are stealing money from government coffers. I witnessed an incident that captures this comic but thought-provoking scenario among

public transport commuters during my fieldwork. In April 2015, I boarded an 18-seater bus travelling from Onitsha in the Eastern Region to Lagos State in the Western Region for a journey that lasted about 12 hours instead of 7 hours due to bad roads. As soon as the driver left Onitsha, one of the passengers stood up and requested that everyone join in a prayer for the safe journey to their respective destinations. Just after the prayers, another passenger, two rows from my seat, opened a daily newspaper with a front page caption: “10 Corruption Scandals that National Assembly Hasn’t Resolved”, and exclaimed, “Chei Naija, monkey dey work baboon dey chop” (Oh! Nigeria, monkeys [ordinary labourers] are working while baboons [privileged politicians] are eating [stealing]).⁴⁴ Although the man started by talking to himself, the fact that other passengers saw the caption of the newspaper meant that many of them had something to say about Nigerian MPs. In fewer than twenty minutes the newspaper had been passed round and scanned by about five passengers, with each one either hissing (showing disapproval) or making obscene remarks about the MPs and Nigerian politicians in general.

The scene provides an insight into the process of political socialization in Nigeria. As radio and television are sometimes heavily influenced by incumbent politicians, encounters like this help people to acquire information about current events to form their own opinion about national problems and to pass the message on to others who cannot read nor write. As demonstrated in the vignette above, there is hardly any distinction between private and public space when it comes to socio-political and economic discourse. When someone has a newspaper or other object that captures

⁴⁴ A remark by a passenger in public transport referring to newspaper report about unresolved corruption scandal in the Nigerian National Assembly. “Monkey dey work baboon dey chop” is a common idiom in Nigeria that depicts cheating, stealing and unfairness.

the public interest, it will not be out of place for others to ask to share it, and in most cases the owner of such material will oblige. Even though public exclamations often sound exaggerated, the fact remains like in this case, Nigerians not only say it the way they see it, but they make use of understatements and comic relief to mask their pain and disappointment.

As demonstrated in some of the encounters narrated above, people use language as an effective compass for navigating their relationship with politicians. They use figures of speech and proverb-laden language to express their expectations of accountability as part of everyday life. While such conversations often accuse politicians of corruption, it is important to see that this is a stereotypical accusation, which often serves as a rhetorical device to make claims to benefits people feel should be theirs of right. A lot of constituents have a strong sense of being 'owed' progress or benefit by their leaders and they passionately and theatrically express such expectations depending on the audience. They use incisive and colourful language during everyday encounters, especially those with deep proverbial meanings to drive home their demands. Nigerian proverbs illustrate the historical presence of accountability demands in different cultural repertoires and symbolizes why accountability demands and provision are parts of legitimate social expectations.

4.3 Accountability Benefit Encounters and the Use of Proverbs

As an Ibo man said in an interview, "Ebe ewere aṅṅ mmanṅ aṅṅ,di ya [sic]".⁴⁵ This is a proverb meaning, "Wherever bees are gathered in large numbers, there will always

⁴⁵ Igbo, Yoruba as well as Hausa languages cited in this thesis are the major languages spoken by the majority ethnic groups in Nigeria. Each of these three languages has special diacritics that supports and

be honey”. In the Nigerian setting, the honey represents positions of authority and influence, and most importantly, being rich and willing to share the wealth. The bees are members of the society who gather to taste the honey (wealth), and who thereby demand what this study has defined as private and community accountability benefits. This proverb summarises the social dynamics of encounters where political accountability is requested.

According to an ethnographic account of the cultural practice of Ile Ife, a spiritual and cultural centre of the Yoruba, “if an individual were both a man of principle and a man of money, he would be the most respected person in town and everyone would flock to his house” (Bascom 2009: 493). The idea of flocking around the rich and influential is not limited to the Yoruba alone; it is a phenomenon that can be seen all over Nigeria and that is prevalent in the political sphere. The dimension may differ, however, relative to the environment, (e.g. village or urban setting, MP’s office or in a public place), and the type of benefits the individuals or groups flocking to see a politician intend to demand. By and large, the way all the actors interact as well as their choice of words will give us an insight into the politics of private accountability benefits in Nigeria.

Private accountability demands can take place whenever a constituent meets an MP. An accountability demand and supply encounter could be pre-planned following an

distinguishes their pronunciations-thereby creating the meaning they ought to convey. It is very important for the speaker or writer to convey the correct meaning given the fact that they are rich with homophones. Similar attributes also apply to the majority of the over two hundred and fifty other languages spoken by minority ethnic groups in Nigeria. Even within the three major languages, there are still differences in dialects-meaning the same word could sound differently when pronounced by different tribes or sub-ethnic groups hence diacritics standardises pronunciation which in turn differentiates the meaning of one word from another. See (Ezeani, Happle and Onyenwe 2016): “Automatic Restoration of Diacritics for Igbo Language”. Considering the difficulty I had differentiating the sound of the words used by my informants during my fieldwork, I resolved to leave all the local languages used in this thesis, including Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa as they sounded in their original form when used by the authors.

invitation by the senator, it could be a deliberate visit by constituent(s) without any prior appointment, or it could be an encounter that happens by chance. Because many constituents may not have a second chance of meeting the senator, they will have to make their demands whenever and wherever they met the senator. This can be in the office of the senator, at the National Assembly lobby, in the constituency office, during social events, and at his/her private or official residence. Generally, politicians in Nigeria are regarded as “necessary evils” that milk the country dry and whenever and wherever people can, they try to retrieve some of the collective wealth they perceive has been stolen. As one constituent noted, some senators are evasive after elections, i.e. they do not visit their constituency, hardly attend legislative sittings, and do not reply to any communication. Another person even likened the relationship between Nigerian politicians and the people to that of a farm owner (Nigerians) and a thief (politicians). Using a figuratively rich proverb, one of the interviewees (constituents), illuminated how a lot of Nigerians feel about their politicians. In response to my statement that some senators are complaining that constituents make too much demands on them, he explained:

I will liken the relationship between an elected politician to that of a mother and child, as our people say: “Nwata agaha akwuli ugwo nmiri ara nneya jiri zuo ya” (“A child cannot pay for the mother’s breast milk”). Without a mother taking the pain of pregnancy and motherhood and breastfeeding the baby, there cannot be a child. So, we the people are like the mother, while the elected MP is the child, because if we have not voted for them they will not be in such good position. So will the child say, “Mother you are asking for too much,” when such mother makes demands of that child in the future? (Personal Communication Constituent_28 Imo, November 11, 2014).

The above proverbial explanation asserts that there are things in life that are unquantifiable and priceless. In this case, no matter how much a child spends or gives

the mother in life, this cannot compensate for the effort and time with which the child was raised from infancy. By extension, the interviewee implies that without the peoples' votes those that occupy what they see as position of authority and affluence would not have had the privilege. This challenges conventional notions of political patronage. Like many Nigerians, the constituent, rather than seeing himself as a client, sees himself as a patron who is however disappointed by the client.

Besides the use of euphemistic and comic expressions, proverbs are widely used to convey important and sometimes very complicated information. Moreover, the use of proverbs is considered as a measure of maturity and wisdom among Igbo and Yoruba speakers. Proverbs are strongly rooted in experience. They are based on "detailed observation of human behaviours, those of animals, plants, and natural phenomena, including values, beliefs, folklores, attitudes, perceptions, emotions and the entire societal feelings and thought" (Esomonu 1981: 141). Chinua Achebe's works demonstrate not only the aesthetic values of using proverbs among the Igbos but its symbolism of wisdom. Indeed, Igbo proverb goes beyond literary interpretation, it breathes life to conversation. Among the Igbo, those that speak in a very simple and plain language are perceived as inexperienced, because for the Igbo, "Ilu bu mmanu eji eri okwu"-proverbs are oil with which words are eaten (Achebe 1958: 5). Falola (2004: 53) also shows how indispensable the use of proverbs is in Nigerian society especially, among Yoruba. He writes:

One must learn proverbs. Without the ability to use and interpret proverbs, one cannot be a Mesiego.⁴⁶ A proverb is regarded as the horse that carries words to a different level, investing them

⁴⁶ "Mesiego" is someone who is able to respond to foolish people very quickly and cleverly. Such people are considered more intelligent because of their ability to spontaneously respond or provide answers that tend to outwit their opponents. In a typical Yoruba and Igbo conversation, peoples' cleverness are measured by their ability to use proverbs logically.

with meanings, enrobing the user with the garment of wisdom. Just as a man's character cannot be washed away by rain, so, too, a true Mesiego can never be drowned in a sea of proverbs. Proverbs allow contradictions to attain a meaningful status, for the wise to escape being caught in a lie. One learns idioms, sentence so complicated that the elders might be summoned to help.

Interestingly, proverbs are often used as a commentary on how politicians are stealing national wealth. Apart from what they consider as the collective wealth that politicians should share with those that elected them, many believe that the accountability of an MP reflects her or his ability to respond to communal needs. An interviewee asked about the morality of demanding things from politicians, especially senators, explained to me that: "I have not received any money from any politician, but if I have access to such money, I will take it. Besides, as you know, no man is an island, and our people say: "A non-social animal rubs its itching back on a tree, but when a man has an itchy back, he asks his kinsman to scratch him" (Personal Communication Constituent_25 Aba, March 12, 2015).

This proverb is suggestive of the communal spirit among Nigerians, especially in the rural settings, which emphasise that no individual exists just for him or herself and everybody has a role to play in the community. The term "kinsman" in the proverb stands for the people, community or constituents that elected a senator, and "non-social animals" are solitary ones that do not benefit from grooming by others. The proverb implies that people by nature will always be either rich or poor. The poor may lack money or means of survival and may seek help from those that are wealthy or are able to help, while wealthy ones may need leadership or political support from the community. Thus "scratching" symbolises a social bond, specifically the act of helping those in need, who are "itching". By contrast, "rubbing" is a desperate act often seen

among non-social animals, such as goats, which persistently “rub” their bodies against “trees” that do not necessarily stop the “itching”. The analogy of “itching” and “scratching” therefore describes the interdependence that exists within a community for the mutual benefit of all. In many Ibo societies, those that are uncooperative with others and do not fulfil their social responsibility are sanctioned or even, in the worst-case scenario, ostracised (Anigbo 1978). While the use of this proverb emphasises the importance of exchange, it also implies that politicians who do not look after their constituents fail in their recognition of reciprocity.

As revealed during the course of my interviews, senators said that they spend a large amount of their own earnings to assist constituents, but as one of them puts it: “There is no senator or even the richest man in Nigeria that can afford to supply all the needs of Nigerians” (Personal Communication-Senator 6, Abuja October 20, 2014). As discussed in chapter five, private benefits like jobs, contract or financial support are among the demands Nigerian MPs are willing to provide when they can. But for some observers, once a senator offers a gift to a constituent like I noticed during my fieldwork, he or she can easily be seen as a “patron”. Such assumption plays into the clientele narrative of African politics where constituents are assumed to be “clients” of big men or women politicians. The relationship is not an established patron-client network and constituents do not see themselves as clients to their MPs. On the contrary, the attitude and language used by the constituents I observed suggests that they do not see themselves as clients of the MPs. Rather; they have a sense of entitlement to benefits and are not obliged to support politicians because of any gift they received. This further question the wisdom in generalising such relationship as patron-client corruption. In a wider sense, such narrative borders on the

misinterpretation of African political culture. This analogy was clearly alluded to in the study of how vote-buying is interpreted in Kenya (Kramon 2013). As Eric Kramon, noted, his use of vote buying in the study was mostly because he wanted to be compliant with convention. He goes on to question the ingenuity of the lopsided interpretation of vote buying in Kenya:

But what I realised very quickly in talking to Kenyans is that much of what we think looks like vote buying is actually not understood by candidate or voter as a transaction at all. Given just how widespread cash handouts are during political campaigns in Kenya, it seems clear that better describing and explaining the role of cash handouts in the political system could lead to a better understanding of how democratic politics works in a place like Kenya (Kramon 2013: 252).

Politicians require enormous resources and sacrifice to meet constituents' demands. However, the types and level of pressure politicians receive also depends on the level of constituents' awareness of MP's responsibility. For example, in the case of Ghana "MP's who raise the political awareness of citizens in their constituencies reportedly face lower pressures for private (...) goods as a consequence" (Lindberg, 2010:129).

On this basis, senators often adopt strategies to reduce constituents' pressures. Some of the senators interviewed acknowledged the long-held view of many Nigerians, namely that some of them neither visit their electorate nor provide any form of assistance to their constituents. Such senators do not receive any public sympathy and are often regarded as prodigal sons who stole a political mandate and should be treated as thieves. In order to catch the thief, metaphorically referring to senators, an interviewee (voter), explained: "The farmer (constituents) must use different measures including setting snares and hiding until the thief returns. Therefore, it requires

resilience, persistence and craftsmanship to corner an evasive senator.” (Personal Communication Constituent_34, Lokoja, November 2, 2014).

The above measure was dramatically expressed during an encounter I witnessed between a group of constituents and a senator at the lobby of the Nigerian National Assembly. This episode unfolded as I was observing a Senate plenary session from the public gallery. Following a motion of adjournment, some of the senators began to exit the chamber and at that point, I overheard three young men who saw the senator they had been waiting for leave the chamber and decided to quickly go and wait for him by the exit door. Speaking in low tones, as they were not supposed to be noisy, the one that seemed to have the best knowledge of the National Assembly Complex said: “Guys, look, the senator we have been waiting for is leaving, so let us go out quickly and wait by the senate exit door because he may not go back to his office”. Sensing that this episode might provide me with deeper clues about the dynamics of such encounters, I decided to go after them to observe how the senator would react to them. The encounter was very brief, but the scene nevertheless added new perspective that helped me broaden the research analysis. Joining a barrage of people jostling to get the attention of senators, I took a vantage position that helped me to capture this unpredictable encounter. As soon as the senator emerged from the chamber, the three men waiting by the door approached him and each one of them took his turn to greet him, saying; “Good afternoon distinguished senator sir”. “Good afternoon” the senator replied, he moved a few steps, turned around and asked; “Can I help you”? “Yes sir, we are your boys from (...)”, they replied. The senator went on: “Do you have an appointment with me today?” His mobile phone rang, and he then quickly looked at it and said; “Gentlemen, I have an important call – excuse me”.

As he walked down the lobby heading towards Senate Committee Room 1 still speaking on his mobile phone, the young men followed him in the hope that he would stop and attend to them. Meanwhile, they were deliberating what their next move would be. Their leader advised it would be better for them to follow him as that was their best opportunity to make their demands. Suddenly, the senator turned back and asked, "Are you people still following me? As I said before, I do not know you people, and do not have any appointment with you, and you can see I am very busy, and I am going for public hearing and cannot see you". In response, after saying a dozen "Sorry sir" to him, the young men told him; "Sir we have been looking for an opportunity to see you for a long time and we came from (...), your constituency". He reluctantly told them to go and wait for him in his office, and he warned them that he was not sure when he would finish. They thanked him jubilantly and headed towards his office. At this point, one of them said; "These politicians are like a green snake in green grass, you never can tell where the head is, so you need to be wise when hunting them"(Constituent Private Conversation_Abuja September 10, 2012).

The conversations and the narratives of the constituents during my personal communication with them suggest that people feel strongly about the demands they make of leaders both in private and public spaces. Because Nigerians believe that anything that is worth saying is worth saying well. For them, figurative phrases are intelligent ways of expressing themselves because they arouse deep reflection and soul-searching by those listening. It is however important to note that what people say and how they say it, depends on what they want to achieve and whom they are addressing at the time. In a private audience with a political leader, they must show respect but in a public gathering, especially if the politician is viewed as selfish and a

non-performer, they may resort to booing and use of offensive language. This observation resonates with Mbembe's African postcolonial account that argues that the expression of humour, respect and disrespect somehow reinforces power relations, and the legitimacy of the powerful (Mbembe 1992). For example, in the case of the three young men and the senator, the constituents were extremely careful in their use of language in the presence of the senator, but as soon as he gave them hope and left, they referred to him as "a green snake in a green grass" (someone elusive). This suggests that people will avoid upsetting those in position of authority to maximise any accountability demand opportunity. The encounters narrated here equally attest to the fact that there is often something of a "cat and mouse game" between MPs and constituents at the National Assembly Complex. What this is teaching us is that even though MPs may be unhappy about being pestered by accountability-seeking constituents, they nonetheless find a way not to offend them. On the other hand, where constituents are patient and persistent, as narrated in the scene between a senator and the three men from the South Eastern Nigeria, people can succeed in gaining access to the big men. However, such access does not guarantee accountability returns, therefore the young men must show respect to the senator to be considered as worthy constituents.

4.4 Praise-singing and Accountability Pressure

Political praise singing is not exclusive to Nigeria; it is an integral part of most African societies' political culture (Lukani 2019). In Nigeria, praise singing provides a unique dimension to often colourful and carnival-like political activities. Praise singers may be constituents who intend to appreciate the good deeds of politicians, or they may be

professionals who earn their livelihood through praise singing. The point of political praise singing in Nigeria is that politicians can gain support through praise singing that catches on, while the praise singers too get paid (Obiezu 2019).

Constituents may form small or large groups to pay MPs solidarity or curtesy visits but none of the participant observations I undertook during such visits showed that they were part of established patron-client relationships. However, there were instances of groups gathering to show appreciation and political support to MPs they claimed have performed well. Such visits provide us with the opportunity to scrutinise how constituents collectively make their demands and how MPs publicly deal with such pressures.

One of the encounters during my fieldwork bears witness not only to the dimensions of accountability demands on Nigerian MPs, but also shows how colourful such gatherings can be. On my visit to interview a senator from a North Eastern State in Maitama District, one of the most expensive and elite areas of Abuja, I noticed a carnival-like atmosphere on the street leading to his home. There were two groups dressed in eye-catching costumes, drumming, singing and dancing in what a first-time visitor to Nigeria might mistake for a festival. Out of curiosity, I remarked that this particular scene must be unusual in such a serene area reserved for only the rich. Speaking in Pidgin English, my taxi driver thought that I was out of touch with contemporary Nigeria and sarcastically enquired, “Oga, you no dey for Nigeria? You no know say where all these thieves wey they steal our money dey, people dey gather to collect their own share?” (Sir, don’t you live in Nigeria? Are you the only one that does not know that wherever these thieves (senators) that steal our money are, people

will gather to demand their own share of the stolen money?) (Personal Communication Abuja, October 20, 2014).⁴⁷

As we drove closer to his gate, we saw noisier crowds still dancing and singing. When I asked the driver to pull over, he remarked, “So Oga, (Sir) you want to see the senator yourself? I carry people to this place always; I hear the senator dey give people money, (I learnt that the senator provides people with financial support) so that is why you see all these people here”.⁴⁸ As I alighted from the car, some of them advanced towards me, and speaking in Hausa Language saying: “Sanu, ranka dede” (Greetings, may you live long), which is a popular way of greeting and showing respect in the Northern part of Nigeria and often used to chant someone’s praise.⁴⁹ When I asked what they were there to do, their leader replied in Pidgin English mixed with Hausa: “Walahi, we dey see Oga senator, Insha Allah, we dey happy because we know him go come give us something”. (I swear, we are here to meet with our senator, by the grace of God we know he will give us something). He explained his group had come from Maiduguri, Damaturu and many other places, and expressed his hope that the senator would assist them, before turning to me and said: “Oga, flees give us something and Allah go bless you” (Sir, please give us something and God will bless you).⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Comments made by my taxi driver Abdul when I remarked about people dancing on my way to see a senator from Kebbi State for an interview. Even though the allegation made by the taxi driver in this case is provocative and presumptuous, it reflects the attitude of many Nigerians towards politicians, including those that benefited from them. The general feeling is that all politicians are corrupt. People can be very upset and vocally emotional but sometimes comical about it as shown in some stand up comedies where serious alleged or proven corruption cases are comically referenced to elicit laughter from the audience. This also resonates with Mbembe’s description of post colony.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ This is an example of how Hausas verbally manifest polite and respectful expressions in Nigeria. Similar intuitions exist in the Igbos and Yoruba languages, including in other languages spoken by minority ethnic groups. See (Dozie and Otagburuagu 2019).

⁵⁰ An encounter with the group of constituents from Kebbi State that flocked the residence of the senator from Kebbi State I went to interview, 25th of October 2014.

Looking around, I noticed a lot of people, who were largely men. The attempt by the security guard to open the gate for me to enter generated louder chanting, drumming, dancing and singing in an ever-increasing spectre of praise singing. A man who claimed to be the senator's personal assistant came out and gave them some money, which I later learnt was about N500.000, equivalent to £1,859.00 (based on September 2014 exchange rate=269 NGN). It did appear that they were well organised as they peacefully lined up under the supervision of the senator's personal assistant and began to discuss sharing the money. Unfortunately, I learnt from the senator that this good gesture is often misinterpreted by his constituents as meaning that there is a lot of money so they keep coming from far taking huge risks to travel from the Northern States to Abuja.

One of the courtesy calls I witnessed during my fieldwork was the visit by the representatives of a student organisation from South West Nigeria to the three senators representing one of the states from the region. With the general election less than five months away, the visit was meant to endorse the re-election of the senators whom the students claimed had performed well, and to highlight major development issues that would need the attention of the next governor of the state. The three senators were sitting in the front row to address the youth. As is the norm of such gatherings, the senators took it in turns to chronicle their achievements. First to speak was the female senator who also happened to be the highest-ranking senator among them. Although the visitors were not as rancorous as some of the political gatherings I have witnessed, they spontaneously cheered as she listed her achievements, saying; "Yes, distinguished senator, we know you are a performer and that is why we will always support you". When she finished addressing the audience, they all stood up,

clapped and chorused a prayer for her saying; “God bless you”. Another gathering of constituents outside the National Assembly produced a sample of Yoruba’s artistry filled with eulogies and fanfare, including the use of the “gangan” (Yoruba talking drum) to praise their senators.⁵¹ Amidst rising cheers, there were two “gangan” drummers and “ekiki” (eulogists), whose involvement displayed a glimpse of the spectre of Yoruba culture by reciting some popular “ekiki” to herald the senator’s achievements in office. “Oriki” or “ekiki” means the same and either of them are used interchangeably in different parts of Yorubaland. They uniquely allow performers to show respect to individuals in a way that links the living and the dead, human and spiritual as well as the present and the past (Barber 1991). As the talking-drummers praised the much-loved senator, the eulogist verbalised what the drummers were saying as contained in the poetic eulogies below:

“Erin oníbú owó

Alágbàlá òkun

Elephant owner of abundant wealth

and a courtyard of sea.

Ajànàkú, òkan soso àràbà tí mi igbó kìjìkìjì.

Elephant, the only gigantic one like àràbà tree who shakes the forest violently”.⁵²

The words and phrases used here and the context they were used suggest that the said senator is not only well loved, but that she symbolises a rare gem with rare

⁵¹ “A talking drum is hourglass shaped from West Africa (South-West Nigeria, Benin, Hausa and Dagomba of Northern Ghana). Its pitch can be controlled to mimic the tone and parody of human speech. It has two drumheads connected by leather tension cords, which allows the drummer to modulate the pitch of the drum by squeezing the cords between their arm and body. A skilled player can play whole phrases. Most of the talking drums sound like a human humming depending on the way they are played” (see Adedoyin 2018: 2).

⁵² Eulogies recited orally and through gangan, the Yoruba talking drum, during the visits of Lagos State Students’ Union to the three Senators representing the state at the National Assembly, October 18th, 2013.

attributes. She is metaphorically seen by her constituents as “Erin” (elephant) with unlimited strength (wealth). Like “ajàràkú” or “àràbà”, she is one of the biggest trees in the forest, and her presence shakes the whole forest. Metaphorically, the National Assembly is a forest where there is stiff competition and only the very powerful, such as the “erin” (elephant), survives. By way of locally understandable allusions and symbols, these eulogies describe the senator’s achievements, which make her popular among the constituents. Just like every other person or thing being eulogized in Yoruba land, she owns all those qualities and by implication, none of her peers could be compared to her.

This scenario not only illustrates the beauty and colour that oratory has in Nigeria, and particularly in Yoruba culture, but it helps us to understand some of the cultural instruments and language, members of society use to endorse or reject their leaders. Apart from showering praise and positive ‘ekiki’ eulogies, “praisers can withhold praise or include implicit or explicit derogatory allusions as a kind of negative sanctions of a ruler’s acts” (Finnegan 2012:120). Supporters or protesters come up with songs or chants to either eulogise good leaders or condemn bad ones. However, these performances also leave room for the type of postcolonial ambiguity ought to be scrutinised (Mbembe 1992).⁵³

People can be gracious with political leaders in public where there is expectation and hope of potential benefits, but constituents may become abusive when they run out of patience with politicians. One of such incidences that stands out where constituents vented their anger violently with derogatory songs was when the Senate President

⁵³ Mbembe invites us to also scrutinise performance of positive praises. He talks about the conviviality of the powerful and the weak, in the way positive celebrations might also reflect a deep criticism.

Olushola Saraki was stoned by the people over the non-payment of civil servants' salaries in Kwara State.⁵⁴ As Senator Saraki left the Mosque during the Eid el Kabir celebration in Ilorin, many protesters threw stones at him while singing and shouting "Ole, ole, ole!" (Thief, thief thief!).⁵⁵

In a nutshell, the above scenes provide us with a diverse range of accountability demands by constituents. It shows that their tone changes when constituents gather in large groups whose physical presence emphasises their demands. When gathered to make demands in a place like National Assembly, constituents may speak well of the MPs, including praise-singing. But outside of controlled environments this can lead to highly charged interactions; including the display of scorn and disaffection towards an MP they do not appreciate. The above examples therefore illustrate not only the power of collective agency by constituents, but also the conceptualisation of this power as part of a political contract.

4.5 The Politics of Distinction and Crowd-renting

Since politics in modern democratic societies is a game of numbers, political parties and politicians are often interested in the number of people supporting them. Opinion polls are frequently used to predict which political party voters prefer. But in many parts of Africa, the number of people attending private ceremonies or political rallies may also indicate how much support politicians and their parties have. Some politicians mobilise support by different means, but crowd renting is increasingly becoming an

⁵⁴ This was recorded on video, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dLLbpXrYIA>

⁵⁵ Senate President Olushola Saraki stoned and abused by protesters in Ilorin over non-payment of civil servant salaries, see video

option for unpopular politicians to create a false impression of popularity (Babajide-Alabi 2019). For some politicians, renting a crowd does not only boost their chances of voters' support, it equally inculcates a general sense of respect.

Although constituents voluntarily assemble in large numbers to show big men respect and make different demands, evidence from my fieldwork suggests that many Nigerian politicians, including senators, can go to significant lengths to create scenes where they are praised even further. One of the breath-taking displays that depict this culture of exhortation of politicians was stage managed by a female politician in Ehime Mbano Local Government of Imo State, in the South-East Region. This politician had over the years played the role of a philanthropist and subsequently a political kingmaker. She was a very rich contractor who did not hesitate to help a lot of people and this benevolent disposition made her one of the most popular leaders in the state. Prior to joining partisan politics, she spent more than two years hosting different social events, providing youths with jobs, scholarships, sharing small business loans and above all, empowering rural women, especially widows.

As part of her political ambition to create a niche for herself and to be treated differently, she staged a party every weekend for about two years and during this event gave accounts of what she had done for the less privileged. This development soon projected her to political stardom to the extent that aspiring politicians, including the state governor, sought her anointing. The action of this female politician gives us an insight into the culture of deference and its ramifications as exposed in my interactions with the constituents. The term deference connotes a condition where people yield or submit to an espoused, legitimate influence or judgement of those superior to them (Kirby 1970). Through the culture of respect, claims to political authority are made,

justified and accepted or rejected by the society (see Smolenski 2005). Nigerian politicians therefore promote their sense of deference because in a way it allows them to build public support. Politicians host public merry-making events, like the case of this woman politician, to form and maintain grassroots support. Although many use such events to genuinely provide needed help to the underprivileged, unpopular politicians equally sponsor crowd-renting to create an image of popularity among voters, as discussed elsewhere in this chapter.

Initially, Ezinne was non-partisan benevolent rich women who made selfless contributions to her community. At this stage, she belonged to the category of big men and women, that I will refer to as “social godfathers and godmothers”. These are philanthropists who provide social amenities like building of schools, clinics, churches and skills acquisition centres without personal political gain. However, sometimes, a “social godfather” may assume the position of a “political godfather” (rich investors/sponsors of others in politics), in the hope of recouping their investments through government contracts and other schemes when those sponsored win the election. Sometimes “political godfathers” do contest for political position themselves. Therefore, it is fair to conclude that following her interest in politics, Ezinne’s status changed from being a “social godmother” to that of a patron, “political godmother”. Godfathers possess power and influence and are politically relevant in deciding who gets nominated to contest elections and who eventually wins the election (Bassey and Enetak 2008). Apart from wealth, godfathers are politically mobile with their support swaying from one candidate or political party to another with the capacity to breed corruption and socio-economic decay (Majekodunmi and Olanrewaju 2013). Godfathers can influence politics but majority of them do not contest for electoral office

(Jones, 2019).⁵⁶ Even when they do, there is no guarantee that they will always succeed. For example, despite her popularity, Ezinne failed when she contested for a high political office. The reason for this failure includes the fact that vote-buying does not always change the balloting intentions of voters. Voters typically consider a number of factors, including the contestants' past behaviour, before casting their ballots (Kone and Winters 1993; Healy and Malhotra 2013). The outcome of the 2019 elections, where some of the most highly ranked godfathers/ moneybags like Olushola Saraki lost to less known contestants, attests to the power of electoral revolt in Nigeria (Adibi 2019). His loss was one of the most celebrated and astonishing results of 2019 elections given that he was a two-term governor of Kwara State, an incumbent Senate President and above all, in control of the Saraki political dynasty that has dominated Kwara State politics for many decades. His defeat was associated with the anger of voters regarding non-payment of workers' salaries and alleged use of political thuggery to sustain power (Olawoyin 2019). These examples among others suggest that constituents (voters) do not get easily bought over by the money politicians may offer. They often do reflect on the quality, performance or antecedent of the contestants before casting their votes.

Prior to her contesting election, Ezinne organised a highly choreographed performance with a view to building strong grassroots political popularity and support. As I was informed, the woman's party was held every weekend from Saturday morning till

⁵⁶ The position of Nigerian godfathers could be likened to those of apex predators in the food-chain of their immediate ecosystem. From the ward, local government, state, regional and national levels, powerful men and women occupy this informal position. The godfather aims to influence who takes a political office so as to allow them to control what happens including allocation of political offices and public resources from behind the scene. Above all, godfathers see political sponsorship as an investment and do aggressively seek returns on their investment when the godson or god-daughter wins.

Sunday morning, and on the day, I attended, there was no empty seat by noon. The party started with different displays of cultural dancers, and subsequently food and drinks. Ezinne's emergence from her house was one of the most glamorous public displays of any female politician I witnessed during my fieldwork. As soon as the last music finished, the master of ceremony announced that she was about to come out and this information automatically got everyone, both young and old, to their feet. Her introduction was preceded by eulogies and praise-singing, including chanting her titles like Chief Dr/Mrs Ezinne ("Our good mother"). When she took to the stage, everyone went quiet and each time she mentioned what she had done for the people, the crowd shouted "Iga a dīoo" (You will live long for us).⁵⁷ Because of the number of people struggling to get closer to her, the gathering became disorderly, giving the arms-bearing policemen the opportunity to announce to her that they too were very loyal. Soon, some people at the far corner began to push each other, whereupon two policemen charged towards them and ordered the whole section to vacate the area. Amidst this confusion, one could hear some of them saying: "Officer, anyi no na nke Ezinne" (Officer, we are in the presence of our good mother), to which the policeman replied: "I am doing my job, she is our mother too, and our job is to protect her". I counted about ten armed policemen that were said to be stationed in her compound for security. This scenario gives us a taste of not only how much politicians can commit to staging social gathering that promote their political distinction but how women's politics is evolving. However, what is not yet clear is how much of the society is genuinely receptive of women in a culturally male dominated political environment. On

⁵⁷ A general slogan dedicated to sing the praise of politicians in the South Eastern Nigeria. Because Ibos believe that the greatest gift of nature is life and those that do good deserve to be alive so that they will continue their good work.

this occasion, I did not hear any negative comment about what she does or does not do. People overwhelmingly showed their support and respect to her especially in the way they praised her.

The above scene builds on the previous section to explain the importance of crowd support for the political reputation of aspiring representatives and on big men (and big women). While distinction is a string personal ambition for many individual politicians, visible mass support is also an important part of Nigeria's logic of accountability. Performances of support are often associated with the number of people that attend an event organised by big men or women, so politicians find ways to rally such support. Crowd renting and crowd management became an important political tool because if the crowd supports a politician instead of challenging them, it is implied that they have successfully fulfilled their accountability demands.

4.6 Big Men/ Women and the Symbol of Respect

Nigerians cherish respect and this is demonstrated not only in family relations but in every strata of the society. The parameters for attracting other peoples' respect include age, wealth, wisdom, strength, and the ability to offer the community an unconditional humanitarian support. Symbolic of the sense of respect that Nigerians accord each other is what people say to each other, what they are expected to say to each other, and, most importantly, how they say what they say. Across different ethnic groups in Nigeria, older people are not only expected to be respected by the younger ones but seen to be respected too. Those adjudged to be disrespectful are considered to be deviants. Among Yorubas for example, people are expected to show curtesy by prostrating (if male) or kneeling (if female) when greeting the elderly. By so doing, they

often receive a long shower of blessings that many believe will elongate their lives. Such an exchange may last minutes and a younger person would happily prostrate or be on her knees, simply to end up receiving blessings from the elderly as well as being called “omo oluabi” (a cultured child or young person who symbolises hard work, humility and respect).⁵⁸

Sometimes, the elderly person involved in what could be described as always well-choreographed greeting rituals could respond to the younger one with more affectionate words like “omo mi” (my child) or “aburo mi” (my younger one), even when they are not related. The Ibos too demonstrate respect to the elders in different ways, for example, a cultured young Igbo man is expected to address the elderly as “dede” (elder) when conversing, and younger people often remove their caps or hats when greeting the elderly. In the same manner, younger Hausa men could be seen holding their hands together with fists clenched while bending the head as expected and reciting “Ranka dede” (May you live long) severally when greeting the older people as a mark of respect. While the desire to receive due recognition is part of the Nigerian social fabric, big men demand not just to be treated with respect but to be treated differently. Big men including politicians do recklessly exhibit their expectation of distinction both in private and public spaces. Political leaders often demand to be shown respect because they believe they deserve it. Being shown curtesy by others boasts the ego of a politician, but most importantly it allows him or her to dominate others as well as to impose and maintain or reinforce power imbalance. Demand for

⁵⁸ Omoluabi is a word that signifies virtue in Yoruba philosophy and culture. It signifies good manner, humility, respect, loyalty and someone that gives back to the community. As Dolapo Adeniji-Neill (2011:1) describes “an Omoluabi is a person of honor who believes in hard work, respects the rights of others, and gives to the community in deeds and in action. Above all, an Omoluabi is a person of personal integrity”.

respect not only allows politicians to control how others treat them but to also limit constituents' access as well as to dodge their responsibilities. This is illuminated by the brief exchange I had with interviewee (Senator 2):

Me: "Good afternoon, Distinguished Senator."

Senator: "Okay, who are you?"

Me: "I am the one that sent you the interview request email and introduction letter about six months ago".

Senator: "As you can see, I am in a hurry; I am going to the airport to get the next flight home so that I can meet with my sponsors for my governorship primary election. I am late and I don't have a private jet."

Me: "Sorry, Senator, I will be happy with a few minutes of your time, just some few questions, and in fact, these few minutes we have spent could have been enough."

Senator: "Look you have to go; you know it is not easy to get a senator to speak to you by this time. You cannot expect to walk into a senator's office and get his/her audience".

Me: "I understand Senator, but I have already seen some other senators; like Senator (...)."

Senator: "But those people are not as busy as I am, I don't have time...how long are you in Nigeria for? Can you come back next month?"

Given the serene atmosphere as we exchanged the above argument and the glaring show of fear and trepidation on the faces of her staff and two constituents that had been waiting several hours for her, one could easily sense that this senator may not have had an ordinary person like me speak to her with the level of boldness and confidence I mustered. Perhaps only the fact that I was not there as a constituent seeking for job or financial support left her with no choice than to accept what she must have considered as an act of disrespect to a highly placed politician.

4.7 Female MPs and Symbolic Representation

Symbolic representation refers to the general public attitudes toward women in politics and trends in political process and engagement of constituents. The impacts of public behavior towards female politicians like MPs are even more important given that they generally take place outside of national legislature. Statistics shows that there has been an increase in the number of female politicians across Africa (Women in Politics Map 2017, Dodsworth 2019). Tamale (2001) and Tripp (2001) noted that the increased presence of women in Ugandan parliament was slowly changing people's attitudes towards women in politics and creating a new political culture regarding the acceptability of women as political leaders. Yoon (2004, 2011) also reports a similar finding in Tanzania. Burnet (2011) argues that an increased women's presence in Rwandan parliament, "may have increased respect" for womanhood, including respect from family and community members, enhanced capacity to speak and be heard in public forums, contributed to women's greater autonomy in decision making in the family, and increased access to education. One of the positive consequences of post-conflict era in many African countries like Uganda, Liberia and Angola is the increase in the number of women in government (Tripp 2015). Equally, Barnes and Burchard (2013) posit that as women's presence increases in parliaments, the political engagement gender gap in terms of voting decreases, not because men's engagement falls, but because women's rises. But do these positive assertions suggest that female MPs are treated the same way as their male counterparts?

These questions become imperative as we try to broaden our investigative lens into the accountability relationship between senators and their constituents cross Africa and Nigeria in particular. We need to know more about how female politicians are treated in Africa. In terms of this study, it is worth knowing whether there is a dichotomy

between the accountability pressures exerted on female MPs compared to their male colleagues. In this guise, there is a need to explore whether the language, type and processes of accountability pressure made on female senators are different from those of their male colleagues.

A school of thought believes that women make positive impact in public life by showing motherly affection and that they are more effective because they are politically more ethical and humane than men (Randall 1987: 81-82). In order to relate the above narrative to this study, we need to know whether constituents make different and/or more accountability demands of female senators than their male counterparts. I therefore considered constituents' use of language during accountability demand and supply encounters with female senators with a view to understanding the role of gender in political relation. This thesis did not produce data that would let me compare male versus female senators' directly. But within the limits of the results produced, there was no evidence that indicates that the gender of a senator affects the attitude of constituents during accountability demands significantly, even though clearly gender specific words were used. From my close observation, constituents visit their senators because of personal, group or communal needs and the rate at which they come and make demands is related to how able the senators respond to their demands.

The frequencies of pressures senators receive from their constituents depend on how popular he or she is in the public eye. But popularity is also a function of an MP's willingness, graciousness, and selflessness to share his or her wealth and resources with the constituents. Therefore, the pull factor is not only the ability of a senator to meet such demands but more about what people say of the senator. Positive opinions about an MP could increase or reduce the number of accountability pressures he/she

receives and influence the affectionate or resentful language constituents use in different encounters. This is illustrated in a conversation between constituents I overheard during my time at the National Assembly, which went roughly along the following lines:

Constituent One: Good afternoon, it has been a long time, what brings you guys to National Assembly?

Group of Four constituents: Oh, we came to see Senator_13 (...), So, what are you up to?

Constituent One: I came to see Senator... (Senator_5). You know that a recommendation letter is important nowadays. I have been here two times this week but managed to see her today.

Group of Four Constituents: So, did you succeed?

Constituent One: Yes, she gave it to me, and I will be returning home tomorrow.

Group of Four Constituents: We are here for similar thing, but we have not been that lucky. We learnt that our own senator is not very helpful, but we will try again.

The above exchange was a spontaneous comparison of constituents' feelings about two of the three female senators (Senator_5 and Senator_13), I observed during my fieldwork. Three female senators (Senator_5, Senator_13 and Senator_15), were as closely observed like the other 15 male senators, and I did not observe any significant difference in the language, attitude, intensity and types of pressures the constituents exerted on them. The major pull factor among all of them was the same as for men, i.e. the ability, willingness, and magnanimity to meet constituents' demands. As I noticed, one of the three female senators, observed during my fieldwork received many constituents, just like some of her more popular male counterparts. This suggests that constituents are more enthused visiting her for accountability demands because she was perceived as more helpful than many of her male and female colleagues. As a result, people say good things about her, just as many other male senators that are

known for being selfless. While there might be covert gender specific perception of female senators, there was no evidence to suggest they were treated differently from their male counterpart. Indeed, one of constituents also made a biblical comparison transcending gender to illustrate his feeling:

You see anyone that does well will always have a reward for it, here on earth and in heaven. Senators, member of the House or those in other agencies of government are supposed to use their positions to benefit everybody. Yes, it takes a lot of money and effort to help everybody, but people get remembered for their good deeds or bad deeds. If you look at the bible, when Jesus Christ went about healing people and doing good, people went on talking about it even when he told them not to tell others. So, we will always talk about MPs because we sent them to the National Assembly. Those that do well we will pray for them and celebrate them, but those that are selfish will equally be condemned (Personal Communication_ Constituent 19 November 2015).

As I observed over the period I visited (Senator_13's) office, barely a handful of people came to see her and they often left swearing and abusing her silently because, as they alleged, she was mean and had no feelings. This is a complete opposite of the "good senator" politician that was adored by her constituents by virtue of her motherly affection and the consistent help she gave to her people. This type of commendation or condemnation is not limited to female senators, indeed, since the Senate is male dominated, there are more male senators that stand to be commended or condemned by their constituents depending on how they perform. Constituents use affectionate terms such as "ezinne", "nne oma" (our good mother) or any other iconic title names like "erin, ajanaku, iroko" (elephant or domineering tree in the forest) to thank, praise and eulogise performing female MPs, as much as they do to performing male MPs.

There was no noticeable evidence of major difference in the type of demands made of, or the attitude of constituents to, male and female senators. However, some of the

constituents tended to use more affectionate and endearing tones and words towards women. These reflect the social perception that females, have motherly affection. The caveat, however, is that the expression of such humane feelings is reserved for female MPs that have performed well by the rating of the constituents. On the other hand, those that have performed badly or were perceived to be carefree about helping the constituents are described and talked about in tones and language that depict absentee and irresponsible MPs. In most Nigerian contexts these are highly emotive terms, and they may indicate that female politicians are punished harder when they do not perform. However, based on my data, this could not be confirmed.

Overall, and on the basis of the data I collected, it would be incorrect to assert that female senators received more accountability pressures from constituents than their male counterparts because of their status as (public) mothers. On the other hand, it would be misleading to suggest that such sentiments do not exist given that the evidence I have is limited. Perhaps this hypothesis could be tested in a different study designed to comparatively explore how constituents relate to male and female MPs in Africa.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter contributes to the overall thesis by illustrating how language used during conversations and utterances form part of a performative understanding of political accountability. As the previous chapter has shown, demands for accountability existed in precolonial societies, and have continued to influence colonial and postcolonial political practices. This chapter provides more insights by highlighting the widespread legitimacy of, and support for, accountability demands both in everyday exchanges

and in political or public settings. While demands for accountability are often linked to generalisations about corruption, they also nonetheless affirm that politicians are expected, or even, to be obligated to improve constituents' lives through material wellbeing.

This chapter used different exchanges to illustrate that accountability demands are voiced differently in separate contexts or encounters, ranging from general social discourse and stereotypical views of the relationship between ordinary people and their leaders to the importance of persistence and respect in gaining access to such leaders. It also illustrates that there are differences between demands in a controlled environment, such as the National Assembly, and in crowds or during large-scale events. This chapter analysed everyday conversations and encounters to show constituents' attitudes towards politicians. Expectations of accountability are expressed as part of everyday life.

While such conversations often criticise corruption, it is important to see that this is a stereotypical accusation, which often serves as a rhetorical device to make claims to benefits people feel should be theirs of right. As the language they used shows, there is more to accountability relationship than patron-client benefits. Demands reflect the legitimate feeling that leaders have a responsibility towards the community by virtue of their position. Most Nigerians therefore have a strong sense of being 'owed' progress by their leaders. Such feelings are expressed using proverbs which illustrate the historical presence of accountability demands in different cultural repertoires, which permeate everyday life.

This chapter also shows the difference between how constituents ask for benefits in personal private encounters and in the public. The tone of conversations differs significantly from the way in which politicians are discussed in general, and there is a difference between how proverbs and everyday conversations refer to politicians and the way one can approach a powerful person in practice. Individuals need to show respect in order to be recognised as worthy voters. This chapter also illustrates that it is possible for persistent and respectful constituents to make themselves heard, even if they have no existing ties that could be interpreted as a patron-client relationship. Yet the tone of demands changes when constituents gather in large groups whose physical presence emphasises their demands. Outside of controlled environments, this can lead to highly charged interactions that demand attention, again irrespective of existing personal networks. This illustrates the power of collective agency by constituents with vignettes.

This chapter explained the importance of crowd support for the political reputation of aspiring representatives and on big men/women. While distinction (difference) is a strong personal ambition for many individual politicians, visible mass support is also an important part of Nigeria's logic of accountability. As a result, politicians often create an atmosphere of crowd support to boast their popularity and the unpopular ones do engage in crowd-renting to create a sense of grassroots support.

5 A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A NIGERIAN SENATOR: IN THE 'ABUJA BUBBLE'

5.1 Introduction

This chapter builds on the central argument of this thesis that the performance of accountability relationships in Africa, especially in Nigeria, is more complex than patron-client narrative suggests. While it does not primarily focus on the relationship between politicians and constituents, it discusses areas of political activity that are frequently referred to in the media and in public debate. It explores Senate plenary and other legislative activities, within and outside the chamber, relations between civil servants and politicians, and politicians' roles in an oversight function. The chapter reflects on the enormity of the legislative and non-legislative activities that make their position more challenging than generally perceived. Equally, it highlights that politicians' performances also serve as a basis for accountability pressures in political debate beyond the relationship with constituents.

While the early sections of the chapter focus on how the senators behave during plenary sessions, most of the latter half explores on oversight activities. These are not always seen, which is why the public often imagines them through the lens of corruption. The chapter contextualises the performance of MPs' oversight functions in Nigeria partly by referring to highly publicised cases of allegations of corruption, which resulted from the oversight activities of some MPs. It also explores the perception, experience and attitudes of public servants that have worked closely with MPs during oversight functions with a view to having a better understanding of the issue.

Overall, the chapter sets out that while corruption occurs, not all oversight activity is corrupt. Many senators work very hard to challenge irregularities and to fulfil their duties. Reflecting the importance of performance in Nigerian politics more generally, even the more private oversight activities also have a strong performative element, which reflects both the importance of recognition and the dominant focus on corruption in public debate.

5.2 A Senator's divided attention: From Plenary Session to Peoples' Pressure

A day in the life of a Nigerian senator revolves around how a senator manages high expectations of constituents and their legislative duties. Legislative politics requires gaining the support of other members to pass motions, resolutions or bills. Therefore, senators use different types of performances to mobilise support for or against a bill, motion or resolution tabled before the chamber depending on where their interests lie. During legislative sessions, many senators attend plenary sessions from their residences at legislative quarters in Abuja. Those that do not live in the quarters have their private houses in other affluent areas of the city. Everywhere a senator goes, there will be people waiting to greet, praise or make demands of him or her, and sometimes senators have people waiting by their gates early in the morning to present demands. A legislative business day begins with a huge crowd jostling with policemen on duty to go through into the National Assembly to wait for their MPs. Usually, big men are driven in trilling and intimidating convoys of official cars with gun-wielding policemen, but when a senator is driven in his/her official car, the identity is easily given

away by the insignia of his/her office: "Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria".⁵⁹ Since senators are hardly accessed by constituents when they are in such a secured environment, many people would patiently wait for them in the office, by the entrance of the Senate chamber or at the National Assembly lobby.

5.3 The Senate Chamber

At the National Assembly, MPs (Senate and Federal House of Representatives) are required to sit for a minimum period of 181 days per calendar year. The decision about the frequency and timing of their sittings is usually the responsibility of the leadership of each of the chambers. The galleries of both chambers are normally occupied by journalists covering legislative proceedings along with members of the public. But more people scramble to get into the gallery on a day when either of the chambers has topical issues listed on its legislative agenda. Access to the Senate's legislative activities is guided by Senate Rules drafted to ensure compliance with its procedures and to avoid the chamber snowballing into boisterous and reckless behaviour. The initial atmosphere in the chamber prior to the commencement of proceedings is usually informal, with senators shaking hands, indulging in banter, and criss-crossing their seats, with some chatting in loud voices and exchanging pleasantries while others

⁵⁹ Big men or women, who hold political office are entitled to official cars, but the quality of such car depends on the position and rank of the occupant of the car. As a mark of recognition, the number plates are usually inscribed with the title and/or rank of the big man/ women as a seal of his/her office. The number plate for big men and women civil servants may contain the position of the official and his/her ministry or department. All official vehicles of the National Assembly are usually inscribed with National Assembly Secretariat (NASS) and those that belong to the principle officers would additionally contain the position of the official. This performance goes beyond those in official positions, because throughout Nigeria, many big men/women acquire expensive number plates with the inscription of their chieftaincy titles. The practice makes them more visible in the public; supposedly make them relatively protected from crime as they travel in convoy of police escorts.

discuss matters of personal interests in low tones or seek support for potential motions or bills.

Such exuberant behaviour is common among parliamentarians the world over, and sometimes it takes the presiding officers considerable effort to bring a session to order. For example, during the Nigerian Senate's Plenary Session of October 19th, 2016, livestreamed on Facebook, it took the presiding officers, Senate President, Senator Bukola Saraki, and Chief Whip, Senator Olushola Adeyeye, about 5 minutes to call senators to order. In a persuasive and amusing way, the Chief Whip called each of the exuberant senators by their names and pleaded with them to go to their seats. He started by saying: "Distinguished colleagues please take your seats (...), distinguished colleagues please take yours seats" (Ekwealor 2016: 2). When some of the senators did not respond to his request, he resorted to evoking their personal backgrounds: "From the University of Ibadan, distinguished Senator Independence Hall, Excellency Shaba Lafiaji, please take your seat, Senator Albature Akan, please take your seat, The birthday boy, Senator Emmanuel Paulker please take your seat, from Zoology Department, Senator Ajayi Boroffice please take your seat (...)" (ibid). By recognising and addressing each of the errant senators in this manner, it took him less than two minutes to get all of them back to their seats – something he had failed to achieve using the official method of calling the chamber to order.

This scene as well as other encounters elsewhere in this study suggests that recognising an individual's distinction makes big men feel respected and may potentially make them feel more obliged to yield to demands. As soon as order was restored to the chamber, the Chief Whip sought the attention of the Senate President by saying: "Mr President Sir, the chamber is set for today's session". Before the

business of the day commences, senators receive the Order Paper (a formal paper containing the day's legislative business) and the presiding officer, the President of the Senate, opens the proceedings with a prayer. The Senate President reads out the votes and proceedings page numbers in the Order Paper, followed by a motion proposing the adoption of previous votes and motions for the day's proceedings being moved by a senator and seconded by another.

5.4 Announcement/Executive Communication

The Senate President announces important information for the attention of the senators. An announcement could be public or private-related, but priority is usually given to announcements from the Presidency, usually a letter from Mr President being read out followed by others. Sometimes, it may include private ceremonies that involve any of the senators including weddings, child christenings, the conferment of chieftaincy titles, or burial ceremonies.

Petitions

Senators take turns to read out different petitions from their constituents requesting legislative interventions to resolve the issues or to address problems they may have with various government departments. Each submission is tabled before the Senate maze and in the end the Senate President will refer the matters to the Ethics and Privileges Committee for further investigation.



Picture 2 Nigerian Senate in plenary session⁶⁰



Picture 3 Nigerian Senate in plenary session. Senate and House of Representatives in joint session⁶¹

⁶⁰ Source:

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&id=7324F00FD0A687A4F91B4EC9255C2EDBF9FE0F1C&thid=OIP.rpsTZb7DUUpzQ7PKs8hIGsQHaEK&mediurl=https%3A%2F%2Fqz.com%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2015%2F06%2Fap060516025396-e1447437798918.jpg%3Fquality%3D80%26strip%3Dall%26w%3D2000&exph=1125&expw=2000&q=images+from+nigerian+national+assembly&selectedindex=33&ajaxhist=0&vt=0&eim=1,2,6&ccid=rpsTZb7D&simid=608024792293442576age> Accessed on 7th December 2017.

⁶¹ Image of the Senate and Federal House of Representatives Chambers. Source: https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&id=A75358E04212B687A4737509ADC44F25F56AFE0C&thid=OIP.hnCa768QRsx3WZzt_BEcUgHaD_&mediurl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.channelstv.com%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2015%2F04%2FNational-Assembly-in-Nigeria.jpg&exph=350&expw=650&q=images+from+nigerian+national+assembly&selectedindex=31&

Committee of the Whole

Depending on the issue on the day's legislative agenda or prevailing circumstance, the Senate Leader may move a motion for the session to proceed to Committee of the Whole, so as to allow members to debate motions or bills that are of public interest. Depending on their own interests, constituencies' interests, or, as some of them would like to claim, 'national interests', senators are always ready to express their views, often claiming to echo how people truly feel. In doing this, some are easily animated, loud and bullish, others may be more eloquent, calm and logical but what is recognisable among all the senators that speak is that they are all driven by passion and collective emotion for the needs they represent. But if they feel rebuffed by the Senate President, they may become disruptive upon which the Senate President may choose to request that such senators be escorted out by the Sergeant-At-Arms. When emotions and interests converge, as they often do during debates, most parliamentarians are willing to verbally and physically abuse each other (see BBC News 28 October 2008, The Daily Telegraph, 24 May 2012, BBC News 18 September 2013, The Guardian 18 May, 2016). Legislative boisterousness and violence among parliamentarians result from divisive issues and tight votes. Galusha (1900), describes an illuminating precursor of legislative violence thus:

Crowd some hundreds of men together on a hot afternoon or night; fill them with the fire of partisan ardour; perplex them with doubts as to the personal gain or loss that may follow their vote on the question at issue, and instil them with envy of, and ill-will, toward, their fellow, and you have abundant material for row. All that is an excuse, and that is too often found (p: 1192).

[ajaxhist=0&vt=0&eim=1,2,6&ccid=hnCa768Q&simid=607990376711458305](https://www.bbc.com/news/parliament-2008-10-28) Accessed on 10th of December 2017.

Apart from emotional outburst, MPs in many parts of the world including Nigeria, use such ungentlemanly performance as a last resort to resist what they believe are injustice and to impress their constituents (Reuters, 22 June 2010). In the case of Nigeria, parliamentary rancour does not last for too long because MPs often find ways to work together. Although ethnic and religious divisiveness tend to increase infighting and misgivings during plenary sessions, yet when it matters, politicians do find compromise (BBC News 17 September 2001). As legislative sessions are televised live, senators and honourable members like to present themselves as defenders of their constituents as well as statesmen. This type of performance is premised on the fact that politicians believe that there is neither permanent friend nor enemy, what exists is a permanent interest (Clay 2000). One of the most important moments that Nigerian MPs often demonstrate the importance of such performance is during law making process.

The performative ability of an MP regarding law making may depend on his/her knowledge of legislative drafting and other interests. An Act of the National Assembly may originate from A Member's Bill, Private Member Bill or Public Bill (Mbaya et.al 2013: 109). A Bill is a legislative proposal, or a proposal to change an existing legislation that is presented for debate before the parliament. A Member's Bill is sponsored by an MP while a Private Member Bill is the type that originates from an individual or group in the society. On the other hand, a Public Bill originates from the executive. Irrespective of their origin, every new bill goes through four stages of legislative scrutiny. Apart from speaking passionately for or against a bill on the legislative floor and committee stages, MPs engage in horse-trading with a view to getting reciprocal support needed to protect their interests. For example, if the

multiplier effect of a bill will lead to public infrastructure developments like roads, electricity, and job creation, surely, an MP or MPs from the district that will be affected will in most cases support it. At the end, for such bill to be passed into law, they will also need the support of other MPs with a mutual understanding of being supported when another bill that is of interest to them is presented. A typical example of where the consideration of mutual support was used by Nigerian MPs was during the consideration of the North-East Development Commission and the South-East Development Commission Bills. Following the passage of the North-East Development Commission Bill, in 2016, a similar Bill for the South-East, previously rejected, was reintroduced and subsequently passed with the support of many northern MPs whose states benefited from the passage of the previous North-East Development Commission Bill into law, an Act of the National Assembly (Punch 1 November, 2017). Perhaps such regional support suggests a reciprocal agreement between the North and South-East, driven by national interest. The mood of most MPs supportive of the South-East Development Commission Bill was captured by the speech made by the Acting Leader of the House, Hon. Mohammed Monguno:

Since after the civil war, there is no concerted effort for the rehabilitation of the infrastructure in the south-east, that's the essence of this Bill. You are all aware that because of Boko Haram, our infrastructure in the northeast was destroyed. And this House in its wisdom decided with unanimity to support the North-East Development Commission that has today hit the ground running. Mr Speaker, what is good for the goose is also good for the gander. So, what is good for the North-East is also good for the South East because infrastructure has been destroyed. Yes, the three R that was rejected was a stopgap measure. It is against this backdrop that the Senate passed this bill. So, I am also urging my colleagues to support this bill (Vanguard May 16, 2019).

Similar feeling was expressed by one of the MPs I interviewed when he alluded to the fact that the National Assembly represents a melting pot of diverse national interests.

In his response to the question of political representation deficit in Nigeria, he said:

As senators, we represent all Nigerians. Yes, people see political representation as getting things done, but you cannot provide those democratic dividends on your own alone. There are a lot of problems, needs and interests and sometimes one gets daunted about the way forward. But as senators, we should see ourselves as statesmen who should put ethnic, religious and political differences aside in national interest (Senator_5, Personal Communication Abuja, 20 October 2014).

These scenarios illustrate how politicians manage their differences and confirm the importance of performance in Nigeria's distinct political culture. Highly personalized and emotional performances are part of strategies used by politicians for several reasons. First, it shows them to be confident, while also feeling passionately about the interests of their constituencies. Secondly, by using exaggerated statements they also put pressure on their political rivals and make demands on each other that may be taken up by constituents.

5.5 Inside the Three Arms Zone

The Three Arms Zone is a replica of the Washington D C's Beltway used to represent the perceived insularity of the American government. The Wall Street Journal's description provides a common perception of the Beltway by Americans: "Capital Beltway, the highway that loops around Washington, D.C., everything outside the Beltway is the genuine America, while everything inside the Beltway is suspect at best and irredeemably corrupt at worst" (Wall Street Journal, November 17, 2017: 1).

Although the Abuja's Three Arms Zone does not have a circular road shielding the government offices as often alleged in the case of the Washington D.C, it is perceived as a well-protected political zone harbouring politicians that are out of touch with the common people. As described elsewhere in this study, The Three Arms Zone is an exclusive and highly secured area of Abuja occupied by the three arms of government. Apart from the Presidential Villa, Supreme Court and National Assembly, The Federal Secretariat, Head of Service and several ministries and parastatals are located opposite The Three Arms Zone. There is one major highly secure and congestion-free road linking The Three Arms Zone from Abuja Airport and as one approaches the Federal Secretariat, it divides into two, one leading to Presidential Villa and the other to the National Assembly. The Supreme Court sitting in the middle could be accessed through the Presidential road or the road leading to the National Assembly. These fortresses are protected by several military and police guards in the South and by the Zuma Rock in the North which rises 725 metres (2,379ft) above its surroundings and is said to have mystic powers. According to history, it was used by the Gbagyi people (original Abuja indigenes) as a defensive retreat against invading neighbouring tribes during intertribal wars (Alofetkun 2008; Adams 2018). The depiction of Zuma Rock on the 100 naira note attests to its importance in Nigeria. The Eagle Square and National Cenotaph, which many consider as modern-day Nigerian shrines adjoining the Federal Secretariat, are normally accessed by big men during important national celebrations. They are usually under guard by heavily armed military men 24 hours a day and ordinary Nigerians are sometimes beaten and kicked around by the guards because they mistakenly walked close to the Cenotaph. Apart from the proximity of the government agencies to the National Assembly, many MPs (Senators and House of

Representatives Members) had their offices in the same buildings as civil servants from 1999-2007. However, since the completion of the Senate and House of Representatives administrative buildings, senators and honourable members are now fully accommodated on the Senate and House of Representatives wings respectively. But during the time of their proximity, the location of these political and bureaucratic offices created enough room for formal and informal interactions between MPs and public servants whose activities are supposed to be scrutinised.

This unusual ecology not only raised eyebrows among observers but also provided a good opportunity to study how these MPs interact with civil servants. They also sometimes had lunch together. However, the most distinguishing feature of MPs in this setting was their display of flamboyance, including flashy official cars, gun-bearing security men, and many accountability-seeking constituents gathering around the secretariat. Whether operating from the National Assembly or any other location, MPs have enormous capacity and resources to carry out oversight functions on the activities of government departments that are far or near The Three Arms Zone. But many Nigerians feel being kept in the dark about the quality and outcome of oversight functions. As ordinary Nigerians are kept away or punished for trespassing anywhere around these fortresses, they could still see their representatives and public servants mingling, and many do often question the integrity of the oversight activities that are claimed to have been conducted. Although one could give many of the legislators credit for doing their jobs diligently, but the disconnection of ordinary Nigerians from The Three Arms Zone, creates a feeling of “Abuja bubble”, just like the “Washington bubble”.

The perception of the “Abuja bubble” comes with varied implications. Nigerians feel more isolated from politics and politicians are seen to be disconnected from reality. There is a perception that those in the corridors of power in Abuja do not have the capacity to feel the plight of ordinary people because they are under a spell of Aso Rock spirit (Obadare 2018).⁶² Trust in politics and politicians have become scarcer which increases apathy (Adekoya 2019). But for the “insiders” (politicians), maintaining political networks and scheming are vital to ensure that their constituencies’ vested interests are protected. By belonging to political networks, politicians position themselves to attract benefits like infrastructural development projects to their constituencies. In terms of performativity, to an extent, the environment created by political networks allows them to be among themselves, or people they understand, and thereby free from some accountability expectations-though not from all.

In a nutshell, many people are concerned about the effect of the social connection between MPs and other government officials has on the oversight activities of the legislature. The perception is that such relationship cannot engender oversight credibility. While it is legitimate for people to challenge any wrongdoing, but it must be said that not all close relationships between politicians and civil servants were corrupt; many were aimed at simply getting things done. But more importantly, Nigerian lawmakers recognized the dangers of proximity and eventually ensured the physical

⁶² In Nigeria, religion and politics are two sides of a coin because political events and performances often have religious colouration. Both political leaders and the led cannot make their point without referencing God. When things go in their way, they tend to relate it to the fact that God or (gods) have answered their prayers and when things go wrong, they blame the evil deeds of their political enemies. As Obadare pointed out, there is a Pentecostal perception that the presidential villa (Aso Rock) has powerful occultist spirits that quickly possess those in power. The only solution, they contend, is to conduct religious ritual of ceaseless prayers for elected Christian politicians.

separation of civil servants and politicians. This reflects the ability of politicians within the system to recognize problems and create conditions that discourage collusion.

5.6 MPs and Legislative Oversight

A key element of measuring good governance is how political authority and power are allocated and applied in public life and how political leaders and representative are selected. In addition, we also take interest in how political leaders and representatives apply the rule of law and the stewardship of public goods and resources, among others (Pelizzo and Staphenhurst 2014). In a democratic setting, the legislature plays a strong horizontal accountability influence on government agencies to ensure that rule of law is upheld and that public goods are judiciously provided. In Africa, it has been argued that parliamentarians are becoming agents of change but there are inherent tension that lies at the heart of what they are expected to do like representation, policy making, oversight function and constituency service delivery (Barkan 2009). One of the merits of vigorous legislative oversight activities is to prevent abuse of executive power. Montesquieu (1949) argues that:

Political liberty is to be found only (...) when there is no abuse of power. But constant experience shows us that every man invested with power is apt to abuse it and to carry his authority as far as it will go. (...) To prevent this abuse, it is necessary from the very nature of things that power should be a check should be a check to power. (...) When the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person or in the same body (...) there can be no liberty; (...) Again there is no liberty, if the judiciary power is not separated from the legislative and executive. (...) There would be an end of everything were the same man or body, whether of the nobles or of the people, to exercise those three powers (p. 172-174).

In order to achieve this, the functions of government need to be differentiated and performed by different organs consisting of different bodies of persons so that each department be limited to its respective sphere of activity and not be able to encroach upon the independence and jurisdiction of another (Johari 1989). Even though both the legislative and executive functions are fused in parliamentary government, there are still parliamentary committees and opposition party to scrutinise the activities of government agencies and ultimately, the judiciary to mitigate executive excessiveness. The legislature uses its oversight power to monitor the activities of executive agencies and departments with a view to ensuring that laws and policies of government are effectively and efficiently implemented (see section 4 (1), (2) & 88 (1) of the 1999 Constitution).

The above sections and institutionalized parliamentary practices and tradition form the premise of legislative oversight by the National Assembly (Okoro 2017). The legislative oversight function is one of the cornerstones of democracy. Oversight is a means for holding the executive accountable for its actions and for ensuring that it implements policies in accordance with the laws and budget passed by the parliament. The robust monitoring of the executive by the parliament is an indicator of good governance. Besides the parliament's legislative function, it is through oversight that the parliament can ensure a balance of power and assert its role as the defender of people's interests (Okoro 2017).

The Nigerian National Assembly's oversight process mirrors the practice in the United States Congress. In the US, Congressional oversight is conducted by the United States Congress over the executive branch, including the numerous U.S. federal agencies. Congressional oversight includes the review, monitoring, and supervision of federal

agencies, programs, activities, and policy implementation. Congress exercises this power largely through its congressional committee system. However, oversight, which dates to the earliest days of the Republic, also occurs in a wide variety of congressional activities and contexts. These include authorisations, appropriations, investigative and legislative hearings by standing committees, specialised investigations by select committees, and reviews and studies by congressional support agencies and staff (Halchin and Kaiser 2012). Congress's oversight authority derives from its "implied" powers in the Constitution, public laws, and House and Senate rules. It is an integral part of the American system of checks and balances. Pivotal to the success of legislative oversight structure in the United States of America is the existence of vibrant committees who gather oversight information and dictate the preferred course of action. Halchin and Kaiser observed that executive oversight entails reviewing, monitoring, and supervision of operations and activities. Oversight takes a variety of forms and utilizes various techniques. These range from specialized investigations by select committees to annual appropriations hearings. Oversight is supported by a variety of authorities: The Constitution, public law, and chamber and committee rules- and it is an integral part of the system of checks and balances between the legislature and the executive (Halchin and Kaiser 2012). However, MPs' oversight scrutiny of government agencies does not take place in the public and this creates a perception of corruption. People rely on alleged trending allegation of corrupt politicians on social media, or newspapers publications which are often not verified. Thisday Newspaper describes a breath-taking example of how an average oversight encounters between Nigerian MPs and public servants unfolds:

My brother! We have evidence funny things are happening in your office. I will advise that you quickly arrange a good package

and see the boys or else you will face a public hearing on the matter. No sir. We are very transparent and accountable (...). You don't have to answer now. Think about it and let's talk tomorrow. We can meet say by 7 P.M. at the Fulani bar, Transcorp Hilton (Thisday 18th December 2015: 1).

The above extract from a newspaper article supposedly describes a typical oversight blackmailing conversation between the Chairman of a Senate or House of Representatives Committee and a minister or a head of an agency. One could guess what happens next. As the article puts it, at the end of such a meeting called by an MP, the minister, director general or executive secretary is faced with a stark choice: give in to the demand or face various forms of hostility and harassment. In the event described above, the minister or agency head gives in and the legislator becomes friendly and expansive:

My brother consider the matter dead. Next time try to carry us along. With me as Chairman of this Committee, I will ensure that you don't have any problem. Let us work together. Na we we! (Comrades) If he doesn't, he becomes a persona non grata and the committee members organise an open hearing to declare him corrupt, unproductive and a liability to the country (Ibid 2015:1).

Yet while there might be few examples of such practices, there is no evidence to suggest that all Nigerian MPs' oversight encounters take this form because they are officially confidential. This may be considered improper, but it does not mean that all MPs engage in oversight corruption. Instead, many MPs conduct oversight activities in the most honourable manner. Politicians with questionable behaviours can be publicly challenged and sometimes even jailed (BBC News April 26, 2016; BBC News Pidgin 12 June 2018). In Nigeria, the performance of oversight activities does not only serve the traditional purpose of horizontal accountability of government agencies, but it equally offers a way in which MPs' accountability credentials are questioned.

According to Barkan (2009:7), "Oversight is an essential function for any democracy legislature because it ensures both vertical accountability of the rulers to the ruled and horizontal accountability of all other agencies of government to the one branch whose primary function is representation." Just like every genuine democracy, Nigeria's representative politics is underpinned by the fact that legislative oversight is the only way to ensure executive agencies are made accountable and to limit excess. In furtherance of its oversight responsibility, each of the chambers of the National Assembly creates committees, sub-committees and ad-hoc committees to cover existing ministries and departments of government as may be needed. It closely monitors executive agencies routinely and may take several actions to make them accountable. For example, it can pass a law to compel them to obey existing rules or procedures, overrule their decisions, and/or to narrow an agency's jurisdiction. It can use its appropriations power to restrict the agency's funding. It can also narrow the agency's regulatory authority (Nwagwu 2014). Ezeani (2010) notes that legislative oversight activity is a major source of executive and legislative conflict in Nigeria. The major reason for this is the constant allegation that the oversight activities conducted by the Nigerian senators and House of Representatives members are often designed to advance their personal interests. In addition, MPs are accused of achieving personal aggrandisement by blackmailing and bullying executive officials until they agree on settlements. Despite the clear intent of the drafters of this constitution, which is to enforce checks and balances and accountability in governance, many Nigerians perceive legislative oversights to be an instrument of legislative corruption.

Critics do not only argue that legislative oversight in Nigeria suffers from integrity crisis; they also contend that it has become a political tool for the harassment and blackmail

of members of the executive branch, and especially political enemies or rivals. It is argued that this scenario gave credence to former President Olusegun Obasanjo's stance on different occasions on oversight functions, whereby it is alleged that he directed some of his ministers to ignore National Assembly summons because he considered such political aberrations as undue interference, illegal acts and ungodly avenues for corruption and extortions of resources from the ministers. Throughout his eight years as President, Olusegun Obasanjo used every opportunity to berate the MPs, including by describing them as "parasitic criminals, [a] waste of space and [a] burden to good governance" (Premium Times 26 November 2014). In an unprecedented presidential attack on the National Assembly in Nigeria, former President Obasanjo's frustrations were made public during a book lunch of his former Anti-Corruption Chairman, Justice Mustapha Akanbi, in 2014. At the event, former President Obasanjo claimed that the National Assembly, which he said was shrouding its corruption in the opaque nature of its budget, had damaged its capacity to oversee the executive. He accused the President Goodluck Jonathan-led executive of making direct payments to the legislature in order to cover up its wrongdoings. He alleged that MPs did not only shroud their remunerations in opaqueness, but also that they indulge in extorting money from departments, contractors and ministries in two ways. They extort money during visits to their projects and programmes and in the process of budget approval when they build up budgets for ministries and departments. These agree to return funds to the politicians through contracts that are never executed. Obasanjo claimed that they do similar things during their inquiries and even alleged that all the activities of the National Assembly lack transparency (Punch 31 July 2016).

From the outset, many MPs are alleged of supporting members aspiring to become the leader of their chambers according to their personal interests. Sometimes, MPs engage in carpet-crossing to protect their personal interests at the expense of party loyalty or political integrity. MPs also compete to secure the chairmanship and/or membership of what is often called “juicy committees or sub-committees” (Senate or House Committees that oversee ministries, departments, parastatals and agencies that control important sectors of Nigerian economy). For example, being a chairman or member of committees like Nigerian National Petroleum Company, (NNPC), Nigerian Maritime Authority, to mention but a few, some claim will enhance the chances of MPs overseeing them to make a lot of money. There is a deep sense of despondency among Nigerians that their MPs are not living up to their expectation of providing public benefits. Many of the parliamentary members are said to be driven by selfish desires of wealth accumulation than the patriotic desire of leaving enduring legislative legacies for posterity to print their names in the sand of history (Akomoledede and Bosede, 2012).

These accusations matter in the day of an MP because some of them spend a lot of time defending themselves both in civil courts and in the court of public opinion. Many Nigerian MPs are men and women of integrity, but they are nonetheless held accountable for all allegations of corruption levelled against their colleagues. For example, during the 8th Senate, some senators including the Senate President, Bukola Saraki, who faced corruption charges, were frequently appearing in courtrooms, or in custody of anti-corruption agencies to answer questions for their alleged graft practices. According to Premium Newspaper:

Like the outgoing Senate, the 9th Senate will also have members who are facing major corruption probes with some already being prosecuted. About 10 per cent of the newly elected Nigerian senators are facing corruption probes. Some are already being prosecuted. They include former governors, who allegedly stole state funds in office and other public officials (Premium Times 28 February 2019).

The implication of such allegations and court cases is that many loyal senators felt compelled to support and defend their colleagues by attending series of court hearing from lower courts up to the Supreme Court, instead of attending legislative plenary sessions (Vanguard 23 May, 2019). As this went on, there were also other senators who did not support those alleged to be corrupt and would rather publicly denounce them and support their prosecution. Irrespective of the group each MP belongs to, the politics of exposing corrupt public officials is part of the larger debate about politics of accountability in Nigeria. All MPs, including those with impeccable records, always feel compelled to prove their uprightness, especially as they engage in oversight functions. MPs' oversight activities are perceived differently because, unlike the plenary session, most of these are not public thereby leaving room for various misinterpretations. For this reason, they are often seen as particularly prone to corruption. But political debate has also recognized the dangers of potential corruption in oversight activities. This was exemplified by former President Obasanjo's attack on the oversight function in Nigerian politics under President Jonathan. This shows that performance, and the mobilization of critical rhetorical strategies, also potentially serve to check corruption.

5.7 MPs and Oversight Scandals

Oversight function appears to preoccupy modern legislatures; Verney (1969: 167) argues that the watchdog function seems to be more important for most legislative

assemblies than that of law-making. In Nigeria, legislative oversight function generates more public interest because that is a way of making public service accountable. Because the voters do not have any control over how the civil servants use appropriated funds, they rely on the MPs to enforce accountability. Unfortunately, public confidence in MPs lowers with any allegation of an induced or collaborative act of corruption (Page and Okeke 2019). An ideal legislative oversight duty offers an opportunity for elected politicians to ensure that executive agencies' actions are credible and cost effective. The legislature is to ensure that public servants involved in impropriety or non-compliance with due process are brought to book. However, legislative oversight process also provides an opportunity for MPs to be thoroughly challenged where there are allegations of misdeeds. Therefore, oversight investigation becomes a two-way traffic for promoting a horizontal accountability of both the executive and the legislative arms of government. Popular narrative of legislative oversight function in Nigeria suggests a process where corrupt MPs are hardly challenged. On the contrary, alleged corrupt activities are often scrutinised publicly, MPs and other political actors mobilise typical political performance strategies to expose misdeeds and call each other to justice. The two cases that came up in public committees' hearings, discussed at length later in this section, are testimonies to how the table can turn against politicians. In many cases, the essence of the oversight of executive administration entails scrutinising and authorising revenues and expenditures of the government and ensuring that appropriated funds are properly spent. As intended, the constitutional power of budgetary appropriation gives legislators the needed political influence to shape governance, and possibly carry out reforms that are sustainable. In the case of the United States of America, Saffell (1989)

opined that no function of the Congress that is more guarded to administrative control than the power of the public purse. Similarly, Posner and Park (2007:8) affirmed “Legislatures in some countries have gained a role in approving macro fiscal frameworks”. It is also noteworthy that in the event of an MP been accused of oversight corruption, there is a tendency for the public to assume that “law making is synonymous with money making” (Mbah 2002:19; Nwagwu 2014; Umaru 2017). Some contend that Nigerian MPs lack integrity because they use oversight powers as a political tool to harass and blackmail members of the executive branch perceived as political enemies or rivals. To this end, Alao (2015) argues that oversight functions as they are carried out by Nigerian MPs are often unconstitutional and violate the principle of separation of powers. He observed that the legislature in Nigeria is systematically usurping the functions of both the executive and the judiciary, and that such actions hamper political stability and socio-economic development.

The National Assembly has the mandate to create committees to supervise government departments, but the scale of the committees and sub-committees have been alleged as ways of settling personal interests. As at the time of my fieldwork, there were 57 standing committees in the Senate and 89 standing committees in the House of Representatives carrying out what many think are duplicated oversight roles. Each committee in either of the chambers consists of many members with each senator or member of the House of Representatives belonging to several committees at the same time. Unfortunately, the legislative work of the National Assembly is said to be adversely affected by these non-legislative functions, resulting in the enactment of poorly drafted legislation. On many occasions, Nigerian MPs are shown on national television conducting series of committee public hearings as part of their oversight

investigations with pomp and pageantry. While oversight function is an essential accountability process in a democracy, many Nigerians feel that more still need to be done on the question of transparency (Alao 2015).

As one interviewee said, “they said, MPs are fighting corruption, but what we see is that the more they say they fight corruption, the more they are accused of stealing more than the thieves, so who do we believe?” (Personal Communication Constituent Rivers State March 20, 2017). Such paradox alludes to how some Nigerians feel about MPs and their legislative oversight function, particularly on its claim of probity, accountability and transparency in the conduct of its business (Segun and Oni 2014).

5.7.1 A Case Study of Nigerian MPs’ Oversight Function Allegations

Oversight power allows the legislature to enforce due process and accountability. In doing so, they have the power and authority “to take actions that span from routine oversight to criminal sanctions or impeachment in relation to the actions or omissions by other institutions of the state that may be qualified as unlawful” (O’ Donnell 2008: 60). Where horizontal institutions are inadequate, citizens could get involved with its enforcement in what Adamolekun (2010) identifies as diagonal and society-drawn accountability. In a representative government, citizens can enforce horizontal accountability by pressurising their elected representatives to enforce accountability against public officials (see Perez-Linan 2014; Hochstetler 2011). Traditionally, legislative committees question government agencies about their performance, and have the power to hold them accountable by initiating vote of no-confidence (Lindberg et al, 2017). In order to create transparency, most legislative institutions set up a Public Accounts Committees (PAC) to ensure resources are efficiently utilised and reduce corruption (Pelizzo 2014).

In any case, research suggests that PAC do not provide an effective oversight control that enhances the culture of accountability. Members of PACs are said to be easily convinced to turn blind eyes to impropriety. According to Golooba-Mutebi (2016), Ugandan MPs were found to have compromised their oversight authority by asking the president for financial help. Lindberg (2010) found that Ghanaian MPs who show loyalty to the president are rewarded with seats on procurement and tender board as well as with cabinet positions. Besides alleged wrongdoing of some MPs during oversight functions, Nigerian legislature engage in budget padding before passing appropriation bill (Omeje and Ogbu 2019). These studies show that the allegation of legislative oversight corruption is a topical issue in public debate in Africa, but it does not simply imply that all African MPs are corrupt. We do not have any empirical evidence that shows an Africa-wide trend of legislative corruption. What exist are more of isolated cases of alleged corrupt MPs as in the example of Nigerian MPs discussed below.

5.7.2 Ms Aruma Oteh Vs Mr Herman Hembe

Following an allegation of impropriety levelled against the Director General of the Security Exchange Commission, Ms Aruma Oteh, the House of Representative's Committee on Capital Markets and Institutions decided to conduct a public hearing as part of their investigation. The public hearing, which was conducted on March 14, 2012, was intended to publicly indict Ms Aruma Oteh of misconduct. However, media reports revealed that specific charges of corruption were made against the chairman of the committee, Mr Herman Hembe during the public hearing, which raises fundamental questions about Nigeria's legislative oversight process (Alli, 2012: 1). Every public hearing is usually preceded by a Senate or House resolution for either of the chambers

to promote accountability and transparency of legislative business. Performance wise, prior to the public hearing, the Senate President or House Speaker respectively, will appoint the chairman of the committee and the members. Based on the terms of reference the committee has, interested parties and the public will be invited to participate. Although a public hearing is not a court, but the committee has the power to compel the parties concerned to attend. Organising public hearing is an opportunity for MPs to conduct a serious business but at the same time, it creates a sense of fanfare and ceremonial displays. In the case of Securities and Exchange Commission, the Chairman Mr Herman Hembe, was flanked by several members on the well decorated high table, while Ms Aruma Oteh and her team sat in the front row opposite. The committee members along with everyone in the committee room were well dressed. Considering the eagle-eye press, Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Commission (EFCC) in attendance, people seemed to be very conscious of what they say or how they responded to incriminating questions. Although the atmosphere was tense, the usual protocol of people addressing the committee members, especially the chairman with their correct title of “Mr Chairman Sir”, was duly followed. However, being courteous and observing protocol did not deter Ms Oteh from accusing Mr Hembe of demanding for bribes during their previous oversight encounters.

According to the report, Mr Hembe had (...) told Ms Oteh “you are not fit to regulate the sector.” He accused Ms Oteh of profligacy, telling her that she had “been spending money as if it is going out of fashion since assuming office one year ago (...) you stayed in a hotel for eight months and spent over N30 million. In one day, you spent N85000 on food at the hotel. The other day you spent N850000 on food. These are the things

we should look at to see how you will regulate a market that is collapsing” (Alli, 2012: 2).

Ms Oteh, who seemed to have been cornered by the MP and taken off guard, responded: “Mr. Chairman, I question your credibility to preside over this probe. On 20th October last year, you were given a cheque to travel to the Dominican Republic to attend a conference (...) yet you did not attend the conference. Can you tell Nigerians that you returned the money when you did not travel? In asking SEC to contribute N39 million for this public hearing, don’t you think that you are undermining your capacity to carry out your duties?”(Ibid: 2) Among her public revelations included the accusation that the MP, Mr Hembe, also asked for N5 million for himself. Ms Oteh pointedly denounced the conduct of the Committee which she likened to a quasi-judicial sitting aimed at witch-hunting government officials that do not yield to the ungodly demands of the MPs. In an unambiguous language, she lashed out:

This has been a Kangaroo court.⁶³ Not even in Idi Amin’s Uganda did we have this type of public hearing (...). I do not think that it is appropriate for you to have gathered information from the SEC and without even asking us to verify that information, to respond to that issue, you already made the judgment that you made; we are trying to build a democracy [in Nigeria]. I will like to say to the Nigerian people that I do not think that I am given a fair hearing (Alli, 2012:2).

From this episode of public hearing encounter, we can infer that MPs use most of their daily legislative time to seek out any suspected wrongdoing by government agencies they oversee and bring them to scrutiny. The process of legislative “naming and shaming” exercise has the capacity to promote MPs’ legitimacy and credibility before

⁶³ National Newspaper, The Nation, March 20, 2012 (p. 2), gave a vivid account of how this public hearing revealed the secrete dealing of MP’s oversight functions. The reference to ‘Kangaroo Court’ is a reminder of military courts that existed during the military regimes.

the public. However, it also shows that if public servants from government agencies being overseen have proof of their innocence or counter evidence to challenge such an MP, then he or she could be put on the back foot. Where the dynamics of public hearing changes as in this case, it will shift the debate to public domain with the matter making the headline on newspapers, radio, and television as well as on social media. Such development makes the whole process of legislative accountability more interesting because it provides opportunity for the checks and balances required to limit MP's alleged oversight recklessness. Publicly displayed oversight outcomes and their consequences of this nature fit into the main argument of this thesis that the quest of Nigerians for political accountability remains strong despite the perception of corruption.

5.7.3 Faruk Lawan Vs Michael Otedola

Apart from the display of alleged bribe money in "Ghana-Must-Go" (sacks) on the floor of the House of Representatives during a sitting, the allegation against Farouk Lawan remains one of the most chilling examples of legislative corruption in Nigerian history. According to the story, following a nationwide protest against government's attempt to remove the fuel subsidy in January 2012, the House of Representatives set up an Ad hoc Fuel Subsidy Committee to investigate alleged malpractices in the oil sector, led by MP Faruk Lawan. His Committee was asked to thoroughly investigate, expose and recommend the culprits for prosecution. The activities and public hearings of the committee were well publicised in the media which increased Faruk Lawan's popularity among Nigerians. Unfortunately, Mr Lawan's celebrity status soon nose-dived when it was revealed that he was involved in corruption himself. During the probe, Faruk Lawan allegedly requested and collected \$500,000 of a \$3m bribe solicited from an oil

tycoon, Mr Femi Otedola. Mr Otedola alleged that the lawmaker demanded the \$3m bribe to have his company, Zenon, removed from a list of those involved in the scandal (Omonobi 2012; BBC News Africa February 1st, 2013).⁶⁴

Initially, Mr Lawan denied the allegation, saying he did not demand, collect, or send anybody to demand or collect any money on his behalf from the businessman. His reaction led Mr Otedola to give a more detailed account of how the transaction took place, where it took place, who collected the money and how much was collected. As this chilling detail graced the Nigerian News Media headlines, and perhaps in an attempt to save his crumbling image, Mr Lawan eventually conceded that he collected some money from Mr Otedola in order to indict him of bribery and corruption. But Mr Otedola, both in the media and later while under oath in a court said the transaction took place and that he did hand over the video recording of the corrupt activity to the police which he said made it possible for the MP to be investigated. His allegation was later read out to Mr Lawan in a court: “You Farouk Lawan (...) in the course of your official duty corruptly asked for the sum of \$3m for yourself from Femi Otedola (...) to afterwards show favour to Femi Otedola,” Reuters news agency quotes the charges read out in the Abuja High Court.⁶⁵ Another member of Mr Lawan's parliamentary fuel subsidy committee, Emenalo Boniface, was also charged in court with corruption for

⁶⁴ See the video record of Farouk Lawan's alleged oversight function bribery of \$3million being handed to him by Otedola whose company the committee said was involved in the oil subsidy scandal. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qnWabagCgKA>. In this video, Lawan could be heard saying to Otedola: “we will fix it”. A term commonly used to reassure a victim of corruption that certain problem or issue they have paid for will be taken care of after they have settled or paid the corrupt official(s). Here, Lawan was reassuring Otedola that he as the Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee overseeing the oil subsidy investigation, will use his position to influence the committee to exonerate his company after collecting the bribe.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

accepting \$120,000 of the \$3m bribe from Mr Otedola (BBC News Africa 1st February 2013).

Reacting to this image smearing oversight drama, The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Honourable Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, in a swift and subtle reaction to the embarrassing development, tactfully reprimanded his fellow parliamentarians thus:

When we were elected to pursue the entrenchment of probity, accountability and transparency in the conduct of government business as a cardinal legislative agenda, we advised ourselves never to expect that it will be an easy task. Accordingly, I have had cause to occasionally sound a note of warning and reminder that our constitutional task is inescapably hazardous requiring total commitment, diligence, transparency, determination and sacrifice (Anayochukwu 2012: 48).

What we can learn from this scandalous scene is that MPs who engage in corruption through privileged oversight power do not always go unpunished. Many Nigerians do not just condemn corruption; they can also go to a great length to mitigate it by helping to secure evidence for the indictment of corrupt politicians and other public officials. Constituents and the public at large have the right to demand accountability of public officials by pressuring legislative and other oversight agencies as well as taking legal actions. As shown here, with evidence against an MP, oversight function interaction between MPs and public officials could become a strategic way to measure political accountability, punish indicted public officials and deter corruption. In other words, as in this case, it can provide an opportunity for two-way accountability traffic between an MP and other agencies. But sometimes, public emotional reaction to an alleged MP's oversight corruption often leads to prejudgement of guilt even when there is no

evidence. Therefore, it is illogical to suggest that corrupt MPs are not challenged, and that Nigerians are simply co-opted to do the bidding of politicians.

5.8 What Civil Servants Say About MPs' Oversight Activities?

As already stated in this chapter, politicians have poor image which makes them susceptible to allegation of corruption. Moreover, the chances of such allegations increase during oversight function because it does not take place in the public. In the absence of an ethnographic reporting of oversight functions, I spoke to some civil servants whose departments were overseen by some senators and honourable members of the lower chamber. They were critical of legislative meddling with their bureaucratic duties, but candidly emphasised that the MPs they dealt with did not compromise due process. They acknowledged that although the issue of impropriety during legislative oversight remains a big problem in Nigeria, but that it does not exist on a large scale. This assertion illustrates that civil servants often observe politicians very critically. Informants from the civil service clearly distinguished between conscientious and corrupt politicians with whom they have worked. While it is of course possible that some of these civil servants were corrupt themselves, it nonetheless shows that civil servants clearly assess and judge politicians for their own corrupt activities. This does not provide a direct check or balance by itself, but it suggests that politicians cannot assume that they will not be held accountable.

As a matter of fact, three of my informants who happened to have had several oversight dealings with MPs as directors in their ministries said they have never been asked for money or contracts. One of my informants assertively disagreed with the allegation of MPs' oversight corruption: "I am not a fan of politicians, especially senators and house

members, because they create the mess and leave it for us, civil servants to clean up, however, some of them are men of integrity who do their best to do the right thing” (Personal Communication Abuja 25 October 2016). Most of my informants believe that many of the MPs have worked hard to ensure that appropriated funds are judiciously used, and that the quality of work executed by contractors is of a high standard.

Although the question of oversight corruption allegations against MPs was not part of the interview questions I put to my informants during the fieldwork, some of them alluded to it during our conversations. As one of them remarked, many Nigerians think that MPs are doing nothing in Abuja other than sharing money. He went on to say that the issue of corruption in Nigeria and indeed, all over the world is not new, but that it is not all the politicians that are corrupt. He concluded by saying that, although he can only vouch for himself, there are more men and women of integrity in the National Assembly than in other arms of government (Personal Communication Senator_5 Abuja, October 19, 2014). Although allegations of oversight impropriety are difficult to verify, MPs and other politicians also call each other out regarding wrongdoing. A very important element of accountability performance in Nigeria is the fact that politicians themselves, especially MPs often publicly scrutinise each other where there are allegations of corruption. Sometimes beyond political interest, politicians like ordinary citizens can publicly or anonymously report those they think have broken the law including their colleagues. For example, a senator anonymously claimed that the chairmen of committees connive with their clerks to short-change members of their committees whenever money or any other benefits are involved. He goes on to assert that:

There is no transparency in the activities of many committee chairmen. They don't carry their members along in most of the issues, especially those bordering on money and other benefits from government agencies that we supervise (Punch 26 November 2018).

The above allegation was given credence by the claim of the Vice Chairman, Senate Committee on Army, Senator Ibrahim Danbaba, who raised a point of order during Senate plenary, to allege that the chairman of his committee, Senator George Akume, was not carrying him and other members of their committee along during their oversight activities (Punch November 26, 2018). Allegations of this nature do provoke anger and the performance of denial forms part of the daily routine of Nigerian MPs. Therefore, they use different platforms like television, radio, newspapers, social media, constituency outreach visits and political campaigns to exonerate themselves. Some of them not only fight to clear their names, but also try to protect the integrity and honour of the legislature as an institution that plays the role of supervision and accountability enforcement. In response to the allegation of corruption of the MPs, the spokesman of the Senate in 2018, Senator Ben Murray-Bruce, claimed that most of such allegations were unfounded and bordered on tarnishing the image of the National Assembly. He challenged those making the allegations to make their evidence public and went on to say: "I wonder why the MDAs are saying that we are promoting corruption through our oversight functions. They should publish the names of the senator or the names of the group of senators demanding money from them" (Punch Ibid). Similarly, the Senate Chief Whip, Senator Sola Adeyeye, responded by claiming innocence of any corruption peddled against senators:

Fortunately, I never been [sic] chairman of a committee (in the 8th Senate). All I know is that I have never demanded a bribe from anybody. I also know that (former) Senate Presidents David Mark (current) Bukola Saraki had repeatedly warned members

not to demand bribes whenever they go on oversight function particularly because they said it makes National Assembly prone to all these allegations (Punch *ibid*).

For an observer, one of the most interesting things about Nigerians is that both the accused and non-accused and their supporters often put up breath-taking performances to make their cases. For example, when responding to issues about corruption people tend to show emotion and high level of vulnerability. A popular way an accused person could appeal to public sympathy could be spontaneously referring the matter to God. For example, apart from swearing in the name of God, people also use such language as: “let God be the judge”, “God knows that I have done nothing” or “God Dey oo” (God exists), to claim innocence of any allegation. What all these shows is that allegations of impropriety against MPs by fellow MPs as well as other public officials they deal with create room for horizontal political accountability. While allegations do not mean guilt, it nevertheless shows that legislative accountability is a genuine and effective process that hardly gets reported.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter shows that the relationship of political accountability between politicians, in this case Nigerian MPs and others is more complex than simplified by corruption. It highlights the enormity of accountability pressures and credibility questions that form part of an MP’s daily routine. This chapter takes the argument from the previous chapter further to suggest that debates about money, corruption, and reciprocity also dominate ‘high’ politics and by implication the professional side of politicians’ lives. It shows that MPs and the legislature (National Assembly), are not insulated from a public perception that treats politicians with suspicion and disdain. Majority of the MPs work

diligently to legislate for the good governance of the nation as well as follow up to supervise and regulate due process, but a few number of them get labelled as corrupt. However, this chapter shows that while allegations of corruption exist, that does not suggest that all politicians are corrupt. This chapter revealed that there exists a strong sense of integrity among MPs and that, they do self-scrutinise each other including publicly condemning their colleagues whose behaviour run short of expectation. Politics of corruption and its interpretation in relation to Nigerian MPs' daily routine reflects how strongly the public demand for political accountability as against condoning it. Even though some public officials get entangled in corruption allegation, the general expectation is that those involved should be brought to book. The chapter demonstrates that while the bottom-up accountability demands is sustained by the pressure exerted on the MPs by the public through the media, the MPs also face a top-down accountability pressure from each other and other public officials they oversee.

6 ACCOUNTABILITY DEMANDS BY CONSTITUENTS

6.1 Introduction

As advanced in previous chapters, the accountability relationship between African politicians and constituents can be understood by exploring the performance, language, and outcome of such encounters. This chapter describes a day in the life of a constituent to explain the nature, performance, and the outcomes of accountability relationships between constituents and politicians in Nigeria. It explores the types of demands constituents make of their MPs in detail and focuses on the degree to which these could be said to reflect patron-client relations. It describes the socio-cultural contexts of constituents' expectations and demands using a qualitative approach like exploring the views of my interviewees and survey respondents. The chapter clearly identifies what people ask of their representatives and explores how the relationships between politicians and constituents are performed, as well as how constituents' demands are expressed. In addition to interviews and participant observation, this chapter draws on a survey carried out as part of the PhD research to gain insight into the nature of accountability demands constituents make of their MPs. The survey findings show that more constituents ranked constituency benefits such as roads, electricity and pipe borne water higher than private benefits like jobs or contracts. However, most would nonetheless be willing to accept private benefits.

By listening to the interviewees and survey responses of my informants, and by witnessing and observing the performance of accountability relationships between the senators and their constituents, we gain an insight into the sociological contexts of political accountability in Nigeria. Moreover, the survey data allows the chapter to

address such questions as whether accountability demands affect constituents' electoral participation, whether age influences the types of accountability demands people make, and whether levels of education affect constituents' choice of accountability demands. It articulates constituents' expectations in relation to accountability demands and their supply and compares different types of accountability demands and how they are prioritised by constituents. Additionally, the chapter addresses the politics of constituency projects, which have become increasingly important in shaping the outcome of representative politics in Nigeria.

6.2 What Do Constituents Expect of their Senators?

In the context of this study, the concept of accountability has been refined to include private and public goods. In Western representative democracies, political accountability revolves around the quality of constituents' representation, law making, and constituency service. along with the level of oversight they have on government agencies (National Conference of State Legislatures 2019). MPs do these by dealing with government departments on behalf of individual constituents and groups, working with the community in their local settings, holding regular surgeries and attending constituency functions (Norris 2004: 4). But in Nigeria, MPs' political accountability is multi-faceted, and performance is measured by both legislative and non-legislative expectations and accomplishments. While the MPs are expected to take their legislative and representative functions seriously, this thesis highlights that Nigerians also consider the non-legislative performance of their MPs, and in particular the provision of accountability benefits, an important aspect of political representation.

The non-legislative expectations include the provision of goods and services. These can be further differentiated into private benefits, which are enjoyed by individuals, group/club benefits, which benefit only a specific group of the society, and community benefits. Public goods are supposed to be enjoyed by the entire constituency. Private and group/club benefits may include material, for example financial assistance, food and other goods, job opportunities, contracts, and non-material resources like political appointments or social connections. Community demands may sometimes include money or bags of food to be shared among the constituents. However, most community demands are in the form of public goods. These are usually constituency infrastructural development projects such as electricity, pipe-borne water, roads, and hospitals. Although there is no comprehensive comparative information about what type of private accountability benefits exist across Africa, evidence from Ghana suggests that people tend to make similar demands of politicians, asking for financial or material support, or for jobs to better their lives (Lindberg 2010).

Several factors affect the type and intensity of the demands that constituents make of their MPs. Constituents may present demands as individuals, as members of groups/clubs, or as part of a larger community delegation demanding for communal benefits from their MPs.

Throughout my interviews, constituents signalled the understanding that the expectation of and demands for public goods and private gains and their provision by politicians is a legitimate process that enables people to benefit from government through their elected representatives. Except for public goods, such as constituency projects, which are annually appropriated for by the National Assembly, other forms of accountability demands and supply are informal and could therefore, be regarded as

part of the Nigerian rent economy. While many constituents said they had never made any private demands, they generally suggested that MPs had the capacity and responsibility to supply varied constituency demands. However, they were more vocal about demands for jobs and constituency projects than about private benefits. Many of my respondents said they had been actively involved in demanding constituency development projects in their communities as well as advocating for jobs for educated youths. These views were also reflected in the survey results on the types of accountability benefits that constituents demand of their MPs.

Over the course of my fieldwork, I observed many constituents coming to see the senators I visited. Many would wait for long hours or even repeat the visits for several days to see the senator. On one occasion, a woman who was nursing a child had an argument with the personal assistant to one of the senators I visited, whom she alleged prevented her from seeing. She stressed that she was sure the senator would have given her some money to solve her health problems if not for the personal assistant's intervention. I saw many people, mostly in organised groups, who had to wait for hours to see their senators. There were also people who were in the National Assembly for another reason, and who took the opportunity to visit their senator, even if he or she did not expect them.

From my observations, people genuinely had high expectations of their MPs. Such expectations ranged from political and legal to socio-cultural reasons. MPs are elected into office to represent the interests of their constituencies and on that basis; people are justified when they demand effective political representation. But in most cases, effective representation includes the ability to attract constituency development projects. As set out earlier, in Nigeria, the privileged are expected to support those with

lesser opportunities or means of survival. This communal spirit further legitimises constituents' expectations and the responsibility of big men like (MPs) supplying them. As a result, an MP usually encounters several constituents with varied demands in a day. He or she will try to deal with them cautiously and diplomatically even when he or she is unhappy and frustrated.

6.3 What Do Constituents Say?

As noted in the introduction, the survey for this thesis included 800 randomly selected respondents across the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria in 2014. Respondents were male and female and drawn from both urban and rural areas, as well as from educated and non-educated social groups. It must be noted that the number of male survey respondents is significantly higher than the female respondents (see the table 4 below), despite efforts to have a fair number of female respondents. It was my intention to conduct a survey that produced a fair sample of both male and female respondents but as it turned out, many females approached did not take part. Although it is difficult to pinpoint the reason for poor female participation in the survey, this may be linked to the fact that women's participation in public and political life in Africa is often more limited. Generally, women face social, economic and cultural barriers that stem from negative stereotypes and entrenched gender roles (Nyamweya et al 2018).⁶⁶ Women from some Muslim communities, especially in the Northern region, are not allowed to interact with men other than their husbands or immediate family members. It is also

⁶⁶ Also see Megan Alexandra Dersnah's Global Report for The Working Group on the issue of discrimination in law and in practice. Available online at: <https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=do+culture+affect+womens'+participation+in+public+survey+in+af+rica&ie=&oe> This report highlights forms of discrimination African women are subjected to that limit their life chances.

possible that women refused to complete the survey because they are less encouraged to be outgoing, or because they are busier looking after the family while actively working. These reasons have been said to be responsible for the alarming and disturbing level of political apathy of Nigerian women in recent years (Falade 2007, Arowolo and Aluko 2010, Fabiyi 2009).

Table 4 representing gender of survey respondents

Gender of Survey Participants	Percentage score %
Male	87%
Female	13%

The survey respondents were made up of different age groups. More than 50% of those surveyed were relatively young, in the age group of 21-30. In most cases they were either still in school, especially higher education, had finished studies, or were working or unemployed. While age has a role to play in answering one of the research questions as shown elsewhere in this study, it is interesting to note that both young and elderly, educated and non-educated, rural or urban dwellers, employed and unemployed appeared to share the same passion when answering questions about Nigerian politics.

6.4 MPs' Performance and the Question of Trust

In order to capture how the people, feel about the issue of trust or mistrust of their representatives, constituents were asked two questions that border on whether they are interested in their MP's performance and when they feel their MPs have performed.

Many constituents equate trust to the quality of a senator's representative performance. Therefore, performance rating and trust are intertwined. Good performance increases the chances of an MP being trusted but poor performance does increase mistrust. Trust in this context is measured by the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction constituents have on the accountability performance of their MP. This means that the support a government, political party or politician receives is determined by how they performed in their specific responsibilities. For example, a study in Norway shows that citizens who were satisfied with a specific public service were also found to have had a higher level of trust on public institutions than those dissatisfied (Christensen and Laegreid 2005). In response to one of the survey questions, "Are you interested in the performance of your MP?" 90% of the 800 constituents surveyed said they were interested in the representative performance of their MPs. While the overwhelming majority of those surveyed were interested in the performance of their MPs, however, a minority of respondents judged their MP's performance on how he/she represents the interest of their constituency at the national level. When asked, "When do you feel that your senator has performed well?", out of the 800 respondents surveyed, only 61.5% said, "When he/she is able to represent the interest of their constituency". Similarly, most of the interviewees acknowledged that quality constituency representation is the most essential duty of any representative, whether Senator, Federal House of Representative Member, State House of Assembly

Member or a Local Councillor. Equally, all the senators interviewed claimed that representing and promoting the interest of their constituents was their top priority.

The survey result suggests that most of the respondents and interviewees are not primarily interested in the art of law-making, which they believe is time and money wasting. Rather, they were deeply interested in what they consider as the substance of political representation. As one interviewee puts it:

I am not interested in what they do there in Abuja. What do they really do? Is it not the same drama every day and collecting millions of naira in allowance? What people want to see is substance and not ability to speak long grammar without any tangible project to show” (Personal Communication constituent_54 Kaduna, January 2015).

This result leaves us with an interesting puzzle. If a strong majority of the constituents are interested in the performance of their MPs, why is it only a simple majority that is interested in how their MPs represent their constituency? Put in a different way, if an MP’s official role of law-making, representation and over-sight duties does not amount to substance and a basis of his/her performance appraisal, what else does? This leaves room for us to explore why the responses of the informants, which confirm that concrete accountability demands, namely the provision of private and public goods to constituents, are taking precedence over MPs’ traditional role of constituency representation and law making.

6.5 Constituents and Types of Accountability Demands

Citizens’ expectations and demands of political leaders are multifaceted, meaning that politicians come under a barrage of pressures to meet different forms of private, club and public needs and at the same time to justify their actions. However legitimate

constituents' expectations might seem, making demands of politicians and asking them to justify how they use public resources creates tension. Constituents' demands are potentially insatiable human wants, and resources to meet these wants are limited. Therefore, economic logic means that constituents will have to decide which of the accountability demands they consider important in theory take precedence, especially when they come into personal contact with their senators. Constituents may make multiple demands in the hope that politicians could magnanimously provide them, but it is only sensible that people demand what is most important to them at a particular time. The interview questions and survey questionnaire were designed to capture the type of accountability demands people make as shown in Fig.2 below and the responses provided by the informants in different contexts were revealing.

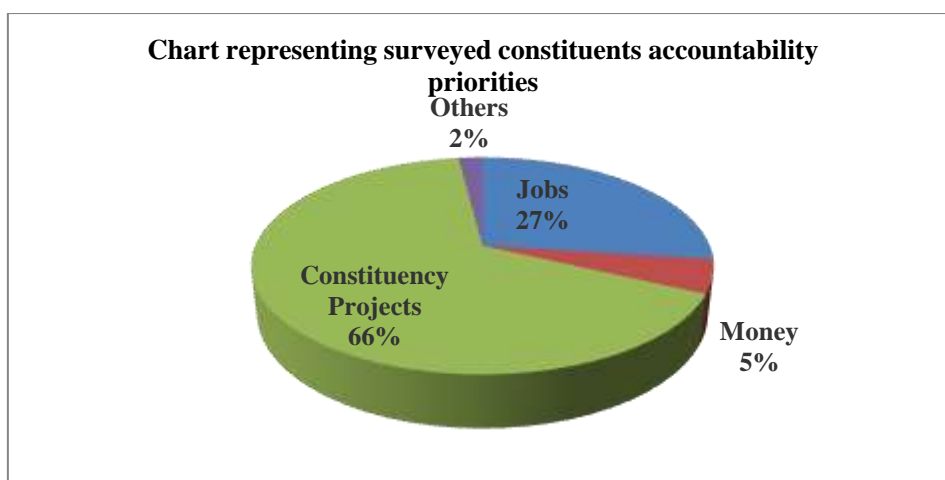


Figure 2 Constituents' Accountability Priorities

Very few of the constituents I interviewed entertained the idea of prioritising money over other important things like constituency projects and jobs, but many said they would accept it if politicians offered it to them. Some believe that there is a big difference between a voter asking for money in order to vote for a candidate in an election and when politicians offer constituents money or other gifts without the

intention of buying them over. One might argue that either way, if this relationship leads to an exchange of material benefits, such as money, for constituents' votes, then it is nothing other than vote-buying. But both survey respondents and those interviewed indicated that money, whether solicited or offered, does not determine who someone will vote for. They find accepting money legitimate because politicians have access to resources of which ordinary people are deprived. Respondents who said they would collect money also pointed out they could still vote according to their conscience. This type of behaviour forms part of the "hidden transcript" with which the oppressed resist against oppressive and unaccountable regimes (Scott 1985). It is also a contrast to Mbembe's idea of a friendly relationship between the oppressive postcolonial leaders and the led which perpetuates political recklessness and impunity in Africa (Mbembe 2001).

On the other hand, constituents who benefited directly from accountability supplies, or whose relatives or members of the same community had gained employment or contracts from an MP were more likely to vote for an MPs without any financial inducement. The interviewees and survey respondents who said they or someone from their community had benefited from things like employment, contracts or social amenities provided by an MP tended to respect and cherish him/her, and they were more willing to vote and persuade others to vote in favour of such MPs. One of the interviewees (constituents) shed more light on how passionate they work to support such MPs:

In my village, we don't just vote for politicians because they give us money. Yes, they bring bags of rice, salt, "garri" (fermented cassava flour) and money, usually during election and after that you will not see them until four years. But we know who we will support; we support the person that has done things for our

people especially giving our youth's jobs and not just money. Like the last House of Representative Member, he helped five people here to get job(s) and does not need to spend money, so we voted for him and he can go home and sleep and not worry to campaign here because we trust him and he knows we love him (Personal Communication Constituent_28 Enugu, December 10, 2015).

This feeling is further illuminated by a constituent who said:

You know we don't have roads, let alone good roads, no electricity; we neither have water nor [a] functioning clinic. So, if you do even [a] road for us, why will I not vote for you? If any of the thieves bring their money, I will take it and still vote for whoever deserves my vote (Personal Communication Constituent_30, Cross Rivers June 5, 2015).

6.5.1 Constituency projects

Many of the survey respondents said that a constituency project is the most important demand they have made of their MPs. The highest-ranking accountability demands were constituency projects at 66%, followed by demands for jobs at 27% and others at 2%. Surprisingly, amongst all types of accountability demands that constituents make, demand for money or financial benefits ranked only at 5% even though many respondents confessed they would collect money if it was offered to them by MPs.

Constituency projects are projects that facilitate the provision of public goods or infrastructure like roads, electricity, pipe-borne water, schools, and hospitals. Such social amenities help to accelerate the socio-economic development of the community and improve their overall quality of life. Since the re-birth of representative democracy in 1999, constituency projects have become an anchor of political accountability. As they are budgeted for annually, they have become the most important way that constituencies measure the performance of MPs. All the senators I spoke to consider it as a priority to provide constituency projects and many of them claim that sometimes they go beyond providing the amenities that have been allocated to their constituencies

through federal resources and use their own funds to finance some of the projects. As one of my informants said:

Senators receive constituency allocation, but it is never going to be enough to provide constituency projects in [as] a large district as mine. You would need to use your own money sometimes, as I have done [on] several occasions (Personal Communication Senator_4, Abuja October 18, 2014).

Although there remains a big question about how some MPs use their federal allocation for constituency projects, the fact that MPs who have the means may still privately fund constituency projects confirms that this is well understood by politicians.

Constituency projects can have a strong collective impact on the community, and they remain the most enduring legacy that politicians can rely on as their achievement when they vacate an office. As evidence of their constituency project achievements, all the senators I visited had long lists of constituency projects they had completed on their quarterly or annual publications and banners, which they proudly presented to me as soon as I arrived. Similarly, there was concrete evidence that the senators of the constituencies I visited had invested significant effort and resources to provide social amenities like roads, electricity, pipe-borne water, school blocks, clinics, irrigation facilities and other people empowerment schemes for their constituents. Politicians that were judged to have performed well in this respect were often rewarded with unique chieftaincy titles (see Vanguard November 14, 2017, Punch November 14, 2017 for coverage of President Buhari).⁶⁷ Although this study did not have any follow-up evidence about the potential electoral gains that such MPs may get as a reward of

⁶⁷ President Buhari was confirmed with the chieftaincy titles of Ochi Oha Ndigbo (Leader of All) of Igboland and Enyioma 1 (Number 1 Good Friend) of Ebonyi State. A chieftaincy title of this nature symbolises a collective appreciation of the contribution of the president to Igboland such as the award of a new contract for the construction of River Niger bridge. It could also be an incentive for him to provide more infrastructures in Igboland

their constituency project performance, undoubtedly politicians who provided social amenities are more likely to gain the trust and respect of constituents than those that only surfaced with money ahead of elections.

However, despite the importance of constituency projects, my observations suggested that the demands of constituents were slightly more varied than the survey responses. While constituency projects featured among them, the majority of interactions I witnessed, or was told about, were linked to other concerns, including requests for jobs, contracts, or money.

6.5.2 Demand for jobs

What constituents demand and how they demand them depends both on push factors and opportunity. Push factors include but are not limited to poverty, lack of employment, lack of business or contract connections, and poor social or informal networks. Opportunistic demands may arise when a big man like a senator wants to be charitable, canvassing for political support or in a social event where the big man wants to gain popularity. From what I observed in the National Assembly, there were a lot of unemployed school leavers hanging around the lobby or running between the Senate and House of Representatives galleries or the entrance to their respective chambers to monitor their targets. On one occasion, I counted more than a thousand unemployed people that crowded the National Assembly lobby creating a deluge of human traffic. Similar scenes have become a norm as shown in the Sahara Reporter's pictures of job seekers with their credentials begging MPs to offer them employment.



Picture 4 Job Seekers Besiege National Assembly Complex⁶⁸

Many people including those in employment dream of working at the National Assembly or as assistants to the senators, but some would still be happy to simply get a recommendation letter from the senators because most jobs are secured through informal networks or through a big man's connection or recommendation.⁶⁹ Again, the

⁶⁸ Source <https://www.legit.ng/469285-photos-unemployed-nigerians-seek-work-at-national-assembly.html> Accessed on December 8th, 2018. Image above is a commonplace in the National Assembly especially following the inauguration of a new assembly. The sight of such crowd in the National Assembly suggests that many Nigerians believe that MPs have the capacity to provide them with job opportunities. Similar images are available at: Saharareporters, New York, June 13, 2019. <http://saharareporters.com/2019/06/13/job-seekers-besiege-national-assembly-complex>

⁶⁹ Governor Jolly Nyame in Jubrin Ibrahim, "The rise of Nigeria's godfathers" BBC Focus on Africa Magazine, November 3, 2003. Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3156540.stm> The godfathers are running Nigerian political process and institutions like their private estates. There is no state of Nigeria that does not have an impostor godfather who prefers to appoint and sponsor surrogates who they can easily remove from office when they refuse to yield to their demands. In many states, godfathers manipulatively bind their godsons by getting them to sign undated resignation letters and filming them making resignation announcements. Should the godsons fail to deliver to their godfathers after being elected, the godfathers are able to simply issue the resignation letter and videotape to remove them from office. In many instances, godsons carry the briefcases and become errand boys before their godfathers anoint them for political office.

majority of the people I met in the offices of the senators I interviewed were looking for work and, in most cases, some of them happened to be among the people that I saw in the lobby. Based on my observation and the number of employment recommendation letters being dispatched, it became obvious that employment was the most pressing demand that constituents made of their senators at the National Assembly Complex. Evidence from my interviews with constituents also suggests that the demand for jobs ranked second highest among the reasons constituents contact their senators.

6.5.3 Demand for contracts

Many of the constituents that besieged the National Assembly were there to seek Senators' or House of Representative Members' help to secure federal contracts or other forms of business connections. I observed that people's demands for contracts, like demands for money, may be a way to get the help to start a business or grow an existing one. People believe that Members of the National Assembly have the clout and connection to help them secure contracts from federal ministries, parastatals, and agencies. Usually, award of contracts is the responsibility of executive agencies, but people are confident that their senators could help them influence the official during the contract bidding. Their optimism about the capacity of a senator to influence contract award decision were revealing in the response of few constituents. When asked how easy it is for a senator to help constituents secure job or contract, one informant said:

Yes, senators, especially those in charge of committee or prominent ones among them, can easily get you job or even federal contract. If you are a senator, you are highly placed, and you can use that position to get federal contracts under the ministries you supervise. Although sometimes, there could be

many vested interests, but a senator is among the big men that can get you contract just like the ministers too (Personal Communication_Constituent Abuja, 21 October 2014).

6.5.4 Demand for money

Many of my survey respondents and interviewees did not consider money as the most important demand they would make of their senators, but some acknowledged that they would gladly accept it when offered. Nigerians do not see anything sinister about constituents demanding money of their politicians, and often MPs found the use of money as the easiest means of settling constituents' accountability demands. Mostly people ask for money to provide food for their families, pay their children's school fees, hospital bills, funerals and other social ceremonies like a child's christening or wedding. During my visit to the 3rd senator, a woman was offered ₦100,000 (the equivalent of about £450.00, exchange rate on (20-10-2014)). When I enquired from the special assistant if that was always the case, he told me, "in fact, Oga (my boss), spends more than ₦1 million weekly", (equivalent of £2,252.00, exchange rate on 20-10-2014). (Personal Communication Abuja, October 18, 2014).

The act of demanding and supplying accountability benefits hinges on several factors including constituents' ability to access the big man or woman, the means, or resources available, and the big man or woman's desire to meet such demands. Sometimes, a constituent's persistence, show of respect, and patience may bring more accountability rewards than expected. For example, on one occasion, a constituent who unsuccessfully sought to see her senator on three occasions was eventually rewarded on her fourth attempt. She did not only get the recommendation letter she wanted for a job; she said the senator also gave her some money that could help sort her personal

problems too. When asked what she thought enabled her success where many had failed, she said:

I am short of words to describe how I am feeling right now. I have been coming for three days but I couldn't even get the chance to speak to him. Each time, he was either going to the chamber or for a meeting. In fact, I was the last visitor to leave yesterday after he left the office. I was even told not to waste my time, but how do I go back to my village without any money left. I don't know but he told me, he noticed that I was very patient and that I should keep it up in life (Personal Conversation_Constituent Abuja October 17, 2014).

Despite their alleged salary of \$1.7millions (Animasaun 2013), senators cannot always provide constituents' private needs. As some of my interviewees clearly said, it is only those senators who have the means and heart to help others that are actually sharing money with constituents, and even those who have the means often find ways to dodge such pressures.

Also, many constituents do not get any private benefits because they are unable to track their MPs down, or because the community leaders that contact the MPs on their behalf pocket monies received from the MPs. Evidence from my fieldwork points to the fact that such claims cannot be far from the truth because the majority of both interviewees and survey respondents said they had never met their MP. Although many of the interviewed constituents said they had never made such demands on their MPs, they all admitted that accountability pressures on the MPs were real. Only 28.8% of the survey respondents said they had obtained private benefits, such as cash support, employment, and contracts from their MP, but many more knew people who had collected such private benefits.

6.5.5 Other constituent demands

To understand the nature, types and processes of accountability relationships between the constituents and the senators, I not only observed the encounters between them but also spoke to constituents who made such demands. Although I gained a lot of ideas about what people demand for during my interviews with senators, many of the constituents I interviewed provided me with deeper insights into what they ask for and how. The nature of constituents' accountability demand performance confirms that rather than hoping for a patronage reward, constituents make demands of politicians because they feel entitled to them.

It is likely that the discrepancy between the constituency desires highlighted in the survey and my observation reflects both the need for constituents to prioritise their requests in a personal encounter and the fact that those who make the effort to see their senators are more likely to have urgent personal concerns than those who responded to the survey.

Although it was sometimes difficult to get a clear picture of what people were demanding for, not least because most of their meetings with the MPs were held inside the offices, the MPs and their personal assistants were often proud to broadcast their achievements. Such information was included in the score cards they happily gave me as evidence. The score cards are non-mandatory materials meticulously prepared by MPs to showcase the evidence of their accountability achievements over a period of time. Much of the score cards were quarterly or yearly magazines or banners with pictures and information chronicling MPs' achievements.

All the senators I visited were very proud of what they claimed they had achieved. Many MPs and their legislative aides keep records of the benefits they provided, which were used for preparing quarterly or annual score cards. Many of them genuinely feel compelled to keep records because they were useful evidence to proof their performance in office. However, they also saw the score cards as their accountability performance marketing strategy. Sometimes, the score cards were even printed on T-shirts and other souvenirs that their supporters proudly displayed during constituency outreach visits or political campaigns. Interestingly, the fact that MPs are willing to spend millions of naira on score card contracts does have a multiplier effect on the local economy by itself. This type of performance enhances an MP's reputation as a genuine man or woman of the people (Achebe 1966).

Big men and miscellaneous demands

Senators are not only pressured by the poor and unemployed, but they are also visited by big men or women who can exert pressures on them. In some occasions, other big men or women like community leaders, businessmen, religious leaders, celebrities, chiefs as well as pressure groups can visit a senator to lobby support for specific bills or resolutions. Big men or women with less clouts and influence can make demands of a senator for themselves or groups they represent. On the other hand, senators even publicly make demands of other big men or women with executive influence like ministers to provide jobs and development projects for their constituents (see chapter 7). This performance of big men or women making demands of each other on behalf of constituents suggests that political accountability can also follow a top-down channel as well as bottom-up. Additionally, this narrative applies to where there is a healthy relationship between the two big men unlike where a politician is sponsored by a

godfather. Godfathers (rich men and women who sponsor politicians during election as a form of investment) mostly seek returns on their investments and demand MPs' loyalties in their quest to control legislative and executive arms of government. Contemporary Nigerian society and politicians believe that godfathers have often succeeded in hijacking the political process. Yet politicians have also succeeded in limiting the influence of godfathers. The Governor of Taraba State, Reverend Jolly Nyame, noted, "Whether you like it or not, as a godfather you will not be a governor, you will not be a president, but you can make a governor, you can make a president (Ibrahim 2003)."⁷⁰

Like most Nigerians, all my interviewees knew the godfathers in their states, and many felt disgust about how their states were being run or seemed to be owned by them. The elected legislators and governors alike are subject to the financial demands of these reckless godfathers to the extent that they can control the government from the outside. This intoxicating political power led Chris Uba, a notorious godfather of Anambra State to once arrogantly proclaim: "I am the greatest godfather in Nigeria because this is the first time an individual single-handedly put in position every politician in the state."⁷¹

⁷⁰ Governor Jolly Nyame in Jubrin Ibrahim, "The rise of Nigeria's godfathers" BBC Focus on Africa Magazine, November 3, 2003. Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3156540.stm> The godfathers are running Nigerian political process and institutions like their private estates. There is no state of Nigeria that does not have an impostor godfather who prefers to appoint and sponsor surrogates who they can easily remove from office when they refuse to yield to their demands. In many states, godfathers manipulatively bind their godsons by getting them to sign undated resignation letters and filming them making resignation announcements. Should the godsons fail to deliver to their godfathers after being elected, the godfathers are able to simply issue the resignation letter and videotape to remove them from office. In many instances, godsons carry the briefcases and become errand boys before their godfathers anoint them for political office.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Politicians can resist the pressures from constituents more easily than the financial demands from godfathers who claim to have put them into office. However, there have also been instances where politicians resist the control of their godfathers after sponsorship, just like constituents can resist politicians after receiving benefits (Hoffman and Nolte 2013; Roelofs 2019).

Apart from the intense financial pressures from godfathers, MPs also face demands from other big men who need their patronage to boast their social connections.⁷² MPs face social accountability pressures from less privileged constituents and big men to attend social events like weddings, child christenings, funerals or special anniversaries. As I observed on many occasions, senators get inundated with invitation cards and other befitting gifts like expensive wines, and even cows, just to grace ceremonies. MPs are expected to grace social events and many a time their presence is enough incentive for more people to attend. A social event, be it individually or community organised, is an opportunity for an MP to show what he or she has done for the community. Like every other big man or woman, MPs, are entitled to sit at the High Table, where the master of ceremony and praise-singers can eulogise them. Although many community-based gatherings are socio-cultural, for example, New Yam Festival, sometimes they may be used for political campaigns.

A typical encounter where I observed a social event turned to political campaign was the case of a wedding ceremony attended by a senator in Osun State. At the wedding reception, which a senator representing one of the three districts of the state attended,

⁷² Big men are ranked according to their wealth, political position or influence as well as social status like a traditional ruler, chiefs and businessmen. For example, those at the local and state government levels are big men in their own right but they may look up to the members of the lower house or senators for help.

many people could be seen wearing T-shirts emboldened with the picture of the senator, making the private event look more like political campaign. When he spoke to the audience, the senator made use of the opportunity to claim that due to his effort of bringing development to the district, many youths would be able to earn a living and start families.

Non-monetary demands and Senators' influence

While demand for money is often foregrounded in debates about accountability pressures, one of the under-reported demands people make of their senators is the constant request to be connected to both official and informal networks to get a job. MPs often have the clout to influence the political process of “who gets what, when, where and how” (Laswell 1936). Many unemployed Nigerians depend on a big man, to help them secure jobs especially with MPs, government ministries and agencies, who may be in control or access to those in control of employment (Iroanusi 2020). This becomes even more competitive because many big men within and outside the public service make contact to find their own people jobs. This is where the senator's influence is cherished and many of them publish the names of employment beneficiaries in their monthly, quarterly and yearly bulletins among other achievements. On some occasions, the senator may make phone calls to the government agency where a constituent had already had an interview and some other times, or write an official letter of recommendation using his/her official letter head to increase the chances of the constituent being employed. Better still, as a committee chairman or a member of a committee overseeing a particular ministry or government department, a senator has more direct influence over who is employed.

Because of the official and confidential nature of this type of transaction, many of the informal networking and scheming go unnoticed but my personal experience exemplifies the nature and effects of a senator's influence on job hunting in Nigeria. In March 2002, one of the federal parastatals was recruiting graduate officers and I decided to apply. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the interview held at the respective state capitals. Under normal conditions, this would have meant the end of my job ambitions, but in the circumstances, a friend suggested that we could get an official letter from a prominent senator. He thought that might be enough to position us above the numerous people that attended the interview, but who had no big men behind them. We made a series of efforts to see the then Deputy Speaker of the Federal House of Representative and succeeded in meeting with him on the third attempt. According to protocol, he was the sixth most important and powerful politician in Nigeria and an official letter or phone call from him on our behalf could potentially have facilitated our getting the job even without an interview. This type of connection is known as "iman nmadu" among the Ibos and refers to knowing or being connected to an important personality. At times, Nigerians refer to a person who receives such favours as a "Godson or God-daughter of Abraham", a biblical reference to the role of Abraham in the delivery of the Jews from the Egyptian bondage.

We felt a strong sense of happiness and pride after meeting him for two reasons. Firstly, we were able to meet with the sixth most powerful politician in Nigeria, which was an achievement in itself. Secondly, we had a recommendation letter signed by him. When we arrived to submit the letters the next day to the office of the Director General of the parastatal, we met more than thirty people already in a queue waiting to see him. But as soon as we mentioned that we had a letter from the Deputy Speaker

of the House of Representatives, the secretary told us to come in. We were able to meet with him within 15 minutes, and ahead of others who had been there several hours before us. While my friend and I did not get the job in this case, our feeling however was that had we attended the interview and performed well, the power of our letter could have made a big difference and enabled us to obtain the job. The Director General gave us quick audience perhaps because of the respect he as a big man has for a far-ranking big man in the person of Deputy Speaker of the Federal House of Representatives.

Like demands for jobs especially in government offices, influencing award of contracts from government institutions and political appointments are part of the remits of a senator's moral, social and official responsibilities. Despite the rhetoric of fairness, competitiveness and consideration for hard work, appointments to job opportunities in public institutions are often secured by those that have the right political connections or influence. As millions of graduates join an already saturated labour market, many are unable to secure any job without a political heavyweight as a sponsor. In order to address the tensions associated with this competition, a quota system was introduced to promote "national unity, loyalty and give every citizen a sense of belonging to the nation irrespective of ethno-religious, language and cultural diversities which may exist and which it is their desire to nourish, harness to the environment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria" (Constitution Drafting Committee Report 1977).⁷³ In practice however, securing public positions, especially at federal level, does require the sponsorship or recommendation of an influential politician like a senator of the federal

⁷³ Constitution Drafting Committee. Report of the Constitution Drafting Committee. Vol. 1. Lagos, Nigeria: Federal Ministry of Information, Printing Division; 1977.

republic. Therefore, educated constituents who are looking for public work or those with contract in mind would need to persuade their senators to make phone calls to government officials in charge of such jobs or contracts or at least give them an official introduction letter with their letter-head, which in some cases may help them secure the job or contract. In the event of lacking a sponsor, some candidates even forge official reference letters with the letterheads of prominent individuals (Vanguard Newspapers May 2010, 2015).⁷⁴ This illustrates that non-monetary demands are an important but often less acknowledged private accountability pressures.

As one of the constituents I interviewed noted, people do not enjoy asking senators for money, because if a senator gives someone money that does not mean that the person's problem has been solved. The most important thing, he said, is for the senator to assist the ordinary people to secure a future by getting them jobs. He argued that a job secured for one unemployed youth will have an unforgettable impact on the person's life and that of his/her family. According to him, "what makes a good person in the eyes of our community is how many people you helped when you were in a public position, if you don't help, people will not support you and respect you and you will be seen as useless during your time" (Interviewee 35, Constituent Abuja, December 12, 2015). He went on to refer to Jeremy Bentham's utilitarian fundamental axiom: "the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong" (Burns and Hart, 1977, p393). This type of feeling resonates among

⁷⁴ Daniel Soni, Regional Editor, "HND holder allegedly forges The Minister of Finance Okonjo-Iweala's letter to get TETFUND job", Vanguard Newspaper May 20, 2015. <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/05/hnd-holder-allegedly-forges-okonjo-iwealas-letter-to-get-tetfund-job/>. Official letters from highly placed individuals are usually treated with utmost respect, which increases the chances of being listened to than those without one. In this respect, I must say that the official letters I sent to my prospective interviewees (senators) six months ahead of my visit to Nigeria made it possible for most of them to grant me interviews quicker than I could imagine.

constituents because they attach more value to the long-term effect of securing a job as against demanding monetary support that would soon finish.

Although all the senators I interviewed spoke about the ever-increasing number of constituents that asked them for money, they were aware that people could collect money and still not vote for them. They also felt that the legacy of finding a job for one person in their constituencies would provide them a life-time political respect and goodwill. That is probably why each of the senators I interviewed had a list of how many people that have benefited from their scholarship schemes and those they helped to secure employment at the Federal level.⁷⁵ Another reason the senators kept the constituency performance score card was to increase the level of likeability and trustworthiness that politicians attract when they appear to have fulfilled their electoral pledges to the constituents (voters). A follow-up investigation I carried out during my field-work in Cross River Central Senatorial Zone showed that a politician's good deeds like giving job to a constituent do get celebrated by an entire village.

6.6 What affects accountability demands?

Citizens' expectations have become an indispensable part of political debate in Nigeria. Although they have always been at the heart of the political relationship between political leaders and constituents, it is worth exploring the complex nature of accountability pressures in more detail.

⁷⁵ See The Report, Constituency Magazine for Cross River Central Senatorial District A quarterly Publication by the office of Senator Victor Ndoma-Egba p 48-50 and p 89-97 showing a table containing all the names of the beneficiaries of employment influenced by Senator Ndoma-Egbas and scholarship scheme respectively.

Does level of education affect the type of accountability demands constituents make of their senators?

Education, and especially higher education, is empirically linked to democratic politics (Lipset 1959, 1960; Barro 1999; Glaesar, LaPorta, Silanes and Shleifer 2004; Papaioannou and Siourounis 2005). The connection between education and political participation (Almond and Verba 1989, 1st ed. 1963) cannot be overemphasised. However, the extent to which peoples' level of education affects their "civic culture" needs to be explored. According to Almond and Verba (1989, 1st ed. 1963: 315), "The uneducated man or the man with limited education is a different political actor from the man who has achieved a higher level of education" The importance of education cannot be underemphasize but lack of education does not necessarily preclude active and responsible participation in politics. However, this thesis is more interested in exploring the effect of education on the type of demands constituents make of politicians.

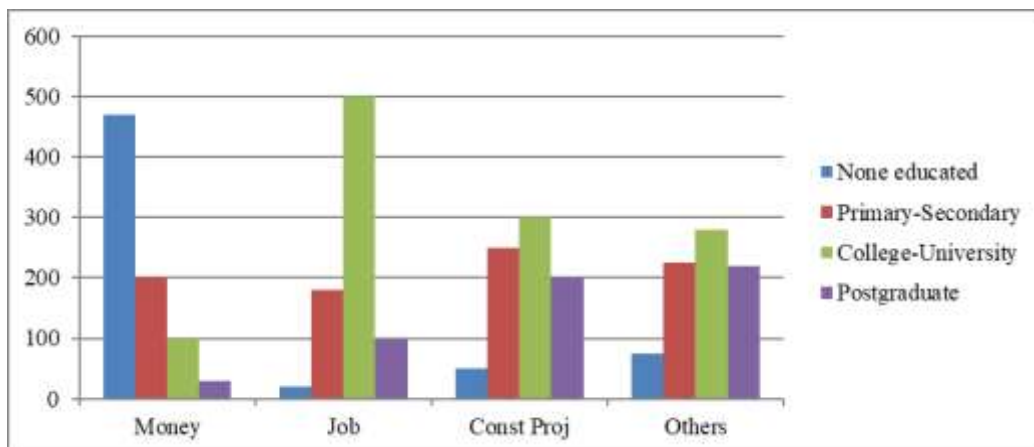


Figure 3 Level of education and types of accountability demands

The study was able to trace the effect of education on peoples' choices of accountability demand by comparing what people with different educational

attainments demanded as expressed on the research survey. Of those who said they would ask for money 58.75% were uneducated, and 62.50% who said they would ask for jobs had a college or university degree. This shows that education makes a difference on what people are asking and not whether they are asking or not. Educational attainment also has significant effect on the demand for constituency projects. As illustrated by the figure above, those with primary, secondary and tertiary education attainment said they would demand for constituency projects (roads, electricity, pipe borne water, clinic school building etc.). However, the number of uneducated respondents who said they would demand for constituency projects was lower than that of educated respondents. But despite the disparity in the attitudes of educated and uneducated towards constituency projects, it remains the most important priority to both communities and the MPs because physical infrastructures collectively affect the community.

Does age affect the type of accountability demands constituents make of their senators?

Age is a social factor that affects peoples' political behaviour. There is a perceived difference between the political participation of the young and the old (Quintelier 2007). Young people are said to be less concerned with politics, less politically knowledgeable, more politically apathetic and have low level of political interest (O'Toole 2003). Gauthier (2003) argues that young people are ignorant, selfish, indifferent, alienated, disaffected and disinterested when it comes to politics. In terms of their attitude towards politics, young people are said to have the lowest score (Henn et al, 2003; Hooghe et al, 2004). African youths are said to be less politically engaged than the older generation. While young people are more active in protest politics across

some countries, such as, Burundi, Central African Republic and Gabon, yet, they lag in electoral participation. For example, only 65% of young people eligible to vote across 36 African countries surveyed cast a vote in their national election, compared to 79% of older people (Lekalake and Gyimah-Boadi 2016). The issue of political apathy among young people becomes more interesting in Nigeria given its share of young population. With youths making up the majority of its 203.3 million population, where the average median age is 17.9 years (Worldometers-Nigerian Population 2019), one would expect young people to make up majority of the voters during elections. When asked about the reason for their low voter participation, some cited lack of trust in the electoral system and the fact that their votes never count as part of their reasons for not voting (BBC News 10 February 2019). Without contesting the problem of less enthusiastic political attitudes among African youths, it is important to acknowledge that such behaviour is a global trend. Contrary to passive political narrative, African youths are radically getting involved in socio-political movements to even overthrow bad governments (Honwana 2012). Since accountability benefit is an element of democratic politics, it will be interesting to learn whether there is any gap in the attitude of young and the old constituents regarding the accountability demands they respectively make of their MPs.

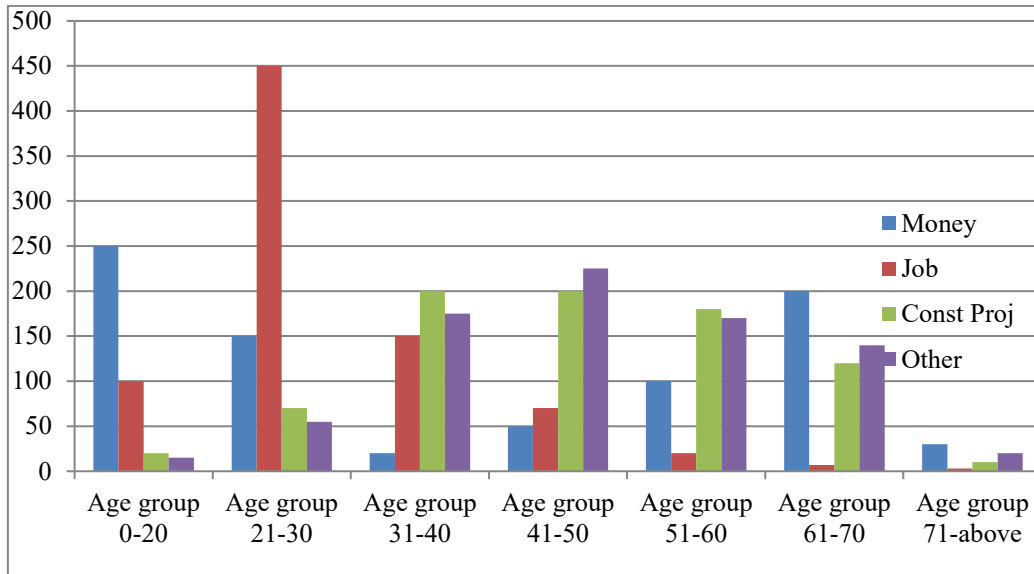


Figure 4 Age groups and types of accountability demands

So far, we have learned through this study that constituents' attitudes to political participation, especially elections, are mostly influenced by the demands of political accountability or the perception of leadership accountability. We have also learned about the various things that people demand for include personal benefits, such as money, contracts, and jobs, and public benefits, including constituency projects and others. But what we do not know yet is the effect of age on constituents' choice of accountability benefit. With this objective in mind, respondents were asked: What do you consider as the most important thing you will demand of your senator? The survey results show that the majority of those below 20 years old said they would ask for money more than anything else, closely followed by the second most elderly group, age group 61-70 years. Similarly, people within the age group of 21-30 years said the most important thing they would demand of their senators is a job, followed by the next age group 31-40 years. This difference in constituents' demand for money suggests that younger people who are relatively poorer, dependent on their parents for financial support, and of school age are most likely to ask for money because they do not have

any earnings yet. Equally, older people age group 61-70 years, who earn less income or have no income, are motivated by money.

Many of those surveyed across different age groups, from young to middle age constituents, said a job was the most important reason they visited their senators, except for the very old age group. They are mostly educated constituents that have finished their studies and are looking for work, or those who are already in work but wish to change for a better paying job. To this end, 56.25% of those surveyed said they will ask for a job. This group happened to be dominated by relatively young people in the age group of 21-30. This implies that the younger people without employment would most likely prioritise a job when in contact with their MPs.

6.7 Accountability and voting

The effectiveness of any democracy depends on its accountability mechanism. On the other hand, conventional wisdom suggests that elections are a mechanism of political accountability (Victor 2018). The logic behind this reasoning is that because politicians seek to be elected (or re-elected), they will make their constituents happy. In the same manner, constituents will evaluate the performance of their representatives and reward those who are doing well and vote out those that are not doing well. Thus, politicians' desire to be elected or re-elected and the ability of electors to hold the elected accountable makes elections a critical mechanism of democracy (Victor 2018). But despite the acclaimed benefits of elections, many argue that it does not always live up to its expectation as a mechanism of political accountability. Jennifer Victor (2018: 2) identifies three reasons why elections are imperfect mechanisms of accountability,

including limited agency, limited cognition and oversensitivity. Overall, different factors affect peoples' voting attitudes.

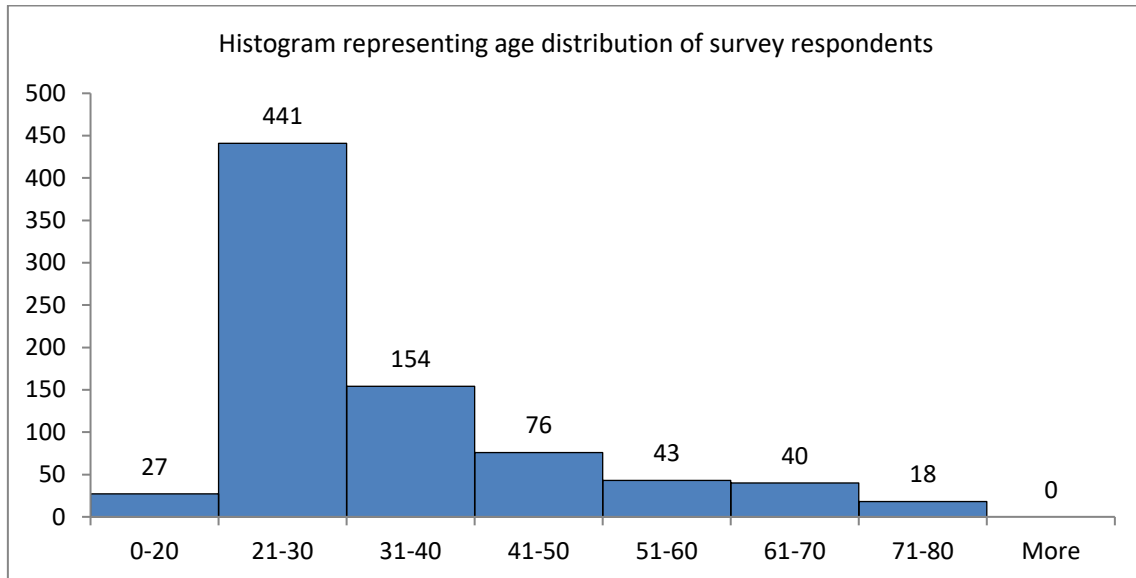


Figure 5 Age distribution of 2015 National Assembly voters' survey respondents

Respondents that voted & those that did not vote	Percentage (%)
Respondents who said they voted	58%
Respondents who said they did not vote	42%

Table 5 Representing constituents' participation in the 2015 National Assembly Election

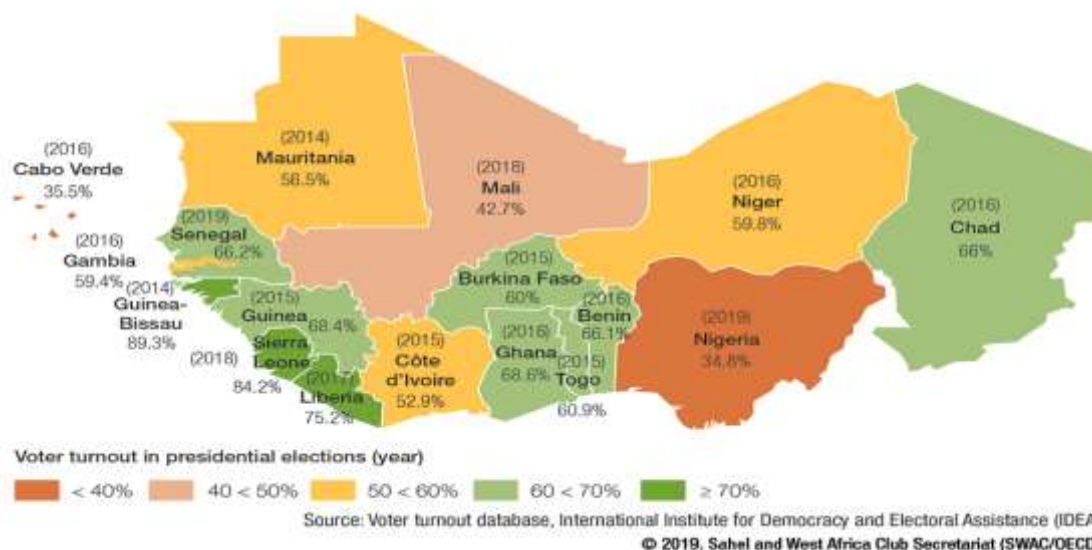
The survey response to the question of voting during the 2015 National Assembly election may not provide a complete picture of the electoral behaviour of Nigerians. Perhaps because of the gender imbalance, the survey indicates a higher turnout than

the official voter turnout of 43.65%.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, the survey reflects a similar sample of peoples' feelings of disconnection and disenchantment with the political elites. On a larger scale, political apathy in Nigeria has been on the increase since 1999. Fagunwa's account illuminates this concern further:

Despite the electrifying effect of the Nigerian 2015 general elections, it was discovered that less than half of the registered voters, 42.76%, officially voted (INEC, 2015). In fact, as it would be argued in the course of this paper, since 1999, the country witnessed its major lowest voters' turnout during the just concluded 2015 elections. This which has been pecked at 43.65% compared to the 54% in 2011 or the 57% in 2007 and lastly the 69% and 52% in the 2003 and 1999 elections respectively (2015: 4).

Poor voter turnout is not peculiar to Nigeria, the same concerns are witnessed across other African countries and the rest of the world (Mozaffar 2002:86).

VOTER TURNOUT IN WEST AFRICA



Map 2 Voter turnout in West Africa⁷⁷

⁷⁶ The results can still be accessed at <http://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/summary-of-results.pdf> Accessed on 12 October 2019.

⁷⁷ Map representing voters turnout in West Africa at <http://www.west-africa-brief.org/content/en/voter-turnout-west-africa> Accessed on 7th December 2019.

Similarly, the 2015 Mo Ibrahim Index of African governance showed a comparative voter turnout during presidential elections among African countries. Breakdowns of the best and least performing countries in terms of electoral turnout during this time showed: Cape Verde recorded 74.5%, Botswana 74.3%, Ivory Coast 25.9%, Djibouti 26%, Sierra Leone 88.3%, Rwanda 89.2%, Seychelles 91.4% and Zambia 24.2%. There were many cases of poor voter turnout in Africa but some countries also recorded a higher voter turnout than advanced democracies like the United States of America, where voter turnout in 2016 was the same as among my respondents, i.e. 58% (Telegraph 14 November, 2016).⁷⁸ In the United Kingdom, voter turnout was 68.7% in 2017 (House of Commons Library 2019).⁷⁹ The International Voter Turnout Trends around the World Report equally acknowledged the existence of the problem:

Despite the growth in the global voter population and the number of countries that hold elections, the global average voter turnout has decreased significantly since the early 1990s (see Figure 4). Global voter turnout was fairly stable between the 1940s and the 1980s, falling only slightly from 78 per cent to 76 per cent over the entire period. It then fell sharply in the 1990s to 70 per cent and continued its decline to reach 66 per cent in the period of 2011–15 (Solijonov 2016: 24).

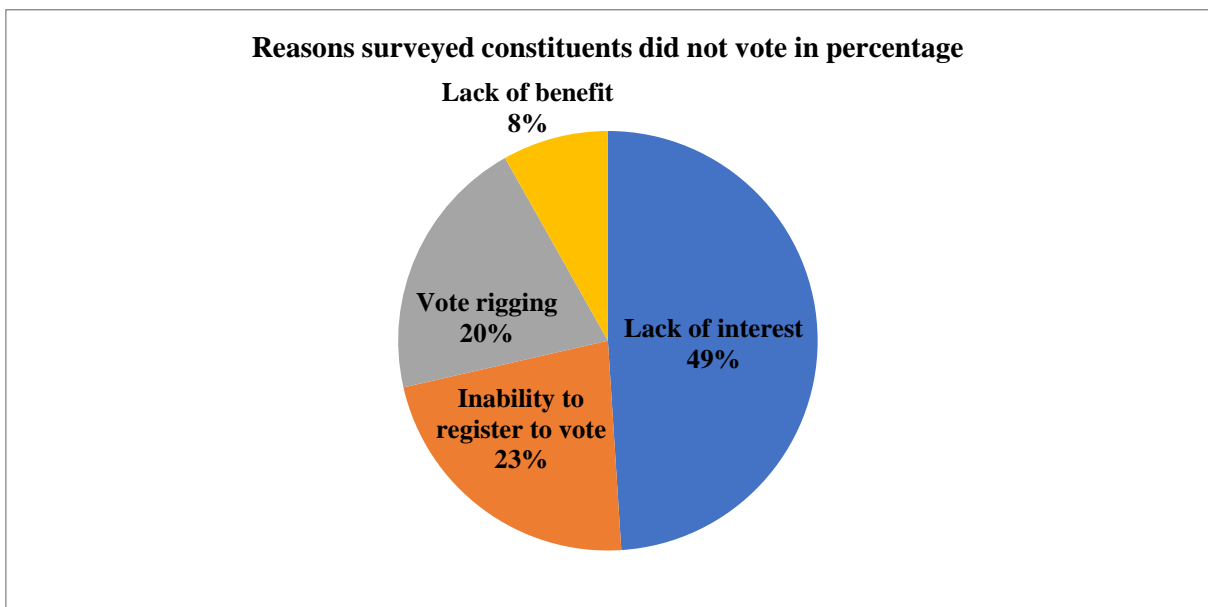
Contemporary events seem to question the correctness of the description of voters' apathy across countries including Nigeria. It seems scholarly attention seem to focus mainly on the idea that people are simply disinterested in politics without exploring what causes low political participation. Evidence from Nigeria suggests that such factors as violence and electoral irregularities reduces public confidence to participate in election other than mere political apathy (United States Congress, Senate

⁷⁸ See The Telegraph on the caption: US Election 2016: Voter Turnout fell to 58 per cent this year, estimate show. Available online at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/11/14/us-election-2016-voter-turnout-fell-to-58-per-cent-this-year-est/> accessed on 5th of March, 2018, at 21:40.

⁷⁹ See UK Political Info for detail voter turnout in United Kingdom from 1945-2019. <http://www.ukpolitical.info/Turnout45.htm>

Committee on Foreign Relations 2000). Many of my interviewees and survey respondents did not shy away from political debate or expressing their passionate opinions about Nigerian politics; indeed, they became both energised and livid when discussing what politicians are doing wrong. But when it came to elections, many of them did not cast their votes. Some of the reasons respondents gave for not voting included their inability to register to vote, electoral fraud, lack of interest in politics, lack of trust in politicians and lack of legitimate benefits.

Figure 6 Constituents’ reasons for not voting during election



In order to find out more about the attitudes and preferences of those who said they voted; a further question was posed as to which of the candidates they voted for. Based on their responses, it seems that many of the respondents voted for the candidates that became senators in their constituencies. At least if taken at face value, this suggests that constituents possess and use their rights of vertical accountability.

Respondents’ voting choices	Percentage %

I voted for the candidate that won the senatorial seat	75%
I voted for the candidate that lost the election	25%

Table 6 Showing percentage of constituents' voting choices

Although Nigerians participate actively in the public discourse that helps to shape the National Assembly's legislative agenda, the fact remains that a senator's actions and political survival do not depend on public opinion; what is important to all MPs is the ability to sustain enduring political support from the voters. Since representative democracy is built on the foundation of vertical accountability, i.e. the ability of electors to endorse or reject political leaders through ballots, politicians' fate is periodically decided by their constituents. So, what actually motivates a voter's behaviour?

Based on the survey results, we can evaluate the influence of accountability benefits on the voting attitudes of the constituents. A significant share of surveyed respondents 66% said they participated in the 2015 National Assembly election because of their desire to elect a senator who can provide public benefits, while 23% said they intended to elect a candidate that can provide them with private benefits, 8% said they took part in the election in order to elect senators that can perform legislative functions well, and only 3% said they took part in the election to reward candidates or incumbent senators they had already benefited from. This result is an indication that political accountability in Nigeria is highly contested. People have different needs and expectations, and as a result there is no unanimity of what they demand of political leaders. Therefore, the boundary between what is legitimate and illegitimate expectation is difficult to be drawn.

The survey results and interview responses of those that voted consistently suggest that the provision of accountability benefits significantly affects political participation, voting. Performance acts like a magnet pulling voters to the polling station and thereby increasing the voter turnout. This builds on the work of Young (2004), who found that voter turnout in eight African countries reflected peoples' satisfaction with the working of the system. Ties to the network of politics also significantly increased voter turnout.⁸⁰

In Nigeria, people base their voting decisions on a candidate's current or previous performances. This affects the relationship between MPs and voters at different levels. The failure to deliver electoral promises may result in violent protests, like the case of Senator Kabiru Ibrahim Gaya whose home was set on fire in 2017 (Uwugiaren 2017).⁸¹ New candidates are evaluated on their history of philanthropy while an incumbent politician's performance in office comes under scrutiny before people decide who to vote for. This behaviour suggests that sometimes in a local election, issues like political ideology, party, ethnic, and religious affiliations take the backstage as voters make decision based on what really matter to them. However, in all these, a charismatic candidate with favourable public rating creates room for not only personalising the electoral politics but increasing the chance of winning. In the absence of ideological or nationalist reasons, people do focus on the charisma and personality of contestants.

⁸⁰ See Daniel J. Young's 2004 Journal article "A Close up of Voter Turnout: Survey Data From Africa"

⁸¹ Iyobosa Uwugiaren. ThisDay Newspaper, 2017. "In 2019, Performance Debate is Unavoidable". His account vividly predicts performance as the major factor that will determine the outcome of 2019 election. Available online at: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/04/30/in-2019-performance-debate-is-unavoidable/> Accessed on 9th of March 2018 at 14:00. In this incident, constituents who were angered by non-delivery of electoral campaign promises (accountability promises) attacked the senator and set his home on fire. This shows that constituents could sometimes violently demand for leadership accountability when frustrated.

This act of paying greater attention towards candidates' personalities is known as "personalisation of politics" (McAllister 2007, Karvonen 2010).

In contemporary Nigeria, charismatic politicians are respected, but such qualities alone do not guarantee winning an election. But politicians who can combine charisma with accountability benefit performance tend to be in pole position during electoral contests. People are less persuaded by ideological leaning and like in many other African countries. Political competition is more personalised than ideological. (Cheeseman and Hinfelaar 2009; Osei et. all 2015). Although political competition is often reduced to leadership alternation (Ake 2000: 133), these anomalies do not suggest that the electors do not care. According to Bleck and Van de Walle (2011: 1139) "African voters care deeply about many substantive issues".

In the context of contemporary Nigeria, accountability benefits are among the most important "substantive issues" that voters really care about. Societies seem rather united by the dividend of democracy: infrastructural development, employment, improved living condition, healthcare, education and good governance. These in the view of my informants are the accountability demands that affect voters' attitudes and choices. People therefore participate in elections to elect candidates that have performed well and to reject those they consider unsuitable to meet socially desired accountability demands.

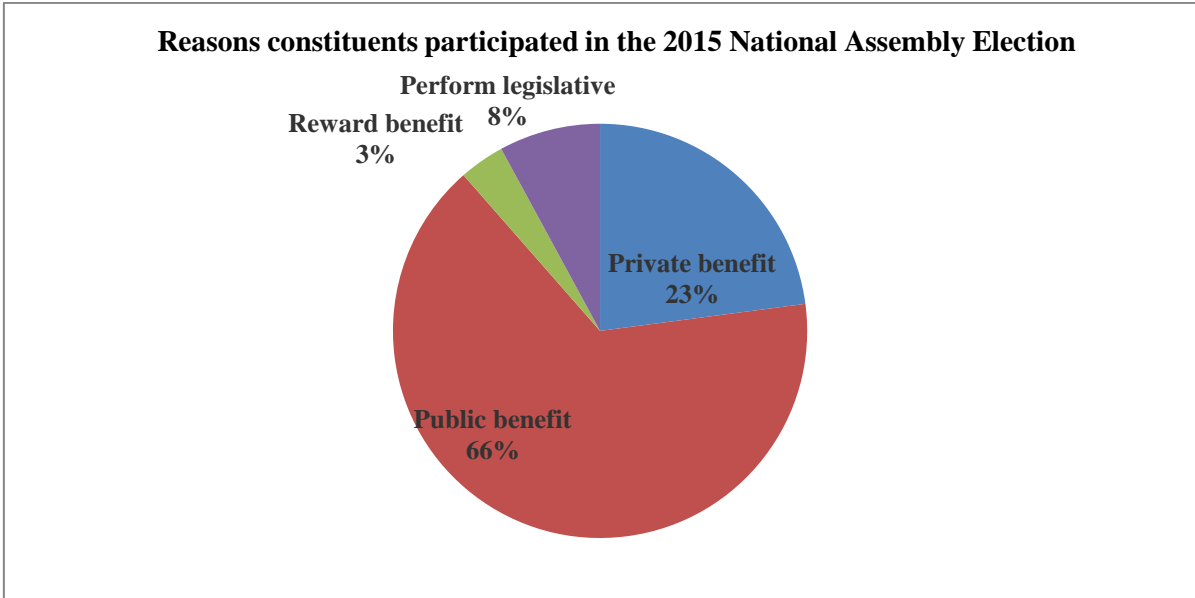


Figure 7 Surveyed respondents' result Pie chart showing different types of accountability benefits that affected constituents' electoral attitudes in the National Assembly election of 2015.

6.8 Conclusion

Using survey data as well as peoples' responses to interview questions and participant observation, this chapter has shown that, accountability demands affect constituents' political participation. People feel entitled to accountability supply and therefore do not consider themselves obliged to vote for politicians because they consider their demands as of right. Even so, accountability supply remains a yardstick for measuring a leader's political performance because it is considered as a legitimate obligation associated with political leadership. As evidenced in the survey responses, accountability demands are incentives as well as motivational factors for people to participate in politics including elections. However, the rationale behind this attitude is not necessarily patron-client exchange. Constituents re-elect candidates to reward them for making a positive contribution to the community, usually by addressing accountability demands. This implies that there is an incentive for aspiring politicians

to participate in politics because voters may turn out to vote against candidates that did not perform well on the accountability benefit scale. Therefore, the more people are incentivised to vote for or against candidates because of their accountability performance, the more they get involved in political and electoral participation.

This study's finding is consistent with Young's (2009) findings that voters in Kenya and Zambia were more interested in demands for public goods than private goods and that neither being offered a gift in return for a vote, nor being in direct contact with an MP makes voters more likely to support their MP, but that visiting the constituency helps an incumbent's re-election bid. However, this study goes beyond Young's finding and further shows that visiting the constituents alone does not guarantee electoral support but that MPs that have positively impacted the lives of constituents stand better chance of being supported. Bovens et.al (2014) rightly argues that in representative democracies, voters rely on a retrospective mechanism of voting (vertical accountability) to either retain performing incumbent politicians or remove those that did not perform. This ability to reward and punish politicians retrospectively encourages politicians' answerability to the electors. But my finding provides more insights into how Nigerians are using their rights of accountability to shape their individual and communal developmental needs. Instead of waiting to punish an incumbent at the end of his or her tenure, constituents normally make demands of politicians before and after elections. By the next election, constituents would then make their voting judgement based on a contestant's performance. In other words, Nigerians use a double-barrel accountability mechanism to make their political leaders perform. Firstly, they make demands of politicians to contribute to community development because they are privileged other than as patrons. Secondly, at the end of the tenure of those elected,

they use their power of ballot (vertical accountability) to retain or remove politicians because of their electoral performance. This means that contemporary Nigerian politics uniquely promotes the logic of performance-based accountability where outcomes are not only defined, but outputs can be effectively measured (Shah 2007).

Voters' demands for leadership responsibility, good governance, socio-economic development, and improved human condition are legitimate rights and expectations of voters (McNeil and Manela 2010). Although other forms and processes like arms of governments providing checks and balances on each other (horizontal accountability), social pressure groups, and the press are useful, election (vertical accountability) is the most potent means of ensuring leadership accountability. Accountability demands are shaped by a society's socio-economic, political, cultural and human development needs and such needs become the drivers of peoples' electoral decision and choices.

This chapter also showed that while most constituents prefer accountability benefits in the form of public goods, others would be happy simply to accept private benefits. Age affects constituents' choice of private accountability demands. As the survey results revealed, the youngest and oldest constituents preferred money above other types of private accountability demand, while the age groups outside these two groups said they would like other private accountability benefits like jobs and contracts. This likely reflects different perceptions of what is beneficial at separate stages of life and ability. In addition, education affects peoples' choice of accountability demands in the sense that those with education are more likely to demand benefits like jobs because these are more enduring than other benefits. However, the less educated often simply demand money or ways to address other material needs.

Overall, the chapter illustrates that the political accountability relationship is not only culturally legitimate in Nigeria, but that it is complex and internally differentiated by factors such as age and education. Constituents make demands because they have a genuine sense of entitlement and think that those, they elected into political leadership positions owe them progress. However, they share different views on how such progress is best achieved, and thus ask different things of their representatives. The difference in the choice of demand people make suggest that what constitutes legitimate demands of politicians is contested by Nigerians. As Lindberg suggests for Ghana (2009), Nigerian MPs take the role of benefactors in response, either because they genuinely care about improving the lives of their constituents, or because it is a means of political survival.

7 SENATORS' VIEWS ON THE EXPECTATION OF ACCOUNTABILITY PRESSURES

7.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at senators' views on the expectations of constituents' accountability pressure in order to illustrate in detail how they themselves perceive these pressures. Senators share the views of constituents that their contributions to communities and individual lives are a social responsibility. They therefore do not primarily understand their financial or other contributions to individuals and communities as patron-client relations but rather as an acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the expectations constituents have on them to provide both public and private goods.

Politicians are aware that people want to see the impact of their governance, irrespective of whether they voted for them or not, and they make promises based on that understanding. This chapter sets out how and why politicians put pressure on other politicians to create or provide resources needed to perform what has become a "hybrid responsibility" (Lindberg 2010:126-127) for the benefit of their constituents. By focusing on senators' explanations of their role in such processes, this thesis confirms the argument that in many cases, politicians pass on constituents' demands to others, and in this way call each other to account. As we will see in this chapter, while MPs may rely on highly performative practices to deliver accountability, the fact that these appear different from the typical negotiating practices in Western democracies should not be misread as un-democratic per se.

There is a question about the political economics of accountability benefits particularly in relation to constituency allocation. The rationality of Nigerian MPs getting involved in the execution of public goods, given the wide-spread allegation of corruption and mismanagement of constituency projects have been questioned (Akintunde 2018; Awofeso and Irabor 2020). But public debate and scholarship on state-capacity, nation-building and political leadership recognizes that the provision of basic and/or essential public services like education, roads, health, water and sanitation significantly contributes to state legitimacy (Mcloughlin 2015: 343). Empirical analyses show “correlations between service delivery and approval of and trust in the state (proxy variables for legitimacy)” (Samuda 2018: 2). It has also been found that a fair combination of good governance, democratic rights and welfare gains highly correlates with legitimacy (Gilley 2006). Equally, Sacks (2009) posits that the relationship between service provision and state legitimacy is indirect and often mediated by other indicators of well-being such as food security. In Nigeria, political legitimacy goes beyond being elected. It is about building trust with voters, and this trust is gained by the performance of accountability responsibilities. The fact that the National Assembly annually appropriates constituency allocation fund, gives Nigerians the legal right not only to make demands of the MPs that receive the fund but to also question how they expended it. Constituents perceive their demands for goods and the scrutiny of MPs’ transparency as a legal and moral obligation which they fiercely try to hold MPs account for. However, this also creates tension that drives “legislative corruption” as MPs design different means to source money both for their personal gains and for constituency service including oversight extortion and budget padding (Page 2018; Busari 2018; Kazeem 2017; Olisah 2020). Nigerian politicians not only accept

constituents' expectations but budget for them and make electoral campaign promises on this basis (BBC 14 February 2019). Therefore, both the elected and the electors mutually understand the legitimacy of accountability pressure. While there are no binding legal instruments that require politicians to provide private benefits to voters or constituents, there are legal provisions that make the protection and promotion of citizens' socio-economic rights a fundamental objective of the state. For example, Chapter 11, Section 16, sub-section 2 (a, b, c and d) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) states that the state shall direct its policy towards ensuring:

The promotion of a planned and balanced economic development; that the natural resources of the nation are harnessed and distributed as best as possible to serve the common good; that the economic system is not operated in such a manner as to permit the concentration of wealth or the means of production and exchange in the hands of few individuals or of a group; and that suitable and adequate shelter, suitable and adequate food, reasonable national minimum living wage, old age and pensions, and unemployment, sick benefits and welfare of the disabled are provided for all citizens.

In order to meet these objectives Section 165 of the 1999 constitution (as amended) and the Allocation of Revenue (Federation Account) Act No. 1, 1982 stipulates how such resources should be shared amongst the three tiers of government. Impliedly, the overall essence of politics is to provide these fundamental objectives. But it is worthy of note that legal experts suggest that politicians are not obliged to fulfil the terms of the "political, economic, social, cultural and developmental rights of the citizens" because section 6 (6) (c) of the same 1999 constitution makes them non-judicial (See Ikpeze 2015: 1; Godson 2016). As this thesis has consistently demonstrated, despite all these legal bottlenecks, there is a strong understanding among Nigerians that a politician's ability to transparently fulfil electoral pledges is the foundation of leadership accountability. During my fieldwork, constituents were mostly vocal about

the constituency allocation MPs receive annually which they believe justifies the increase in public expectation of politicians. Although there were people that were not much interested in what their MPs do with their constituency allowance but as shown in chapter 3 and 5, majority of the public rightly felt that such money belonged to them.⁸²

As a result accountability pressures on MPs are recognized in the establishment of constituency allocations, and in the informal allocations to senators of federal employment on the basis of the federal character principle. In the face of ethno-religious, and political divisiveness, the 'federal character' principle was introduced to enforce equity and fairness in the allocation of resources (Aondoakaa and Orluchukwu 2015). The essence of the principle of federal character is to ensure that all national bureaucratic, economic and political positions are proportionally shared at all levels of government. To underscore its importance, part 1 of the third schedule of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution⁸³ provides for the establishment of the Federal Character Commission to promote, monitor and enforce its compliance. Similarly, federal principle is to a great extent applied in the allocation of national revenue in order to promote socio-economic opportunities for every part of Nigeria. In this spirit, the terms of reference for Aboyade's revenue sharing committee of 1977 was to give due regard to: (i) Equality of States, (ii) Derivation, (iii) Population, (iv) Even Development, (v)

⁸² The idea of "what belong to us" is used for framing a sense of collective ownership and public interest. Nigerians often have the understanding that politicians are elected to use their commonwealth to provide for the needs of all. The overall argument here is that voters expect politicians to redistribute national income judiciously and transparently. In economic terms, taxation is an option for redistribution of income, but this approach may be counterproductive as it is perceived as being discriminatory against wealthy minority who may no longer have any incentive to work when the majority appropriate their taxes. See Hillman (2003) Public Finance and Public Policy Responsibilities and Limitations of Government. However, with less developed private sector tax revenues, government's budgetary allocation could be seen as a major means of income redistribution.

⁸³ As amended.

Geographical Considerations and (vi) National Interest (Aondoakaa and Orluchukwu 2015). There are genuine questions around the effectiveness of federal character and the fact that it promotes mediocracy at the expense of excellence and meritocracy (Ogunniran 2018, Adamolekun 2008, Nwogwugwu and Oluwabukunmi 2015). Despite such inadequacies, people have a sense of belonging when they feel that they get a fair share of resource allocation.

People have a sense of entitlement to their commonwealth beyond the revenue sharing formula. Therefore, resources allocated as 'constituency funds' to politicians are seen as a grassroots resource entitlement. As already discussed elsewhere in this thesis, constituency funds and/or constituency projects are used in many countries to demonstrate legislators' contributions to constituency development (Awofeso & Irabor 2020). Udefuna et al (2013:648) noted that in the case of Nigeria, the "constituency fund or zonal intervention fund was initiated to facilitate even distribution of projects in every part of the country as proper representation in the House of Representatives and in the Senate". Each of Nigeria's 469 MPs is allocated constituency funds to finance their sponsored development-driven projects. Critics point to serious failures associated with constituency fund's operations including, legislative over-bearing role (Olaoye 2014:1), budget failure (Alabi & Fashagba 2010, Akindele et al 2012), embezzlement of funds, kickbacks for award of projects, non-execution and under-implementation of projects (Udefuna et al 2013).

My fieldwork experience is a mix of positive and negative feedback about how MPs use constituency funds. While there was evidence for the judicious use of constituency funds in some of the communities I visited, this was not the case in others (see chapter six). Senators that successfully executed physical constituency projects do receive

praise and held in high esteem by their constituents and can lay claim to being upright and using their constituency funds accountably. Unfortunately, those with fewer constituency projects could potentially be accused of embezzling their constituency fund. However, a less appreciated angle to this debate is the fact that some MPs may have also disbursed their constituency fund to constituents who pester them daily. As a result, the political accountability challenge in Nigeria is not only down to corruption, it is also about the fundamental question of the inadequacy of resources. There is often a gap between public expectation and the overall size of the budget allocated to politicians. While some politicians may skim off funds from these allocations for non-constituency-related purposes, others try to address expectations by mobilizing resources not only through the political process but also from private funds.

Nevertheless, it is this aspect of accountability pressures that can also make politicians vulnerable to 'godfather politics', whereby other individuals invest into a politician's ability to deliver accountability projects, albeit usually at the cost of later accountability, when godfathers expect a return on their financial investment.⁸⁴ While this thesis does not focus on godfathering but on the relationship between senators and constituents, it highlights that 'godfather politics' should not only be explored as a result of patronage or prebendal politics, but as a dysfunctional effect of the particular nature of accountability pressures in Nigeria. Importantly, then, the trend over the past decade to allocate more significant resources to MPs for constituency development also serves

⁸⁴ The term godfatherism is a phenomenon that is uniquely distinct from typical pattern of big man politics in many parts of Africa. The motivation of a godfather is to fund the election of other politicians with a view to taking over state resources both political and economic as a return on investment. In many occasions, this pattern of influence and control eventually leads to uncontrolled criminal takeover of the state as the godfather captures his godson (the elected politician e.g. state governor) and eventually subsumes legitimate process of governance and political accountability.

as a counterbalance to godfather politics by enabling politicians from all backgrounds to be able to address constituency demands more successfully.

The attitude, views and performances of the senators in this chapter indicate that MPs accept what has become a “hybrid responsibility” to be a legitimate process for measuring political accountability in contemporary Nigeria. These are non-formal and non-binding demands constituents make of their leaders. Although such demands are not part of an MP’s legislative responsibility, contemporary development in Africa, especially Nigeria, shows that MPs consider it as equally important as their legislative responsibilities. Using the case study of Ghana, Lindberg (2010), describes MPs’ “hybrid duties” to include demands for financial help, jobs, contracts and political connection. As this chapter explores, although senators are not duty bound to provide private accountability benefits, yet, they are expecting such pressures and are often prepared to deal with it because they see it as part of their social responsibility.

7.2 Political Accountability: Big Men or Women Making Demands of Each Other

My only addition is that during your first tenure, I didn’t get any chance to give employment letter to my constituents. So, when you get there this time, just remember senators here that have people back home. My constituents are asking us for employment slots. So, I want you to put that in your agenda for next tenure. We all need slot for employment for our constituents. (Idowu 2019; Ogbonna 2019).

The above statement was made by one of the ranking and popular Nigerian female senators on the floor of the Nigerian senate during a live broadcast of the Senate’s screening of one of the presidential ministerial nominees, Mr Babatunde Fashola, who was the previous Minister for Power and Steel. Legislators’ intervention on behalf of their constituents wishing to access public services and other entitlements is not limited

to Nigeria but the senator's demands of the minister demonstrates how far some politicians could go on behalf of their constituents. Apart from genuinely leveraging her position as a senator to get job for her constituents, such intervention also increases the popularity of a politician. Wearing her trademark traditional Iro and Buba (a Yoruba women's wrapper and blouse) with a stylish Gele (headgear), she courteously thanked her colleagues for approving Fashola's nomination. She turned and twisted for approving eye contacts with other senators. Gesticulating with her fingers suggestive of a collective feeling in the chamber, she concluded by saying, "We all need slot for employment for our constituents" (Idowu 2019).

Making such a demand of a would-be minister during his ministerial screening can easily be misinterpreted as corruption. One may be curious to know whether the request the senator made, in the place where she made it, is ethical. This generates key questions about accountability relationship in Africa and particularly Nigeria. In this example, it was clear both from the senator's words, and the body language and reaction of her colleagues, that she was saying what most if not all the senators believed to be right. Indeed, her performance was perceived as candid, honest, incisive and diplomatic. Although none of the senators present directly seconded her remarks, they all cheered her on.

In terms of locally accepted ethics and administrative procedure, the senator did not by any means breach the rule, although she was courageous in making such a demand, often voiced privately in interpersonal encounters. This shows that political accountability can be a shared responsibility where politicians in positions of authority are expected to call each other out. It also demonstrates that demands are not only made by less privileged constituents. They could be made in private or publicly both

by frustrated less privileged constituents and by big men or women who put pressure on each other to perform. The voicing of these demands is reminiscent of bargaining and horse-trading through which politicians in many democracies around the world attract funding for constituency development or employment opportunities for their constituents. In the Nigerian context, this behaviour is linked to the fact that politicians often control government recruitment and influence who gets jobs in the public service. Given the rate of joblessness in Nigeria (National Bureau of Statistics 2017; PwC 2018), and the fact that big men or women are often allotted quotas, in many occasions, job seekers rely on big men or women's connections to get employment.

However, as the nature and the outcomes of the demands people make illustrates, big men or women do not necessarily provide such help to establish themselves as patrons. In the Nigerian social setting, a big man or woman, whether in the private or public sector, is expected to make selfless philanthropic contributions to the society, including provision of employment. While the provision of jobs might appear to make the big man or woman a patron, most jobs provided are not used as an electoral incentive. Jobs in government departments are meant to be allocated equitably to all states of the Nigerian federation. Wherever big men or women are allotted quotas, other big men or women make demands of them on behalf of their constituents in order to ensure their area is properly represented. Thus, the performance by the senator replicated an everyday form of negotiation that has become an essential strategy of political accountability and representation.

7.3 The Matrix of Political Accountability in Nigeria

Political accountability has the capacity to strengthen socio-economic development beyond an individual agency. Therefore, effectiveness of political accountability requires multi-level agencies including constituents, community, civic societies, pressure groups, the press, electronics and social media. Constituents have the right to enforce vertical accountability through the ballot, but the media provides the necessary information they need to scrutinize government. Accountability pressure from the media equally increases the transparency and responsiveness of government to its citizens' needs (Besley et al 2002). Similarly, the role of civil society not only promotes leadership accountability but democracy and good governance among developing countries especially in Africa (Bratton 1989; Zanello and Maassen 2011; Devarajan et al 2011). The positive framing of accountability has increased the urge to strengthen its institutions with a view to fast-tracking socio-economic development of developing economies. The importance of accountability is re-echoed in policy discourses, academic writing, reform initiatives and at the international community levels such as World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Africa (Hyden, 2010; Khan and Gray, 2006; Melber, 2007; Lindberg 2010).⁸⁵ As African development discourse unfolds, many believe that the best chance to achieve an accountable leadership depends on a collective action of inter-societal groups (Persson et al; 2013). Apart from collective action, the effect of informal accountability on leadership responsiveness to voters' needs is also gaining recognition (Lindberg, 2010; Hyden, 2010; Kersall, 2000).⁸⁶

⁸⁵ See also: Hyden, 2013; Hoffman, 2006; Grindle 2010; Andrew 2013; Walle, 2009; World Bank, 2004; Andrew, 2013; Booth, 2011; Katomero, 2017

⁸⁶ See also: Welle, 2010; Tilley, 2014

Evidence from my fieldwork suggests that Nigerian MPs not only recognize the role of informal accountability demands but consider it important. As I observed within and outside the National Assembly, MPs often appeared ready for a deluge of demands people make of them. Although many of the MPs I observed were hardly able to provide all the benefits people demand, but they were calm and diplomatic in the way they handled the encounters. Most of the MPs I interviewed demonstrated similar enthusiasm when asked about the effect of constituents' demands. During my interviews with all the eighteen senators I met, none of them regretted the help they provided to the constituents. Despite the difficulty they had dealing with ceaseless demands, MPs spoke passionately about the fact that any contribution they make are above political gains.

The individual agency affects leadership responsiveness, but the enforcement of accountable leadership and good governance requires a collective social responsibility. In this context, constituents legitimately make both formal and informal demands of politicians. MPs can provide goods where they can and make direct or indirect demands of other big men/ women on behalf of the constituents. An MP could ask other big men or women like ministers directly; make a phone call or recommend a job or contract-seeking constituents using an official letter. Sometimes, jobseekers' approach civil service officials including directors or ministers after applying for a position but may still need the endorsement of other big men/women like senators. On the other hand, legislators and other government agencies are under constant pressure from the civil societies, pressure groups, the press as well as the electronics media to perform credibly. For example, many of these organizations sponsor new bills, organize public protests and participate in legislative public hearing with a view

to enforcing leadership accountability. Equally, the Nigerian press goes beyond the role of social accountability mobilizer by investigating and exposing aspects of political performance, which can lead to public office holders being prosecuted (Ladipo, 2012), but which can also simply embarrass them for not having secured any form of benefits for their constituents. These groups' functions and performances create a bottom-up, top-down and sides-ways matrix of collective social accountability demands and supply that political leaders cannot avoid in the long run (see author's collective social accountability demands and supply matrix on Figure 8).

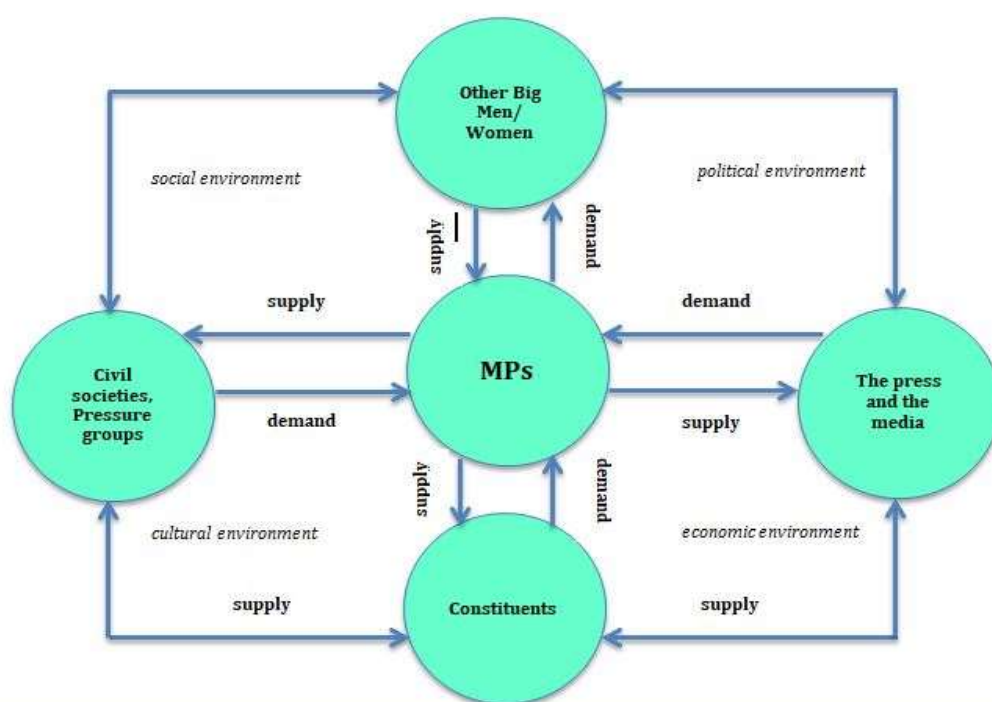


Figure 8 A diagram depicting collective social accountability demand & supply⁸⁷

7.4 What Political Representation Means to MPs?

⁸⁷ Source: Author's description of collective social accountability relationships.

My interlocutors in Nigeria often emphasized that political accountability and representation are two sides of the same coin. Both constituents and MPs suggested that the mandate to represent others comes with the responsibility of being accountable to the electors. When analysing their understanding of political representation, I found that MPs considered political representation as both complex to define and tricky in practice. Many of the respondents acknowledged that political representation is a democratic process that allows an elected political officeholder to represent the interests of those that elected or appointed them. As one of the senators puts it, “political representation and legislative works are complex and dynamic, so it has also brought its own complexity and we have always tried to manage it accountably.” (Personal Communication Senator_3 Abuja, October 19, 2014). By and large, they believe that political representation is an alternative to direct democracy. This involves a mandate given to an elected official like them by electors through ballot to represent their interest at a higher political administrative level, such as National Assembly. Many of the senators were passionate about the fact that their position and the work they do at the National Assembly helps to articulate and aggregate various national interests, sometimes through heated debates.

Speaking with huge enthusiasm, one of the interviewees was of the opinion that the best way to measure political representation is not only on the basis of concrete evidence of what MPs provide to constituents but also about making sure that the voices of the public are heard in governance. He asserted that:

It is a process of representing the political interests of constituents by an elected member usually through election. For example, constituents’ interests are often represented by elected legislators at the National Assembly, State Houses of Assembly and Local Government Councils. Through political

representation, the voices of the voiceless will be heard.
(Personal Communication Senator_11 Abuja, October 25, 2014).

By the voices of the voiceless, the senator refers to not only what constituents think about potential legislation or topical national issues, but mostly to things that affect them directly. In most contexts, nothing affects people everywhere in the world more than a low income, joblessness, lack of health care and security, and lack of social infrastructure like roads, electricity and water. All the senators I interviewed acknowledged that these voices or needs are what they represent, and that political representation is about providing the demands accompanying such voices. This responsibility makes the position of a Nigerian senator challenging. Yet senators can accommodate these demands because of the understanding that it is an indispensable part of their responsibilities. Responding to the question of political representation one of the senators shook his head and said:

Political representation is about identifying with the needs of my constituents and finding a way to meet them. As you would have seen, every day people come to me and wait for different needs. What would representation mean to those without jobs or money? What does it mean to a community without roads, pipe borne water or electricity? If you go around inside and outside this complex and beyond, people voice out their demands in frustration. Even though we the legislature are not responsible for providing these demands, yet people come to us because where possible, we can push the executive agencies. Therefore, this is what representation means to my constituents (Personal Communication Senator_10 Abuja, October 23, 2014).

Such explanations show that MPs are very aware that political representation comes with many challenges and responsibilities. Their plight is made worse because they are in direct constant contact with constituents without any protection. Asked what he considered as the most challenging problem with political representation, one of the senators argued:

The legislator is the first line of exposure to the constituents, those in the executive (...), usually have some protection because of the nature of their offices, and they are protected. We have direct contact with the constituents so we cannot afford that kind of protection. We are not protected, we are supposed to represent the course of the constituents, we are supposed to represent directly the cores of the constituency and we represent how the constituents feel about any issues, so we must be in constant direct contact with them (Personal Communication Senator_3 Abuja, October 27, 2014).

Indeed, all the senators I interviewed expressed similar views about the mandate they have, to represent their constituents. They seemed to suggest that the true sense of representative democracy is being close to the constituents that elected them but that the price of such democratic credentials is indiscriminate exposure to constituents' demands, unlike those in the executive arm of government. They not only seem to accept the claim made by Richardson (2002), that anyone that claims to have a legitimate mandate to play a role in public discourse may also make a legitimate claim of representing a group of people that endorsed such authority, but also believe that representative democracy in their own setting involves personal sacrifices. Through their responses, MPs recognized that the ultimate "representee" in any democratic setting is the people and that a representative would strive to act in his/ her constituents' interests. Some of the senators argued that the National Assembly is a collective representative democratic institution that creates a structure to represent the people as a whole, acting in their interest and name on both domestic and international stage as well as in dealing with individual citizens and groups of citizens, a role McLean (2004) has argued is prominent among the duties of the legislature. Overall, most of the MPs I observed or interviewed genuinely accommodated constituents who came with various demands and listened to them patiently despite the enormity of the

pressures. By so doing, they demonstrate the understanding that political representation is about listening to the needs and interests of those represented.

The insights I gained through participant observations, interviews, survey responses, public discourse and political events show that political representation in Nigeria can be rancorous, yet enthusiastic. Interview responses also suggest that MPs see themselves as part of a group striving towards a well-ordered and an ideal liberal democratic society where their representatives serve as effective agents of the citizens (Rawls 1999).

7.5 MPs' views on Accountability Pressures

As accountability demands are at the centre of this research, respondents were asked in several ways to state and explain their perceptions of accountability. My questions included the seriousness of constituents' expectations and demands and how politicians were coping with the challenges such demands bring. Many of the respondent senators were quite clear about their attitude to the question of accountability, and the majority accepted the fact that it is both part of the duty and the social expectations they face. As one of them acknowledged:

On personal level, there are two ways we impact on the society, one is by attracting federal projects that impact on the constituency, the second one is to initiate constituency projects attracted into the budget to be sponsored by the executive and then social responsibilities for the constituents a case of the society have been good to you and it is time for you to pay back" (Personal Communication, Senator_3 Cross Rivers, October 18, 2014).

One of the senators argued that excessive constituents' pressure mirrors the state of the Nigerian economy. She lamented that the situation was very disturbing when it

comes to the economy of the country, which she considered as a “third world country” due to the poor or non-existing infrastructure. As a ranking senator, she had faced and dealt with a lot of demands, and she sometimes thinks that such pressures border on witch-hunting and blackmail. As she explained:

You cannot really say the demand is truthful to an extent; it's more like blackmail, a case of we voted for you and we have to see what you can do back to us and not the quality you are made of. It's quite a mix-feeling there (...), so I understand the pressures and try to meet them in my own way. I made a vow not to touch my salary, so I use it to assist the constituents. I also have been doing a lot of charity work through which I help a lot of less privileged people like the widows. I do a lot of charity work and I work with people at the grassroots level and I work with people who have one need or the other. Last time during our meeting, I was able to capitalize 650 widows to start a trade (Personal Communication Senator_4 October 20, 2014).

Many of the senators believe that this is not a problem peculiar to Nigeria, and that in many African economies the level of finance is so limited that people who are still struggling with basic infrastructural needs like water, roads, and electricity continue to depend on their family members. As one of the senators explained, that brings a lot of pressure on the legislators, given that “those that are more endowed can impact on the poor but such act of goodwill is for only legislators that can afford the means, and you are impacting on people that are less able” (Personal Communication Senator_10 Abuja, October 25 2014).

For most politicians, satisfying or providing the demands of constituents is the most important measure of an MP's political accountability. The word accountability means to be called to be responsible for one's actions; answerability. Politicians use the word to project a sense of credibility, integrity and performance in office and at the same time to suggest they are corruption-free. In a bid to curtail the excesses of elected and

non-elected officials and ensure their accountability and answerability to the public, some laws have been put in place to eliminate corruption. In Nigeria, such legislations as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Establishment) Act of 2004, the Anti-Corruption Act 2000, the Money Laundering Act of 1995, Advance Fee Fraud and Other Related Offences Act 2006 exist to promote accountability and eliminate corruption. From their interview responses, one can easily sense that MPs are not only in agreement with the conventional meaning of the concept, but that they mostly interpret it as the ability to meet various demands from constituents. Therefore, accountability is about giving account of their performance to their constituencies and the public at large so that they can be judged based on not only the physical evidence of their performances and achievements but on how credibly and transparently they carried out their duties. In this context, providing private demands and community projects are markers of a transparent, selfless and non-corrupt leadership; qualities that can potentially translate into popular support beyond the beneficiaries. As I observed during the fieldwork, there is no doubt that MPs prioritize the type of goods they provide because they do not always have the means to satisfy all constituents' needs. As one of the senators said, the key to retaining the support of the constituents is to gain their trust. The senator pointed out to me that he had been voted three times because his constituents trust him. He went on to say: "I know it takes a lot of resources to meet their needs but I have and will always do my best to represent them to the best of my ability" (Personal Communication Senator_9 Abuja, October 30, 2014).

7.6 Are Accountability Demands on the Increase?

Responses from all the senators I interviewed suggest that the biggest problem they face is meeting the expectations of their constituents, which they believe result from lack of constituents' understanding of the roles of the legislature. Putting their body language and the tone of their responses into perspective, they did not show any sign of frustration when responding to the question of demands but each of them either took a while to adjust or clear his or her throat before acknowledging that constituents' demands are the most challenging problem they face. Most of their responses were philosophical in that they accept this challenge as something they cannot solve completely but cannot ignore either.

As many of them lamented, the major problem with parliamentarians' work in Africa, and in Nigeria in particular, is the misunderstanding of the role of the legislature. Demonstrating the magnitude of the problem, Senator_13 said: "People understand how those in the executive operate but they don't understand how the legislator operates." He went on to say that many Nigerians feel that those in the legislature have the same kind of access to government funds as the executive. The legislature does have the power to appropriate funds and oversee the execution of government policies. He argued that the executive arm is responsible for implementing government programs including giving contracts for infrastructural development, while the legislature is into "intellectual business".⁸⁸ He saw MPs as laying a foundation for those in the executive branch, or as producing a roadmap as the basis on which the policies

⁸⁸ According to the online Cambridge Dictionary, intellectual relates "to your ability to think and understand things, especially complicated ideas". Therefore, an intellectual is someone that indulges in critical thinking and through such finds solution to complicated social problems. Contextually, the senator in this encounter linked their job to intellectual business because bill and subsequent legislative drafting requires research and skills than the job of a president or governor. See <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/intellectual> They are not academics, but he believes that legislators engage in research and critical thinking.

of government should be based. But the common man, he said, does not understand that legislators' job is "intellectually based" and researching, debating and passing motions and bills before passing laws: constituents want their senators to be responsible for water supply in their village, building of schools, hospitals, and markets etc.⁸⁹ He went further to confess that it is an uphill task to meet the multi-faceted demands of constituents in the face of very limited resources. Even people in the executive branch themselves are finding it difficult to meet the expectations of the people, "so the man at the parliament really has a very difficult job", he said (Personal Communication Senator_13 Benue, October 28, 2014).

Apart from constituents' lack of awareness of what ought to be an MP's legislative role, a major factor for the increasing number of demands is lack of education. According to a senator with ten years of experience as a governor, accountability pressure in Nigeria is a function of poor or lack of education, poverty and injustice in the society. He explained that these factors not only increase the number of people who have no means of subsistence but also breed social vices such as terrorism (Boko Haram happens to be active in his senatorial district). Asked whether demands from his constituents are a major problem to him, he responded in a resigned manner:

I come from Boko Haram infected state, but right now, I cannot go home. Boko Haram has taken over my local government and the neighbouring local government. They have hoisted their flags and they are just going up and down the place. I have seven local governments and two have been taken over by Boko Haram and nobody can go and execute those projects in those two local governments. So, mine is a very particularly difficult situation, as

⁸⁹ It must be noted that what this ranking senator meant by intellectual business is the fact that legislators engage in lengthy legislative drafting that is intellectually demanding as against politicians in executive positions that rely on career civil servants to do their job. Whereas senators can influence the provision of those things, but they cannot physically cause a project to be done. He claimed that, they senators can influence it by way of making the executive branch add such demands for infrastructure in the budget to be appropriated by the legislators, but they cannot cause the actualization of such projects.

much as I will like to do things for my state, my state is a place everybody fears to go now. People who are outside are afraid to go there now. But under normal circumstance, that pressure of constituents looking for one benefit or the other is always there, but I am in a very precarious place right now... (Personal Communication Senator_11 Abuja, October 21, 2014).

On the question of whether the nonexistence of social security system is responsible for increasing demands and problems like Boko Haram he said that there were several factors to blame. For example, he reasoned that if Nigeria had introduced free education some 20-30 years ago, Nigerians would not have witnessed things they are witnessing now, including Boko Haram. According to him, some Nigerians are educated, while others are not educated, and some are "Almajiris" (traditional Kor'anic school children who beg for alms). He felt that Almajiris were often used by evil men who recruit them to cause trouble, and who are implicated in the security challenges the society faces today. As at the time of my interview, he said that he was among the sponsors of the social security and free education bills which had passed first reading in the Senate the day before.

The senator remains optimistic that there are quite a few things politicians can do to ensure justice, equity and fair play. Without justice, he said meekly, there cannot be peace, and justice from top to bottom and fairness to all, can only happen when whatever resources Nigeria has been fairly and equitably shared. Before commenting on the menace of Boko Haram in his constituency, he looked downcast, shook his head, paused for few seconds, and with the hiss of a dejected man he said that Kebbi State, where Boko Haram is most active, has been the poorest part of Nigeria, from independence, and even since before independence. He expanded:

They also have very uneducated people, people whose education level is very low, we also have the problem of

desertification and desert encroachment, very dry compared to other parts of Nigeria, very dry area with very little rain (...) and on top of that, the poverty level there is unbelievable, you just have to see it to believe it that a country like Nigeria with the kind of resources that we have, people are still living in that kind of situation (...). I have been in it, I was born into it, I grew up in it, and I have seen it. We are trying to bring about change but it will not be easy to (Personal Communication Senator_11 Abuja, October 24, 2014).

The pressure on politicians, especially MPs, to provide different forms of benefits is a barometer for measuring the development needs of their constituents. Although many MPs go beyond their official responsibility to support their constituents, there is a limit to what they can achieve, given the enormity of development needs in the country. In reality, Nigerian MPs, and various accountability mechanisms such as constituency projects are increasingly driving grassroots development. But there remains huge development gap across the length and breadth of the country occasioned by inadequacy of fund, corruption, wrong project priorities, none or poorly implanted projects as well as socio-cultural inhibitions.

7.7 The Economics of Accountability Supply: How do MPs prioritize, meet or avoid accountability pressures?

As set out above, Nigerian MPs including senators and honourable members of the lower chamber face challenging accountability demands from the public. However, many Nigerians believe that the wages and allowances MPs allocate to themselves make them unworthy of public sympathy for their predicament. Although many politicians may be willing to provide some demands, many have to prioritize the benefit they provide to constituents or dodge them altogether. But accountability supply responsibility of an MP may become of less priority if elected under a proportional

representation (PR) electoral system because members do not represent citizens based on share place of residence (Diamond and Plattner 2010). In contrast, MPs elected under the single member districts (SMDs) or multimember districts (MMDs) electoral system especially in developing economies such as Africa, prioritize “offering assistance for individual needs and public goods such as roads, water-supply system, school, health clinics and meeting halls” (ibid 2010: 35). Beyond, electoral district politics, parliamentarians are responding to “growing public pressure for greater involvement, information, accountability and better service delivery to citizens” (Economic Commission for Africa 2011: 3). In view of these unavoidable responsibilities, African MPs are said to combine their legislative, executive oversight, constituency representation and constituency service as shown in the case of Ghana (Lindberg 2010: 119-121). This thesis builds on Lindberg’s findings. However, the fact that Nigerian MPs receive a direct allowance to meet similar needs calls into question Lindberg’s interpretation of MPs’ supplies within this context as political clientelism. If a senator engages in vote-buying and subsequently uses his or her constituency allowance to reciprocate such gestures or provides jobs to only voters that supported him/her, then it will be fair to associate this with clientele politics. But the reality is that Nigerian MPs provide such benefits both as social and humanitarian responsibilities and the recipients are not obliged or expected to cast their ballots because of those benefits.

A recurring topical issue in contemporary Nigeria is the amount of money legislators earn. Although one can easily notice religious, ethnic and tribal divides when political arguments ensue, it seems that Nigerians often find a common ground when it comes to the earnings of their legislators. Apart from the revelations of my interviewees, there

could hardly be any discussion of legislative politics in Nigeria without references to what they believe are outrageous salaries MPs, especially senators, are receiving. Oftentimes, television panellists, radio commentators, newspaper free-readers, party-goers, religious preachers, market traders, and even bus commuters engage in the passionate condemnation of politicians' large or 'jumbo' earnings and many support any means by which Nigerians could dispossess them of some of the excess earnings.

In contrast, most of the senators I spoke to did not dwell much on their earnings during my interviews with them: they all felt that the misconception of the money they earn is a major factor encouraging constituents' demands for money. They are aware of the ill-feeling of Nigerians regarding how much they receive as salary and allowances, and yet many of them argue that they do not even earn enough to meet increasing constituency pressures. The National Institute of Legislative Studies' (NILLS) official National Assembly Members' Salary Scale publication sheds more light on not only the basic salaries of Nigerian MPs but also on the other miscellaneous expenses that they can claim beyond the jurisdiction of the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMFAC),⁹⁰ as contained in their salary breakdown (Odu 2015),⁹¹ below:

⁹⁰ Theo Odulami and Osime Odebhulu and Idris Ahmed petitioned the (RMFAC), demanding the reduction of the salaries of National Assembly Members. According to them, "Nigeria returned to democratic rule in 1999 after several years of military dictatorship and since then, the elected Legislators/parliamentarians have designed ways of taking their salaries and allowances out of the remit of the National Revenue Mobilisation and Fiscal Allocation Commission (RMFAC). It is alleged that they did this by accepting salaries fixed for them by RMFAC but setting allowances for themselves. The result is today's combined annual salaries and allowances of a Nigerian senator that stands at over \$2 million. This is in a country where millions of citizens do not even earn the minimum wage of less than \$30 a month and approximately \$150 dollars per annum (N18, 000.00/month and yearly salary of N18,000.00 x 12 = N216,000.00). By this calculation it will take a Nigerian earning the minimum wage a whopping 1,638 years to earn the annual salary of a Nigerian Senator." See Change.org: <https://www.change.org/p/national-assembly-of-the-federal-republic-of-nigeria-nigerian-government-review-and-amend-the-nigerian-senator-s-annual-pay-of-2-183-685-00-in-line-with-senator-s-pay-worldwide> Accessed 23/03/2016.

⁹¹ Opeyemi Odu October 12th 2015, National Assembly Releases breakdown of Salaries of Senators and Reps. <http://www.nigerianmonitor.com/breaking-national-assembly-releases-breakdown-of->

Nigerian Legislators¹³

ANNUAL	SENATORS (N)	HOUSE OF REPS (N)
Basic Salary	2,026,400.00	.50
Vehicle Fuelling/Maintenance	1,520,000.00	1,489,000.00
Constituency	5,000,000.00	1,985,000.00
Domestic Staff	1,519,000.00	1,488,000.00
Personal Assistant	506,600.00	493,303.00
Entertainment	607,920.00	595,563.00
Recess	202,640.00	198,521.00
Utilities	607,920.00	397,042.00
Newspapers/Periodicals	303,960.00	297,781.00
House Maintenance	101,320.00	99,260.00
Wardrobe	506,600.00	496,303.00
Estacode	950.00**	\$900.00**
Tour Duty	37,000.00	35,000.00**
TOTAL	12,902,360.00	9,525,985.50

*** Not added to total

₦12,902,360.00 x 109 Senators = ₦1,406,357,240.00

₦9,524,985.50 x 360 House of Rep Members = ₦3,428,994,780.00

Table 7 Breakdown of Salaries of Senators and Honourable Members

OTHERS

TENURE (EVERY 4 YEARS)	SENATORS (N)	HOUSE OF REPS (N)
Accommodation	4,000,000.00	3,970,000.00
Vehicle Loan	8,000,000.00	7,940,000.00
Furniture	6,000,000.00	5,956,000.00
Severance Gratuity	6,090,000.00	5,956,000.00
TOTAL	24,090,000.00	23,822,000.00

₦24,090,000.00 x 109 Senators = ₦ 2,625,810,000.00

₦23,822,000.00 x 360 House of Reps Members = ₦8,575,920,000.00

GRAND TOTAL

SENATE: 36,992,360 = ₦ 184,962.00

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: 33,347,985.5 = ₦ 166,740.00

Table 8 The breakdown of the Nigerian senators and members of the House of Representatives' salaries and allowances.⁹²

As one would expect, the revelation of such salaries especially in a country where over 40% of the population live below the poverty line is bound to generate public outrage (Aljazeera 2020). During my fieldwork, many respondents considered politicians'

[salaries-of-senators-reps/](#) and Soni Daniel Northern Regional Editor, Vanguard, October 10, 2015: Revealed at Last: Salary and Allowances of NASS members.

⁹² Source: Odu Opeyemi (2015), Retrieved from <http://www.nigerianmonitor.com/breaking-national-assembly-releases-breakdown-of-salaries-of-senators-reps/>

salaries excessive. They perceived corruption not only as taking advantage of a position to defraud the state, but argued that in a wider context of justice, earning excessive remuneration amidst extreme poverty is morally corrupt.⁹³

Many Nigerians believe that their MPs cannot justify their salaries. When asked what the MPs do or are supposed to be doing, many people seemed uninterested or at best dismissive of the MPs' legislative role. However, when pressed for their opinion about legislators' performance in Nigeria, they would often divert attention to what they feel matters the most, such as the amount of salary the MPs pay themselves. Rightly or wrongly, both old and young, literate and illiterate seem to know how much the MPs earn. Often they respond with rhetorical questions like: "What do they do there [in the National Assembly]? Some of the interviewees claimed that MPs are mostly seen fighting each other over Ghana-must-go [a common term used to describe large plastic bags often used to contain embezzled or corrupt money]. They are accused of collecting millions of dollars for themselves at the expense of the public. As one government official I spoke with claimed, each of the 109 senators is alleged to collect ₦48 million per quarter. At the end of the year, each of the senator's would have earned around \$1.17 million (based on the exchange rate at the time) and in addition, as he said, they receive a gargantuan "constituency allowance" for doing what the vast majority believe is "next to nothing" (Personal Communication Abuja December 3, 2014). As enticing and attention-pooling headlines of legislative corruption allegations might be, they are very difficult to verify in detail.

⁹³ This interpretation cannot be further from the truth given the fact that despite its status as one of the countries most endowed with natural resources in the world, it is at the same time, one of the poorest in the world- a reality that justifies "resource curse theory" (Venables 2016, Ross 2015, 1999, Patrick 2012). The paradox of poverty in riches is even more depressing for an average Nigerian when their legislators are said to earn the highest salaries in the world.

But a former senator's revelation is consistent with public perception of the legislators, as one them put to me in Abuja on October 2015:

There is no requirement that the MP's should explain how they spend their constituency allocation. During my four years in the House, I didn't know of any member who spent the money only on constituency projects. Most of them used them for private purposes (Personal conversation 24 October 2015).

Without doubt, such depressing remarks are commonplace in Nigerian print and electronic media, where they feed into debates about politicians' obligations. Social media seems to have taken matters to another level because it allows the public to react quickly to pressing national issues. Given this shared discursive understanding, independent media rarely report on the more successful accountability projects, or on politicians who use all their resources to satisfy their constituents, as they would be seen as biased.

Some Nigerians have argued that increasing constituents' demands can also be an incentive for the impropriety of public officials. This in turn affects constituency projects, because poor accountability relationships between MPs and constituents often result in poor political representation. This concern was clearly alluded to by one of the interviewees when explaining MPs' poor accountability performance and representative gap:

Most of the constituency projects are a far cry from the need of the people. The constituents make so much demand on them making it (election) to become the case of the highest bidder gets the vote. So, it makes the politicians to become so desperate. They make so much over-bearing demand on them, so much money, they will not come out during campaign, and they give the constituents some money and forget about them after the election (Personal Communication Constituent_33 Asaba, April 5, 2016).

Overall, my informants did not address specific public allegations like budget padding and arbitrary increases in their earnings during appropriation (Busari 2018). But some of them referred to the fact that the idea that they earn what they don't deserve is untrue. Some justified their earnings and even argued that their earning was by no means enough to attend to the unending demands for private and public goods by their constituents. According to Senator 4, those in the executive arm of government and its agencies are directly accountable to the public through the legislators. The people do not always scrutinize executive officials, so they are shielded from public pestering. He goes on to argue:

Those of us in the legislature are directly elected by our constituents who have the right to seek for quality political representation at the national level. At the same time, they come to us for things that the executive should be doing. There is no amount of money that will be enough to deal with so many demands. But even with our earning, some of us are ready and willing to do our very best for our constituents (Personal Communication Senator_7 Abuja, October 22, 2014).

The readiness of the MPs to take up the 'social responsibility' of assisting their constituents and the general public awareness of the large salaries and other incomes of MPs serve as a magnetic pull of many Nigerians gathering around the National Assembly in Abuja to demand private benefits. Indeed, the power, opulence, corruption, influence and affluence some of Nigerian senators are well documented and known among the populace and several Nollywood movies have chronicled blood-curdling scandals that such senators have been involved.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ See Arrest the Senator 1-Nigerian Nollywood 2015 Latest Full Movie. <http://detube.pk/watch/hDt6wHqV7tg/arrest-the-senator-1-nigerian-nollywood-2015-latest-full-movie.html> Also see Part 2 Nigerian Nollywood 2015 Latest Full Movie. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDt6wHqV7tg>

Also see the Incumbent, a Nollywood Film that depicts the gory tales of how Nigerian politicians use corrupt powers. It is also claimed that many prostitutes and university students prefer to court senators because they can afford to lavish them with money.

Despite accepting constituents' expectations and demands for private goods as a normal trend of "hybrid accountability responsibility", senators are all concerned about the increasing effects such pressures have on them. They mostly believe that constituents mix up the responsibilities of the executive and the legislature. Principally, a legislator, they argue is a law maker who tries to attract one form of development project or another. They claim that constituents tend to demand of the legislator things that should be the responsibility of the executive arm of government, at the local, state and federal levels. Anything they need, they will require them, the senators to lobby the government for it or to fund it themselves. "The constituents do not know the difference between the federal and state governments, so they put everything on your laps to provide", remarked one of the senators who showed a glimpse of frustration during my interview with him (Personal Communication Senator 6_Abuja, October 24, 2014).

The economics of parliamentary politics, especially MPs' earning remains the most topical issue since 1999. Public perception of Nigerian MPs' alleged financial excesses can neither be ignored nor assumed to represent the complete picture of political accountability challenges. One of the ways to better understand the politics of Nigerian MPs' earnings is to compare their salaries and financial obligations to those of MPs from other countries, for example, United Kingdom. Since 1999, there has been a controversy as to the actual amount Nigerian National Assembly members usually earn; however, we can conservatively use the figure available in 2020 to estimate. As of 2019, Nigerian senators were entitled to a monthly salary of 14.25 million NGN (Fashagba et al, 2019), equivalent of 30,069.12 GBP based on the exchange rate of (1 GBP = 473.908 NGN) and (1 NGN = 0.00211011 GBP) on January 26th, 2020 (See

XE Currency Exchange Rates). That is, 14, 250,000 NGN x 0.00211011GBP = 30,069.122 GBP monthly. Therefore, during this time, a Nigerian senator ought to have received an annual salary of 171 million NGN, equivalent of 360,829.53 GBP.⁹⁵ On the other hand, as of 2019, UK MPs' annual basic salary was 79,468 GBP, if we factor in all their allowances potentially the figure increases to £223,753 or potentially more depending on the travel expenses (Independent Parliamentary Services Authority, 2019). At face value, Nigerian senators earn significantly more than their UK counterparts. However, the reality is slightly different when we factor in the money Nigerian MPs spend to support their constituents, as the net worth of their earnings will be far smaller compared to those of UK MPs. During the fieldwork, I observed many of the MPs giving out money to constituents with most of them claiming that they spend more than 1 million NGN, the equivalent of 2,110.00 GBP, weekly (exchange rate of 26th January 2020). If we adopt this rough estimate it means a Nigerian senator will spend at least 109,720 GBP equivalent of 52 million NGN annually to support constituents. Following my observation of politicians during my fieldwork, I believe that it is likely that many of Nigerian MPs spend far more than this conservative estimate in view of the demography and overall need of their constituents. But how does this compare to the spending of a UK MP? Unlike Nigerian MPs who accept their salaries being fixed by the National Revenue Mobilization and Fiscal Allocation Commission (RMFAC) but determine their own allowances, UK MPs' salaries and allowances are

⁹⁵ The exchange calculation here provides a basis to compare what Nigerian senators and United Kingdom's MPs earned using an exchange rate of 1 GBP = 473.908 NGN and 1 NGN = 0.00211011 GBP 26th of January 2020. See XE Currency exchange for live rates, available at: <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=171%2C000%2C000&From=NGN&To=GBP> It must be noted that this is an estimate, as the rate could be higher or lower depending on where and when the exchange is conducted. It must be noted that this calculation may not represent a senator's total earning because there still exist other alleged sources of income.

determined by the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA). They are provided financial support in the form of allowances to allow them to perform effectively both in the parliament and their constituencies (House of Common's Green Book 2009). Of special interest are their expenses on constituency communication which could be mistaken for Nigerian MPs' constituency expenses. Communication driven expenses is a marketing investment politician make to get elected or re-elected. Voters need to be made aware of an MP's achievement as well as to be convinced that he or she is trustworthy. Politicians across the world, especially MPs use different communication strategies including print and electronic media as well as social media to market themselves. Apart from spending money on political advertising, physical presence in the constituency through Town Hall meetings and constituency outreach often make politicians appear to identify with the community and increases an MP's expenses to meet constituents' demands in the case of Nigeria. However, MPs' communication expenses can also increase relative to their re-election challenges as shown in the study conducted by Auel and Umit (2018):

We find that rebellious MPs, senior MPs, and those who do not seek re-election communicate less with their constituents. In contrast, MPs in marginal seats, those who are more active in parliament, and those who represent urban constituencies communicate more. We see these results as evidence of MPs' constituency communication depending on challenges to their re-election. Communication is an important tool for MPs to convince their electors of their trustworthiness, and the more that job is insecure, the more incentives they have to communicate (Auel and Umit 2018: 1).

Communication with constituents provides an opportunity for the MP to market himself or herself for re-election and at the same time allows constituents to make demands and above all evaluate an incumbent MP's performance. Contrary to what the public perceives as legitimate in Nigeria, UK MPs are not usually expected to provide financial

and material support to constituents. MPs' surgeries are used to address diverse constituency needs and local issues where constituents make largely non-monetary demands of their MPs (Parliament UK 2020). On the contrary, Nigerian MPs deal with both financial and non-financial demands of their constituents. In a nutshell, just like the UK MPs, Nigerian MPs perform all the legislative and representative duties; however, they have additional responsibility to support their constituents financially where they can. The difference in the nature of demands people make as well as the socio-emotional and psychological effects means that Nigerian MPs' choice of expenses and how much they spend will be different from those of UK MPs. While Nigerian MPs spend more to support constituents financially, UK MPs, mainly spend money to make their duties more efficient and canvassing for re-election. In other words, socio-economic, political and cultural environment affect what constituents demand of politicians and by extension the kind of expenses politicians tend to make. In advanced economies with good social welfare, constituents demand MPs' intervention to ensure public services are well delivered as well as quality legislation. In developing economies with low per capita income and poor living standards, constituents may demand of their MPs to provide constituency projects such as roads, water supply, hospital, schools and electricity as well as jobs and financial support. Voters' disparity in expectation therefore explains not only the difference in the type of expenses made by MPs but also the type of constituency services provided in different countries. As Power and Shoot (2012), put it:

Voter expectations of constituency service appear to differ in developing countries and more affluent states. In the former, the expectation is that MPs will provide materially for their voters and act as the principal development agents for the area, whereas in the latter, citizens tend to want MPs to intercede in grievances and, sometimes, to find government funds for the local area.

These representative roles have developed in direct response to the needs of citizens; several politicians commented that they felt obliged to make provision because people had no one else to turn to (Power Greg & Shoot Rebecca 2012: 6-7).

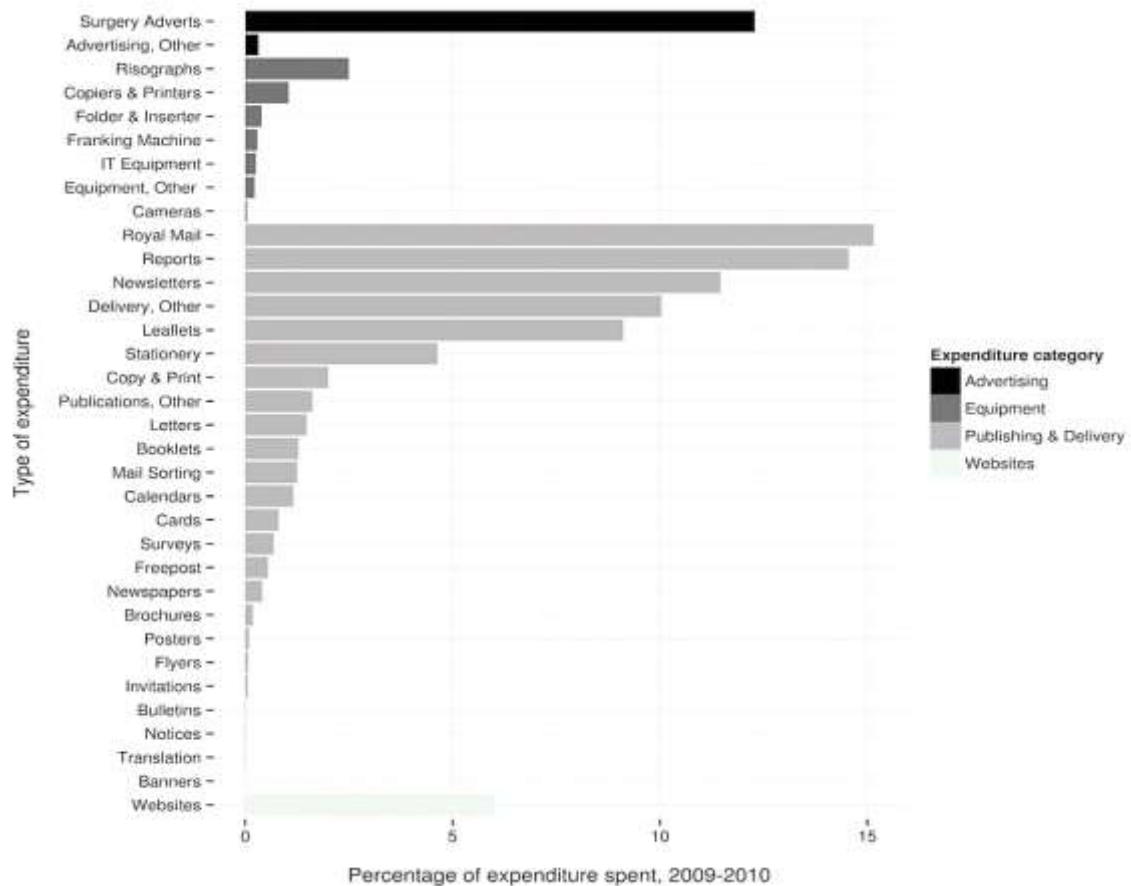


Figure 9 Types of UK MP's expenses in percentage⁹⁶

Comparatively speaking, different environmental factors (such as economic, social, political and cultural) inform the type of demands politicians face and in turn the type of expenses they make to address such demands. Therefore, constituents' demands of MPs and the type of legitimate and/or legal action they take to address them are driven by the society's development needs. As a result, the disparity in the official legislative budgeting and remuneration are engendered by the level of pressure

⁹⁶ Source: Auel Katrin and Umit Resul. Using data from the Communications Allowance between 2007 and 2010

experienced by the MPs. For example, financially speaking, Nigerian MPs clearly spend more on constituency projects as well as private benefits than the British MPs, but they equally earn far more than their British counterparts. Generally, people are justified to be alarmed where they believe that politicians are receiving excessive salaries. But it is also logical that increase in remuneration can sometimes be justified if it is in response to cost of living or additional responsibilities. In the British case, there is a debate about whether MPs should earn more or less salaries than other professionals. Public opinion suggests that many people feel that British MPs do not earn enough to encourage high performing others to take into politics. A survey of public opinion on MPs' salary states:

Our independent survey of 2000 people revealed that 31% believe that the current MP salary of £77,379 is not enough to encourage high performing individuals to consider a career in politics. In other sectors, salaries are based on the level of responsibility that a role carries, and the skills required, but many feel that MP's salaries do not reflect the importance of the job (KIS Finance The Public Opinion on MP Salaries 2019).

At the same time, when MPs were given a 2.7% salary pay rise by the Independent Parliamentary Services Authority, there was strong public resistance to the idea because people believe that politicians should not receive salary increases if employed people they represent do not benefit from similar pay increases (Worrall 2019). This argument shows that in many societies both developed and developing, people tend to frown at perceived excessive earnings of politicians. In the case of Nigeria, the demands by constituents and senators are linked. Senators need high salaries in order to respond to demands from constituents; equally, high salaries encourage even greater demands. But, given wealth disparities in Nigeria, and the importance of

performative politics, it is difficult to see how this 'vicious cycle' can be broken in the short term.

7.8 What MPs Think of the Relationship between Accountability Demands and Voting?

In representative democracy, the relationship between representatives and constituents should be in the mode of principal-agent relationship. The principal (voters) will strive to elect the best legislators to ensure that they do what they want unless were they lack the right information to do so. A representative system facilitates a link between the voters and agents where the voters should have the ability to remove agents that do not perform through ballot. Voters make their pre-electoral assessment of an MP through different accountability performance criteria, such as the quality of legislative contribution, economic performance, party ideology and constituency performance among others. Where voters are well informed, they will be empowered to make the right electoral choices. Constituents make their electoral decision based on the outcomes of different forms of political representation- descriptive, symbolic and allocation-provided by an MP (Steffensmeier et al 2003: 259).

In the context of Nigeria, political accountability equally determines how constituents rate and relate to their political representatives. Constituents base their electoral choices on their MP's performance on legislative, constituency service and the provision of private benefits. Although Nigerians are interested in the quality of legislation, such interest depends on peoples' level of education (see chapter six). However, people also care about constituency service and private benefits, because

these are things that affect most of the people. Constituents therefore vote for MPs based on their assessment of MPs' overall representative and social responsibility performance as suggested by survey and interview responses in chapter six. Rather than seeing these exchanges as part of patron-client relations, my research evidence suggests that both constituents and senators regard these demands as part of politicians' legitimate responsibilities.

The responses of all senators to the question of whether their electoral performance depended on the amount of benefits they provide to constituents were revealing. Many of them acknowledged that the financial capacity of an aspirant is essential but not necessarily as a sure means of electoral victory. Money is primarily important because it is needed for electoral logistics, but it is not a means of guaranteeing that politicians will win. One of the senators enthused that someone can spend the highest amount of money but still lose because the voters are wiser. He went on to advise others what he thinks are the qualities that can get people to consolidate electoral success:

I will advise anyone aiming to go into politics not to think that money is all they need. You have to have money surely, but you will also need to be a person that genuinely cares about the community you will represent. You must be selfless, demonstrate empathy and [be] willing to help people. If you do these, people will always trust you and vote for you (Personal Communication Senator_16 Abuja, October 23, 2014).

Another senator argued that candidates that use money are not genuine people-loving politicians and many times they do not get constituents' respect. He explains the inadequacies of vote-buying:

Those that rely on money alone give Nigeria bad name. Yes, you can spend money, but they always regret because Nigerians are now wiser. They know politicians that are representing them well. But for those that come to spend money, people can take the

money and not still vote for them (Personal Communication Senator_4 Abuja, October 25, 2014).

There is a common understanding that political leadership is a privileged position to impact the community. Political leadership positions also come with access to state resources which politicians are expected to redistribute by supplying various constituents' formal and informal demands. MPs as demonstrated by my interviewees (senators) are expected to perform the role of a philanthropist beyond their legislative duties which increases their favourability scale and trust. MPs' legitimacy affects electoral gains, but this is anchored on the level of trust constituents have in them. Thus, providing benefits to constituents are seen as a legitimate responsibility of politicians other than an obligation to vote for the giver during ballot. This understanding among the senators demonstrates that African and particularly Nigerian voters are more sophisticated than clientele narrative suggests.

7.9 Conclusion

This chapter provided detailed insights from the point of view of politicians to contest the existing misinterpretations of the political accountability relationship between Nigeria's political leaders and their constituents. While many observers might associate accountability demands and their supply with corruption, evidence provided through my fieldwork suggests the contrary. Not only constituents, but also politicians are of the view that the relationships of accountability demands and supply between them and their constituents are legitimate, and they confirm this in public and private performances in which they recognize these demands. This chapter provides insights into how political actors try to provide benefits as part of their social responsibility to constituents. In the pursuit of such benefits, they also call other politicians to account.

Through this practice politicians pass on accountability responsibilities to each other, especially where they have less control or direct influence over the type of benefits constituents are demanding for.

This chapter shows that senators devise multiple means to manage accountability pressures. In addition to insisting that other politicians award the benefits due to their constituents, some mobilize private funds, and prioritize what they supply (or avoid supplying). The attitude and views in this chapter indicates that MPs accept what has become a “hybrid responsibility” of politicians in contemporary Nigeria. This chapter demonstrates that senators are not duty bound to provide private accountability benefits; yet, they are expecting such demands and are often prepared to deal with it because they see it as part of their call of duty. This insight offers a more nuanced interpretation of political representation, which goes beyond the abstract focus on law making and constituency representation.

By engaging with the relationship between resources, including salaries, and accountability demands on senators, the chapter also presents a clearer picture of the discourses that increase the pressure of accountability demands on MPs. It confirms an increasing accountability pressure in response to senators’ nominally high salaries, partly due to the worsening socio-economic condition of Nigerians but because of peoples’ misconception of the resources accessible by legislators. This chapter shows that the understanding and acceptance of accountability demands means that political actors do not consistently supply them with a reciprocal reward expectation. Most MPs believe that accountability supply is part of the quality of service they provide, and that it forms the basis of constituents’ electoral decision making beyond money.

Above all, given the contemporary socio-cultural, economic, and political environment in which MPs operate, they are bound to experience more demands. Apart from individualized demands, society at large has huge expectation of politicians to improve human condition. Therefore, the MPs not only face individual narrow demands, they face multi-level pressures from socio-cultural, economic, and political interest groups as well as the press and the media to perform effectively. These relationships create a bottom-up, top-down, and sideways demands and supply accountability structure in Nigeria.

8 CONCLUSION

This thesis challenges current debates that associate all expectations and demands by constituents of politicians' support with patronage or corruption. Such expectations are not always part of stable networks and they do not necessarily influence elections (chapter 1, 2, 6 and 7). Rather, they are expectations that partly overlap with constituency public goods and services provided by politicians in other countries. The provision of 'accountability benefits' addresses expectations that are seen as legitimate by both constituents and politicians. Thus, it creates a 'hybrid social responsibility' that encourages voting because it affirms that politicians are socially responsible (see chapter 4, 5, 6 and 7). Many a time, exchanges dismissed as corrupt or linked to patron-client relations address local and individualised needs that are understood as political leadership responsibilities. The thesis argues that the demands people make of politicians are a way of enforcing leadership responsibility, and by extension accountability, rather than requests for inclusion in patronage networks.

Linked to the above is the misunderstanding about the exchange of private benefits as corruption: when it comes to the wellbeing of relatively poor individuals, private benefit is understood as a contribution to survive and improve their lives (e.g. through education or employment). Such exchanges are not always for political gains, they are understood as a legitimate means through which the privileged give back to the community (chapter 2, 3, 6 and 7). The reasoning is that when individuals improve their lives, they in turn contribute positively to the society and the common good, making them independent of charity in the future. In other words, by understanding relatively small sums or favours that those privileged in the society offer the relatively poor individuals solely as corrupt or "private/benefits", the power of such benefits to increase

self-reliance is misrecognised. This constellation calls into question the interpretation of what constitutes corruption in political discourse, especially in developing economies where non-political small-scale exchanges help relatively poor individuals to subsist.

The demands people make are not limited to the realm of politics; they are part of wider expectations of reciprocity in Nigeria, which associates status – including that of politicians – with responsibility. People not only have a deep sense of entitlement to collective wealth, but feel they are ‘owed’ support by those wealthier or more powerful than them. They expect progress from the privileged, which include politicians, and want to be recognised as those whose support or consent enables leaders to be powerful. Importantly, the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended (chapter 3) shows that such expectations are not always excluded from formal legal/constitutional provisions. The point that arises from this is that we need to recognise the implicit normativity of some concepts in political science discourse that do not recognise other interpretations of legal or constitutional provisions. In the context of the thesis, Nigerian interpretations of the accountability relationship between politicians and constituents are not recognised. Consequently, an understanding of political accountability solely from the point of view of transparency blurs wider interpretations and thereby associates legitimate local practices with corruption.

Formally, accountability is usually defined in terms of a relationship between an agent and principal, which I based on implicit and explicit expectations that embody punishment contingent upon the observation and evaluation of the behaviour or performance of the agent (Han and Demircioglu 2016). While this connotes the willingness to fulfil ones duties in a transparent manner (Bovens 2005; Thakur 2020; Mulgan 2011, Bovens Schillemans, and Goodin 2014), it can also be understood from

a socio-cultural interpretations of leadership responsibility. This is important because accountability revolves around how responsibilities, expectations and standards used to assess them are framed (Day and Klein 1987; Newell and Bellour 2002). This thesis recognises the conventional understanding of political accountability as the enforcement of leadership transparency, but it can also be interpreted in different ways because it could mean different things to different people (Bovens 2005; Thakur 2020:1), (chapter 1).

Beyond transparency, in many parts of the world accountability is understood and expressed also in terms of the responsibility to promote the wellbeing of the citizens irrespective of political affiliation. However, in discussions about Nigerian, and indeed African politics, the expectation and provision of goods and services is often misrepresented as the kind of reciprocity that sustains patron-client relations or corruption. Accountability involves both retrospective scrutiny of the level of transparency expected of public officials and the prospective actions taken by the people to ensure that public officials perform the task or responsibilities associated with their positions. Using the Nigerian example, this thesis shows that prospective accountability, i.e. formal and informal expectations and demands for the provision of legitimate goods, and retrospective accountability, which includes scrutiny for transparency, are not necessarily in conflict.

This builds on an on-going debate about the lack of recognition accorded to African political ideas and understandings, and it suggests that current approaches to African politics need re-thinking (Olukoshi 2006). In order to address the imbalance created by distorted perceptions of Nigerian politicians' exchanges with their constituents, there is a need for an approach that takes cultural practices into account without using "culture"

as shorthand for a perceived lack of normativity. It advocates a more culturally rooted analysis of politicians' and their constituents' behaviour. Expectations of politicians' support is not just about having a general sense of entitlement or being owed progress by rich and highly placed individuals, including politicians, it is also about understanding the practices that shape the interactions between political leaders and their constituents. Such relationships are embedded in everyday life performative cultures of praise and criticism which are linked to proverbs and figurative expressions (chapter 2, 3 and 4). These performances serve as a subtle way of challenging politicians to perform the political and social responsibilities expected of them, while at the same time resisting bad leadership instead of promoting it.

This thesis illustrates that accountability expectations and demands are voiced differently in separate contexts or encounters, ranging from general social discourse and stereotypical views of the relationship between ordinary people and their leaders to the importance of persistence and respect in gaining access to such leaders. It also illustrates that there are differences between constituents' attitudes to politicians, for example MPs in a controlled environment, such as the National Assembly, and in crowds or during large-scale events. This change in behaviour depending on the setting reflects the attempts by constituents to genuinely show and sometimes stage-manage respect in order to make a success of different encounters with politicians (chapter 2 and 3). The choreography of each encounter, including speech, and tone of voice, patience, tolerance, understanding, the show of respect and the expression of anger or displeasure underscores how constituents use performance to legitimise accountability expectations. In general, the public perceives the demands made of politicians as having cultural, social and political justification, especially in view of the

constituency allocation funds MPs receive annually (chapter 2, 6 and 7). And although constituents' awareness of their right to make demands of politicians can increase political participation, it does not necessarily affect electoral outcomes because such services are considered as the responsibility of politicians.

Politicians are aware that people want to see the impact of governance, irrespective of whether they voted for them or not. Apart from their official tasks, politicians, especially MPs now take up what has become a "hybrid responsibility" of providing both private and public goods and services in contemporary Nigeria. MPs also make electoral promises on this basis and sometimes fund some constituents' demands from their own pockets. This practice is not peculiar to Nigeria; it is increasingly being practiced across many countries as a means of distributing resources for constituency development (Baskin 2014). The importance of such micro-level allocation of resources reflects the pressure of citizens' demands for basic local development, including roads, electricity, water, jobs etc. (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association 2016). The pressure of these expectations means that MPs in Nigeria and elsewhere play the role of local benefactors, which indicates the changing nature of the roles associated with legislators (Milloy 2017). In many cases, politicians also put pressure on other politicians to create or provide resources that can benefit their constituents (chapter 6). While MPs may rely on highly performative practices to deliver accountability, the fact that these appear different from the typical negotiating practices in Western democracies should not be misread as un-democratic per se. The insights gained from this study highlight the widespread legitimacy of, and support for, accountability demands in everyday exchanges as against patron-client narrative.

Equally, the acceptance of support from politicians does not imply collusion as most constituents vote with their conscience rather than out of obligation. People are often highly critical of those in a position of authority who are seen as not performing their social responsibilities. By recognising the seniority of politicians and other big men and women and by showing them respect, people also point to the responsibility that arises from the position of high status. This also reflects a historical and cultural expectation that a big man or “mother/father” of the people is obligated to look after both their individual and collective wellbeing (chapter 2, 3 and 4).

Understanding how these complex local practices shape political accountability requires a research methodology that explores not only everyday performances and outcomes of social relationships but also the meaning of their actions. Through a semi-ethnographic study of everyday performance of Nigerian politicians and constituents this thesis provides a synthesized understanding of accountability relationships as an integral part of distributive politics. The Nigerian case therefore helps us rethink the idea of distributive politics more broadly to recognise informal practices embedded in local culture of expectation (chapter 6 and 7).

The overall argument in this thesis is that accountability in Nigeria and elsewhere should be recognized in the wider context of distributive politics discourse (Golden and Min 2013). This thesis advocates a more nuanced normative understanding of the expectation and provision of benefits as part of legitimate distribution of resources other than clientele corruption. Without underemphasizing the importance of fighting large-scale corruption, it is unproductive to suggest that everyday small-scale benefits constituents receive, such as petty cash or job recommendation letters, are corrupt even though they do not have a significant impact on electoral outcomes. The insights

gained from this Nigerian case study shows that more scholarship is required to explore legitimate local practices that complement conventional framing of political accountability. Therefore, we need to discuss corruption or patron-client relationships in a manner that focusses on large-and-medium-scale systemic practices rather than everyday non-political small-scale exchanges that support the subsistence of relatively poor individuals in a society.

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10 APPENDICES

10.1 Interview introduction letters sent to senators.

University of Birmingham, B15 2TT UK.

7th April 2014.

Senator/Hon...

Nigerian National Assembly,
Abuja.

Dear Senator/Hon...

Request for Research Interview Audience

I am a researcher at Birmingham University UK, and I am currently studying African parliamentary transition politics and development. As many African countries engage in successive parliamentary political transitions, progress is being made along with emerging challenges that come with members of parliament meeting the socio-economic needs of their constituents. Unfortunately, legislative, and representative politics in Africa are heavily under-reported, as well as less researched in academia.

This project aims at showcasing what African parliaments do and how it affects constituency development. Indeed, one would not rule out the fact that in-depth information emanating from a project of this nature may widen the existing narrative of contemporary African representative politics.

I intend to interview members of the Nigerian National Assembly and possibly observe their legislative activities during plenary sessions and where feasible their constituency outreach activities and community projects. I am also doing a similar study in Ghanaian Parliament and would like you to be among the first group of Nigerian legislators I will interview as part of this project because of your positive contributions as an MP.

The first phase of my interview visits will be from 18th of October- 18th of December 2014 and I will be pleased if you could grant me audience on any of the above dates. If convenient for you, a survey questions could be sent to you prior to my research interview with you. If you prefer an online or hard copy version of the research survey questions, please let me know and I will be pleased to forward it to you. My email address is: [REDACTED], and mobile number is: [REDACTED].

I look forward to your kind response to my request.

Yours Sincerely,

Gabriel Okele

10.2 Constituents' survey questioner.

This survey is part of an on-going academic research on what African MPs do and how it affects constituency development at Birmingham University United Kingdom. Obtaining the views of constituents is crucial to understanding the development and challenges of African Parliamentary politics and I will appreciate your taking part to complete the following survey. It will take about 15 minutes of your time. Your responses are voluntary and will be confidential. Responses will not be identified by individual. All responses will be compiled and analysed as a group.

Please return your completed survey questions to me via email: [REDACTED]. Alternatively, please send via email attachment, hand in, or post your completed hard copy to the person that sent it to you.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me via my email: [REDACTED]

Thank you,

Gabriel U Okele

Q1 Senators and House of Representatives Members (MPs) need to be pressured to ensure there is accountability in governance. Who do you think should be responsible for making Senators and House of Representatives Members (MPs) perform their duties well?

Voters President Parliamen Political Parties The Court I don't know

Q2 Do you agree that a Senator (MP) is perceived as a "patron" or "big man" who has access to public resources on behalf of the voters (constituents)?

Strongly Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree Strongly Disagree

Not Sure

Q3 Do you agree that it is the responsibility of your Senator to provide the voters (constituents) with financial and material benefits?

Strongly Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree Strongly Disagree

Not Sure

Q4 Do you think that based on a Senator's (MP's) position and influence, voters (constituents) depend on him or her to assist them with employment, business and/or contract opportunities?

Strongly Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree Strongly Disagree

Not Sure

Q5 Do you agree that Constituents (voters) depend on the MP to fund their group economic activities like loan schemes, small scale businesses and cooperative society activities?

Strongly Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree Strongly Disagree

Not Sure

Q6 Do you agree that a Senator's (MP's) performance is measured by how much he or she is able to provide constituents with private benefits and provision of social amenities?

Strongly Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree Strongly Disagree

Not Sure

Q7 Do you agree that Senatorial candidates (MPs) who provide private benefits like financial assistance, employment, or contracts to voters (constituents) will be voted for by the constituents while those unable to do so are voted against?

Strongly Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree Strongly Disagree

Not Sure

Q8 Do you agree that Senatorial candidates (MPs) who provide amenities like roads, electricity, water, and healthcare facilities will be voted for by constituents while those unable to do so are voted against?

Strongly Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree Strongly Disagree

Not Sure

Q9 Are you interested in the performance of your MP?

Yes No I don't know

Q10 When do you feel that your Senator has performed well? (Please choose as it applies to you).

When he/she assists you with money, job or contract

When he/she provides social amenities like roads, electricity and water

When he/she actively participate in making laws at the National Assembly

When he/she is able to represent the interest of your constituency well

I can't rate the performance of my senator

Q11 What do you think is the most important duty of your Senator?

Provision of personal benefits like employment, contracts and business connection

Provision of constituency development infrastructure like roads and electricity

Assistance with financial needs

Making laws and overseeing the activities of the executive arm of government

Political representation of the voters(constituents)

Q12 How often do you express your views for the consideration of your Senator (MP) before legislation(s) are passed in the National Assembly?

Always Never Once in a while Not interested My views are not important

Q13 Do you think your Senator (MP) considers your views before voting on public issues or bills?

Yes Does not need my views No Sometimes Don't know

Q14 Do you know who your current Senator (MP) is?

Yes If yes, please write your Senator's (MP's)

.....

No

Q15 Did you vote for any of the Senatorial candidates during the last National Assembly election?

Yes No

Q16a If you answered (**Yes**) to question 15, what motivated your voting for the candidate? (**Please select all that apply to you**).

- Desire to elect a quality representative
- Desire to reward the candidate for the private assistance you received from him/her
- Desire to elect someone that will improve community development
- Desire to elect someone that can articulate your legislative interest at the parliament
- Desire to elect a candidate that can build roads, electricity, healthcare facilities and water supply

Q16b If you answered (**No**) to question 16, why didn't you vote? (**Please select all that apply to you**)

- Not interested in politics
- Could not register to cast your vote
- You did not receive any private benefit from the candidates
- Your vote would not have made any difference as elections are usually rigged
- None of the candidates would represent your interest and the constituency well

Q17 Have you ever met your Senator (MP)?

- Yes No I don't want to meet the Senator

Q18 If you answered (**Yes**) to question 18, where did you meet with your Senator (MP)?

At the Senator's (MPs) constituency At his/her constituency residence

His/her private residence outside the constituency At his/her office

During constituency outreach Other

Please specify.....

Q19 When not meeting face to face, what other means do you use to communicate with your Senator (MP)? (**Please choose as may apply to you**).

By telephone Via Email Through letters By Text Message By Fax Message

Through Facebook Through Twitter Through LinkedIn Through Whatsapp

Through Flickr Through Instagram All of the above Other

Please specify.....

Q20 Why do you use this medium (s) when contacting your Senator (MP)?

Because I always get feedback quicker

Because the medium(s) is or are cheaper

Because the medium(s) is or are more confidential

Because this is or are the only means of communication available to me

Other Please

specify.....

Q21 How often do you get feedback from your Senator (MP) following each contact?

Almost immediately It takes too long before receiving any feedback Fairly quick

Do not receive any feedback after contact with the Senator Other

Please specify.....

Q22 If you have ever met or contacted your Senator, what was the purpose of your meeting or contact? (**Please tick all that apply to you**).

To seek for financial assistance Request for job Request for contract

Demand for community development projects To discuss private matter

To discuss bills or policies of interest Other

Please specify.....

Q23 In what way or ways have you been impacted by the activities of your Senator (MP)?

The money MP provided has helped your business to grow

You can now earn a living through the job the MP helped you with

You have been able to fix some family and personal issues through MP's support

Through the MP's connection, you are now getting contracts awards.

You now have better infrastructures like water, roads, electricity provided by the MP

Other ways, please specify.....

You have not been impacted in any way by the activities of your MP.

Q24 What age group do you belong to?

- 8-24 years old 25-34 years old 35-44 years old 45-54 years old
 55-64 years old 65-74 years old 75-years old or older

Q25 What sex group are you?

- Male Female

Q26 What is your highest level of education attained?

- Primary Education Secondary Education College of Education or Polytechnic
 University Didn't attend any education institution Other

Please specify.....

Q27 What is your occupation?

- Business man or woman Tradesman Contractor Trader Civil Servant
 Farmer Clergy Student Unemployed Other

Please specify.....

Q28 Which of the Nigerian 36 states are you from? Please specify.....

Q29 Where do you live?

- In the village In the city In a small town

Q30 How satisfied are you with the performance of Nigerian legislators (Senators and House of Representative Members in ensuring good government and development?

Satisfied Very Satisfied Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied I don't know