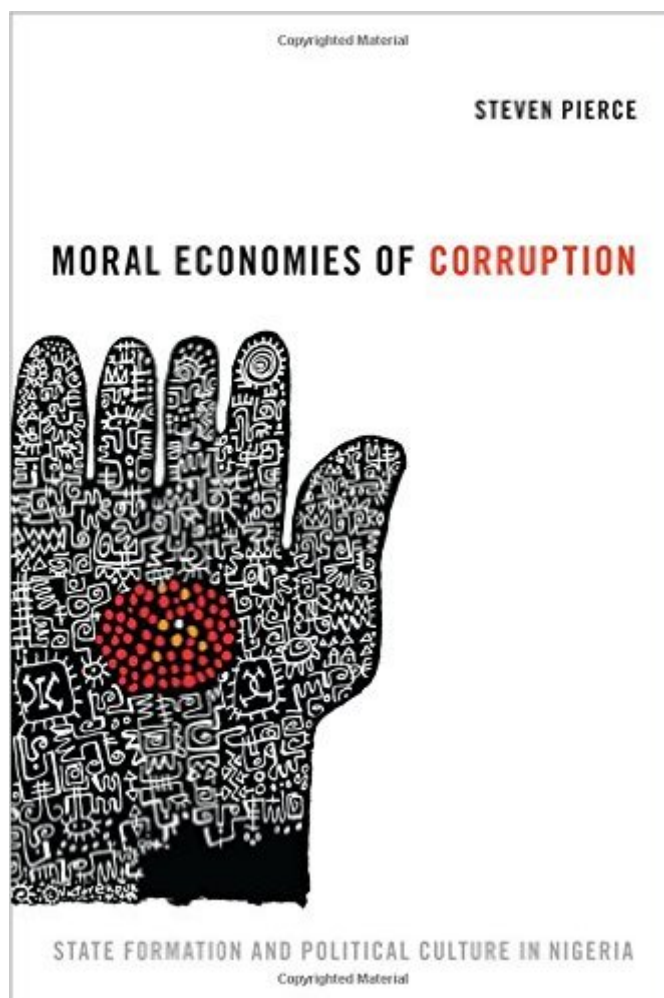


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# Moral Economies Of Corruption: State Formation And Political Culture In Nigeria



## Synopsis

Nigeria is famous for "419" e-mails asking recipients for bank account information and for scandals involving the disappearance of billions of dollars from government coffers. Corruption permeates even minor official interactions, from traffic control to university admissions. In *Moral Economies of Corruption* Steven Pierce provides a cultural history of the last 150 years of corruption in Nigeria as a case study for considering how corruption plays an important role in the processes of political change in all states. He suggests that corruption is best understood in Nigeria, as well as in all other nations, as a culturally contingent set of political discourses and historically embedded practices. The best solution to combatting Nigerian government corruption, Pierce contends, is not through attempts to prevent officials from diverting public revenue to self-interested ends, but to ask how public ends can be served by accommodating Nigeria's history of patronage as a fundamental political principle.Â Â

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Steven Pierce. *Moral Economies of Corruption: State Formation and Political Culture in Nigeria*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016. 282pp. Index, bibliography, maps and notes. Paper: \$25.95. Library Cloth: \$95.95. February 2016.\*\*\*This book offers an interesting mix of historic detail and political philosophy on the topic of economic corruption in Nigeria across its history. From the *Introduction* onward, Pierce constantly offers unique ways of looking at the stereotypes and assumptions westerners have about Nigerian corruption. For example, almost everybody has heard

of and probably received one of the 419 • scam emails, but few understand just what happens when somebody replies to one of these notes, or why westerners are so susceptible to believing that money might be laundered out of Nigeria into the west by these rudimentary means. In this particular case, many westerners are familiar with the Maryam Abacha scandal. Maryam was the widow of General Sani Abacha, who headed Nigeria's military between 1993 and 1998, and during that time he is said to have stolen and laundered billions out of the country, and the assumption was that he didn't manage to steal it all before he died and that his widow carried on this task with the help of random westerners she had her affiliates email. While the facts are closely researched, the moral argument is missing. The back cover states, "The best solution to combatting Nigerian government corruption, Pierce contends, is not through attempts to prevent officials from diverting public revenue to self-interested ends, but to ask how public ends can be served by accommodating Nigeria's history of patronage as a fundamental political principle.

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