

Media Reportage of Financial Crimes and Public Opinion on President Buhari's Change Mantra Politics

MURTADA Busair Ahmad, Ph.D.

Kwara State University, Malete, Kwara State, Nigeria

Abstract

Nigeria's mass media have consistently reported looting of the treasury by the political elites. Therefore, anti-corruption war has overshadowed other salient issues in the media since Buhari's ascendancy in 2015, leading to divergent opinions in the public sphere. Coming from the Spiral of Silence theoretical background and relying on quantitative and qualitative data from cross sectional survey, this study investigates public opinions on the anti-graft war with emphasis on the dominant themes in the news and related genres, namely arms deal, funds misappropriation and diversification, embezzlement, bribery, money laundering and budget padding. With a sample size of 326 respondents derived through non-probability sampling technique, the deliberative public opinion poll and survey reveal that reading Nigerian newspapers on anti-corruption war correlates significantly with audiences' opinion on President Buhari's Change Mantra; viewing Nigerian TV channels' reports on anti-corruption war relate significantly with the dependent variable; immediate social circles of audiences correlate significantly with the dependent variable; and audiences' level of income moderates the predictor and the dependent variable's relationship. Qualitative results reflect quantitative findings.

Key words: Mass media, Corruption, Anti-graft war, Public opinion, Change mantra