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The Conflict of Interest Explanation of Nigeria's Chequered History of Anticorruption

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Since Nigeria's return to civilian governance in 1999, after almost 20 years of unbroken military dictatorship, it has attempted to institutionalize a credible anticorruption regime but has so far met with missed outcome. While recognizing the many giant strides achieved within the Economic Reform programme period of President Olusegun Obasanjo, especially between 2004 and 2007, this paper will argue that the attempt at institutionalizing an anticorruption regime would bound to fail given the several contradictions in the system arising out of an entrenched conflict of interest both in the politics, policies and institutions of governance.

Using the many cases of political manipulation and the legal frameworks setting up the major anticorruption institutions – the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and the Independent Financial Crimes Commission (ICPC), it will systematically trace the storylines of conflict of interest that marred what could have been the dawn of a strong era for development and overcoming the stigma of 'most corrupt country' and the poster child of corruption globally.

Finally, it explores what opportunities exist in laws and practices both locally and globally to manage such conflicts by assuring that the anticorruption agencies are truly independent, and curtailing political control and manipulations, which continue to affect the effectiveness of the agencies and destroy the many little gains of years gone by.