

Sierra leone and equatorial guinea leadership analysis



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This paper analyses the impact of poor leadership in Sierra Leone, and Equatorial Guinea. Africa is the world's richest continent in terms of natural resource endowment. Africa contains 50% of the world deposit in Gold, 90% of cobalt, 65% of Manganese, 40% hydroelectric power, millions of acres of land, chromium, and diamonds (Rotberg, 34). However, despite the availability of these natural resources, the African continent is still lagging behind in terms of development. People are poor, and most governments depend on aid for purposes of meeting their budget deficits (Rotberg, 51). It is important to understand that Africa has millions of talented and skilled innovators, but due to poor leadership, states are unable to hold unto these talents and retain them for purposes of utilizing them. Some people blame the problems of Africa to imperialism, and colonialism. According to scholars, colonialism played a significant role in advancing the problems of Africa. For instance, Rotberg (27) gives an example of Congo, whereby the Belgium's left the country without preparing its leaders for independence.

As a result of this, Congo is a country that is characterized by infighting, corruption, and struggle for leadership. However, these allegations are not true, as denoted by Rotberg (27). Shaw (274) denotes that countries such as India, the United States, and even South Africa were under colonialism. However, these countries have developed economies, and some such as United States is the most powerful and richest country in the world. On this basis, the problems of Africa are associated with its poor leadership style. This is witnessed in all of Africa, including Kenya, under President Moi, Uganda, under president Idi Amin, Sudan, under president Omar el Bashir, Nigeria, under successive military leaderships..

Equatorial Guinea is led by President Teodoro Obiang Mbasogo. This leader is the longest serving President in Africa, having taken power in August 1979, in a bloody coup, against his uncle Francisco Nguema. Equatorial Guinea is found in West Africa, and it is one of Africa's largest producers of oil (Lewis, 28). In as much as Equatorial Guinea has one of the highest per capita income in the world, most citizens of this country are living poverty, they die of preventable diseases such as malaria, are unable to access basic services such as education, health care, clean drinking water. Equatorial Guinea has the highest child mortality rates who are under 5 years, in the world. This is because 20% of their children die before reaching the ages of five years. The remaining 80% of these children do not have an access of quality health care, and educational facilities. The problems of Equatorial Guinea are blamed on the leadership style of the President Teodoro Obiang Mbasogo (Lewis, 18). For example, President Teodorin Mbasogo is accused of practicing nepotism while employing senior members of his cabinet and state officials.

For example, in the years 2013, President Obiang appointed his eldest son, Teodorin Obiang to a cabinet position, and as the second vice president of the state. This is for purposes of preparing his son as his successor, once the president leaves power. Teodorin Obiang is always accused of embezzling millions of dollars of state money, in order to fund his own lavish lifestyle (Solo-Trillo, 139). Teodorin Obiang has been a controversial figure in Equatorial Guinea, and attracting international criticism for spending more than ten million South African rands, on a South African trip that included champagne parties, property renovations, and buying of cars. Scholars

believe that the personal fortune of Teodorin Nguema emanates from his corrupt activities connected with gas and oil exploration in Equatorial Guinea (Solo-Trillo, 140).

Lewis (37) denotes that the foreign interests of Teodorin Nguema includes two luxurious houses in South Africa, which have a combined value of 50, 000, 000 South African rands, and house in California estimated to be worth 31, 000, 000 United States dollars, a home in Paris, and a music recording label. Mr. Teodorin Nguema also has a series of luxurios cars, and in 2008, he bought a sports car estimated at 1, 100, 000 million euros (Solo-Trillo, 138). Others include a Maserati model estimated at 700, 000 euros, and a Bugatti Veyron model (Lewis, 33). However, in the year 2009, the government of France seized these cars, together with his other collections because of corruption claims, and in 2013, these cars were sold on an auction.

The US government also seized properties belonging to the President and that of its sons, estimated to be valued at 70 million US dollars. In 2012, the United States issued a warrant of arrest against Teodorin Nguema on charges of corruption, and money laundering. The luxurious lifestyle of Teodorin Nguema did not reflect the salary that he was earning as a state minister (Solo-Trillo, 139). The cabinet of President Teodorin also receives billions of undisclosed oil revenues, which normally goes to finance their luxurious lifestyle. In a bid to prevent such kind of information from reaching the public, the government of President Teodorin Mbasogo constantly harasses the media, and foreign nationals seeking to report on the conditions of Equatorial Guinea (Solo-Trillo, 133).

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Despite these allegations and accusations against Teodirin Nguema, president Nguema government defended him against them, and even appointed him as the second vice president of Equatorial Guinea, and a possible successor of his father. Other family members holding positions in Guinea include, Gabriel Mbagha, who is another son of the president, and he is the minister in charge of energy and oil, and Candido Okomo who heads GEPetrol, the official oil company in Equatorial Guinea (Solo-Trillo, 131).

It is important to understand that corruption plays a great role in undermining development within a given state. This is because the funds that could be channeled to development projects, are misused and stolen, as a result, there won't be any money to fund the development projects in the country. It is important to denote that because of nepotism in government appointments, senior officials in the government of President Teodorin are not accountable for their activities (Solo-Trillo, 132). This is because they know that in case they do not deliver, or are engaged in corrupt activities, their patrons, who are high in the government circles, will protect them. Nepotism and corruption are not the only problem affecting Equatorial Guinea.

Another major problem affecting this country is lack of a free press. Local journalists in Equatorial Guinea are unable to speak against major scandals and corrupt activities in the country (Solo-Trillo, 125). This is because the press and the media are heavily censored, and there is always a risk of reprisal in case the media highlights an issue that does not augur well with the government. It is further important to understand that the local media in Equatorial Guinea are always owned by people closer to the President, and <https://assignbuster.com/sierra-leone-and-equatorial-guinea-leadership-analysis/>

on this basis, it is always difficult for them to criticize the policies that the President enacts. Scholar denotes that without free flow of information, it is very difficult for a state to achieve economic, political as well as social development.

This is because with availability of information, public officials within a given state will be held accountable for their actions, as well as a free and an independent media will promote democracy (Solo-Trillo, 127). It is important to denote that democratic countries are characterized by economic growth and development. Furthermore, the judicial system of the country is not independent, as the President is considered as the Chief Magistrate. He oversees a body that is responsible for appointing and dismissing judges, and on this basis, the President cannot be held accountable for his actions (Solo-Trillo, 129). This promotes corruption and lack of accountability amongst senior government officials, and on this basis, Equatorial Guinea lacks behind in terms of development.

Another country that has been faced with poor leadership system is Sierra Leone. After approximately 10 years of the civil war in Sierra Leone, the government and the people of Sierra Leone still face a wide variety of challenges, and this includes widespread poverty, weak governance, and systematic corruption (Shaw, 272). The anti-corruption institutions established in Sierra Leone do not have enough resources such as skilled workers to tackle the problems associated with corruption in Sierra Leone. With the peaceful elections of 2007, there are some positive developments in Sierra Leone in regard to fighting corruption and weak governance in the country. The new government established in 2007 has been able to <https://assignbuster.com/sierra-leone-and-equatorial-guinea-leadership-analysis/>

strengthen the capabilities of the country's anti-corruption commission, and its ability to prosecute high level corruption cases (Shaw, 279). The country also boasts of an independent media that is free from government regulation and censorship. The country also benefits from a good international image, with an increase in international investors within the country.

However, it is important to denote that the road to political stability and economic development in Sierra Leone has not been easy. This is because since independence the political leadership in Sierra Leone was characterized by corruption, nepotism, a weak social society, electoral violence, and a collapse of the country's education system (Shaw, 281). It is important to understand that Sierra Leone gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1961. It is important to understand that during the first four years after independence, Sierra Leone under the leadership of Milton Margai was prosperous (Shaw, 276). This is because Milton Margai, the first prime minister saw leadership as a chance to serve the people, as opposed to following selfish interests. However, after his death in 1964, the new leadership of Sierra Leone, led by Albert Margai was undemocratic, corrupt, and they practiced nepotism.

For example, in the 1967 elections of Sierra Leone, Albert Margai could not tolerate any person opposing his party. He used violence and threats to intimidate the opposition parties into submission (Bangura and Marda, 22). It is important to understand that due to corrupt related activities, there were riots in Sierra Leone, leading to the fall of Albert Margai. After the fall of Albert Margai, the army under Steven Sisaka carried out a coup, and installed Steven Sisaka as the new leader of Siera Leone. This was in April
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1968. Sierra Leone was characterized by military coups that replaced one military leader, with another (Bangura and Marda, 41). It is important to denote that with the entry of Sisaka Steven, a military leader, Sierra Leone turned into a one party state, as opposed to the constitutional democracy it was, during the leadership of the Margais. The leadership of Sisaka Stevens saw the destruction of the parliament, and any other forms of accountability such as the judiciary and other governance institutions.

The leadership style of Stevens was characterized by executions, torture, control of information, and corruption. In 1985, Major General Joseph Momoh took power from Sisaka Stevens, who opted to step down. Momoh led Sierra Leone for seven years, leading to widespread corruption, and a total collapse of the Sierra Leonean economy (Bangura and Marda, 49). Due to lack of accountability and poor leadership, the government was unable to pay the salaries of its civil workers, and important commodities like energy were very scarce in Sierra Leone. The education system also collapsed, with many youths roaming the streets of Free town idle. This also led to a brain drain, where professional of Sierra Leone fled to country, and went overseas in search of a good life. By 1991, this country was ranked as one of the poorest nations in the world, and an all out civil war broke out in Sierra Leone (Bangura and Marda, 36). On this basis, it is important to understand that due to poor leadership, Sierra Leone the government of Sierra Leone was unable to provide services to its citizens, leading to the fall of the government under consideration.

In conclusion, poor leadership is one of the main reasons as to why Sierra Leone experienced a bitter civil war, and Equatorial Guinea is lagging behind <https://assignbuster.com/sierra-leone-and-equatorial-guinea-leadership-analysis/>

in economic, social and political development. It is important to understand that due to poor leadership, people in Sierra Leone became very poor, and they were unable to afford education and other basic needs such as food and clean water, as a result, they were lured by rebel movements to fight within its ranks. Sierra Leone learnt from this bitter civil war that took place between 1991, to the early years of 2000s. As a result, Sierra Leone is a practicing democratic country, having established good institutions of governance, for purposes of checking the executive government. On the other hand Equatorial Guinea still continues with this practice of poor governance, and this is mainly because its hasn't experienced a change in hands in terms of governance. As a result, Equatorial Guinea is considered as one of the poor countries of the world, with its people lacking the very basic needs.

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