

INTERROGATING THE CONSEQUENCES OF POLITICAL CORRUPTION ON NIGERIA'S DEVELOPMENT, AND THE WAY FORWARD

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Abstract

This paper interrogates the consequences of political corruption on Nigeria's Development and provides the way forward. Corruption is any form or act of dishonesty perpetuated by the individual(s) to weaken a legitimate institution or process and this has direct consequences on development. The paper argues that Political Corruption which is an act of dishonesty perpetuated by Politicians either elected, selected and or appointed is inimical to the growth and development of Nigeria. The method of Data Collection employed in this paper strictly concerns the design and the method of Data Collection. The explanatory design was used in this paper to rely on document evidence to prove the injury caused by political corruption and the secondary method of data collection was used. The choice of this is to reduce the temptation of respondents not willing to give information due to the sensitive nature of the topic under review, no doubt political corruption has been proven to have a very dangerous consequence against Nigeria's development. Based on this the paper by providing a way forward, suggested among others that the Nigerian people need to be educated because it is political only through education Nigerians can have a grasp of the activities of Nigerian politicians

Keywords: *Corruption, Political Corruption, Development, Nation-Building, Good Governance.*

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1. Introduction

Countries all over the world try to put measures to eliminate or reduce corruption to the barest minimum because of the dangers associated with corruption, especially political corruption. Africa is not left out in having their dose of the consequences of political corruption and this is

perceived to be the reason(s) for the underdevelopment of the continent of Africa, as it is often said that no continent or nation can develop with the presence of corruption, especially with Political Corruption, which many perceived as a “killer” of Development.

Corruption over the years has been “fingered” as that ten-letter word that has been the “spanner in the wheel of Nigeria’s progress and development and that development of Nigeria is tied to how well corruption can be dealt with especially political corruption, especially as effect Nigeria’s fourth Republic which began in May 29th 1999, and it is still mining. Nigeria may not be able to achieve Development with the prevalence of corruption, especially political corruption, that is not to say that there are no other forms of corruption as there exist grand corruption, Bureaucratic corruption, economic corruption and political corruption but this study is particularly interested in studying political corruption due to the enormity of its presence in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic and the weight it has against development in Nigeria societies. Poor policies, plans and programmes largely fail due to the prevalence of hire mined corruption encouraged by docile followership, instigated by dishonest bureaucrats and executed by corrupt politicians who see politics as a means to an end.

Politics everywhere in the world is a call to service but in Nigeria reverse is the case because politics in Nigeria is seen as the surest way of achieving fame, power, and money even if it is at the detriment of development, the larger society of Nigeria does not care provided those elected, selected and or appointed can “butter their bread” or “Sugar their tea” at the expense of quantitative and qualitative transformation hence, the consideration of the paper topic.

Motivation for the paper

The following is the motivation for this study;

- i. Whether there are negative implications of political corruption
- ii. Whether political corruption has hindered development in Nigeria
- iii. Whether there are ways forward against political corruption

Objectives of the Paper

The purpose for embarking on this paper among others; is to,

- i. Examine the negative implications of political corruption
- ii. Examine how political corruption has negatively affected Nigeria’s Development

- iii. Examine suggestions that will help deal with political corruption in Nigeria

2. Methodology

The methodology is in terms of the design and the method of data collection. The explanatory design was used in this paper; the choice of the design is to provide an explanation that will aid assimilation. The secondary method of data collection was used by this paper with textbooks, well-researched papers, and published and unpublished evidence(s) about the topic the secondary method was chosen.

3. Conceptual Review

The concepts to be reviewed in this paper are;

- i. **Corruption:** Corruption simply put, is any act of dishonesty. Corruption again is an “Illegitimate exchange of resources involving the use or abuse of public or collective responsibility for private end (Luo, 2005). According to the Transparency Intervention (1997), corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. In the words of Adeniyi, (2022), corruption is like a cancerous cell that threatens the life effect of Nigeria and Nigerians. According to him, corruption is a bankruptcy of character and indiscipline that suppresses honesty to achieve selfish and greedy ends.
- ii. **Political Corruption:** Political Corruption can be seen as all those transactions between private and public sector actors through which collective goods are illegitimately converted into private regarding payoff (Inge, 2003). Political Corruption is also the use of power by government officials and or public servants and their network and contacts to undermine the system for personal or family gain. In Nigeria, Political corruption is the abuse of power in other to achieve private illegitimate advantage at the detriment of the Nigerian system.
- iii. **Development:** Development is not purely an economic phenomenon but rather a multi-dimensional process involving re-organisation and re-orientation of the entire economic and socio-political system. However, in this context, development is the process of improving the quality of human lives to create better lives (Nishan, 2020). In the words of Todaro, development should achieve three objectives which are; (i) Raising people's living standards or level (ii) Creating conditions conducive to the growth of people's self-esteem and (iii) Increasing people's freedom to choose from a variety of goods and services in the view of the

presenter development is the creation of happiness through the upliftment of human dignity through the availability of social goods and services to the people.

iv. **Nations Building:** This is a process through which the boundaries of the modern state and those of the national community become construing and the desired outcome is to achieve national integrity (Mylonas,2020;2): It is also a structural process intertwined with industrialization, urbanization and social mobilization in other to achieve good life to the people.

v. **Good Governance:** This is the opposite of bad governance, and it has to do with leadership that is anchored on servant – master relationship with the presence of transparency, accountability, prudence, dedication and responsibility to reduce and or eliminate the suffering of the poor with necessarily reducing the quantity and quality of service to the people being their servant, (Alli, 2011).

4. Theoretical Framework

This paper adopted the Behavioural Theory. The behavioural theory was developed as an alternative to the traditional theory in the 1940s and 1950s. Behavioural Theory concentrates carefully on observing individuals' behaviour in the political process and less on state political institutions, (Multiullah, 2015).

Behavioural Theory was borrowed from sociological and psychological theories and the choice of the borrowing was to allow for the development of and application of psychology which corruption falls within especially political corruption. Behavioural theory studies the behavior of an individual about politics and other socio-psychological issues. Although it is difficult to pre-empt the character and behaviour of man as both a social and political animal, the behavioural theory has indeed helped in providing a tool for studying political corruption within the content and context of interrogating the consequences of political corruption as it affects the development of Nigerians, because with political corruption it is impossible to achieve development, especially in a plural country like Nigeria.

Political Corruption can be discussed within the context of behavioural theory as it talks about bringing the issue under discussion within the realm of political science. Behavioural theory has helped in explaining political corruption and allows this paper to argue that political

corruption is an attitude of deviance and the consequence of this behavior has assisted in predicting the dangers of political corruption to Nigeria's national development.

5. Causes of Political Corruption in Nigeria

The causes or reasons for political corruption are numerous but in Nigeria, these causes are streamlined into seven and they are;

- a. Radical changes and breakdown of societal norms
- b. The problem of ethnicity and religion
- c. Strong men and weak institution
- d. Socio-cultural bias
- e. Poor reward system and absence of socio-economic environment
- f. Poor reprimand system
- g. Canalization of the system

a. **Radical Changes and Breakdown of Societal Norms;** Most elected, selected and appointed officials of the government always do things contrary to the norms, principles, rules and the constitution and these deviant behaviours against the system undermine the system to the extent that development becomes elusive. For example, in a situation where the President, Vice President, Governor e.t.c collects security votes to address insecurity issues, insecurity still pervades the Nigerian state. To Otaki(2006), doing this is unconstitutional and against the norms

b. The Problem of Ethnicity and Religion in Contemporary Nigeria

The Nigerian state is a place where rules and the constitution are circumvented for primordial sentiments of ethnicity and religion. Recruitment and selection into leadership positions for example are not always based on excellence, efficiency and know-how but rather based on the parochial interest of ethnicity and religion. This situation has given room for having round pegs in square holes in terms of political and other type of officials occupying government positions(Okonjo-Iweala et al,2003)

c. **Strong men and weak Institutions;** The interplay between politics and political corruption in the system has led to the issue of impunity and this is one of the greatest causes of political corruption in 21st century Nigeria. This has often led to a situation of having men who are regarded as being above the law, supervising institutions that they swore to protect

and thereby corrupting legitimate institutions to enrich themselves at the expense of the development of Nigeria Alade, 2004)

d. **Socio-cultural Bias;** pressure arising from family, friends and relations on the one hand and the traditional and customary belief of “Kolanut” as incentive and appreciation have finally gained entrance into the political life of most Nigerians, as they see corruption as the norm if you fail to be corrupt no chieftaincy title and other award for you and this propel political corrupt individuals to be corrupt (Achebe, 1998).

e. **Poor Reprimanding System;** When acts of corruption are not punished through legitimate provision, corruption is encouraged to thrive and seen as a way of life and this encourages corruption in the political arena (Ikando,2011)

f. **Cabalization of the System:** Corruption in Nigeria has been promoted through clique formation these cliques are mostly formed by the elite not for the interest of the country's development, but rather for the parochial, selfish and greedy interest of the few to promote dishonestly stealing of public funds at the detriment of the nation's development(Frank and Okoli,2008:29).

6. Manifestation of Political Corruption in Nigeria

In 21st-century Nigeria, political corruption that has been legitimized and institutionalized manifests in several ways and such ways are captured in the Political Bureau established in 1987, outlining the manifestation of corruption to include the inflation of government contracts in return for kickbacks, fraud, and falsification of account in the public service, malpractices, impersonation, forgery e.t.c, Ilorah (2004:6) but from 1987 till date corruption in addition to the above as now included (Abdullahi, 2011).

Firstly, the solicitation or acceptance directly or indirectly from public officials or any other person of any goods of monetary value, or other benefit such as a gift, favours, item, promise or advantage for himself or herself for another person or entity, in exchange for any act or omission in the performance of his or her legitimate activity(ies) (Bahal, 2000).

In the secondary place, political corruption manifests in the offering or granting directly or indirectly monetary value to a public official or other favour to achieve from such public

official any act of dishonesty omission or compromise in the discharge of his official duty, (Fawole, 2020).

Again is the dimension of public fund by a public official or any other persons elected, appointed or selected for purposes unrelated to those for which it is intended, for his or her benefit or that of the third party of any property belonging to the state or its agencies to an independent agency, or to an individual that such official has received by his or her elected, appointed or elected position, Orngu (2006:15).

Moreso, the offering or giving, promising, solicitation or acceptance, directly or indirectly, of any undue advantage to by any person, elected, selected or and appointed, directly or indirectly of any undue advantages to or by any person who directs or works for in any capacity, a private business entity, for himself in a breach of his duty (Achebe, 1998).

However, corruption manifests in the political cycle through the offering, giving, solicitation or acceptance of “Kickbacks” directly and or indirectly, or promising of any undue advantage to or by any person who asserts or confirms that he can exert any improper influence to circumvent due process, (Mylona, 2020).

Implications of Political Corruption to Nigeria's Development

My Frank and honest opinion is that anybody who can say that corruption in Nigeria has not yet become alarming is either a fool, a crook or else does not live in this country” Achebe (1998:46).

Corruption has no positive implication in Nigeria, especially political corruption as it is responsible for the underdevelopment of Nigeria that is why, Achebe,(1998). posited corruption in Nigeria has passed the alarming and entered the fatal stage, and Nigeria will die if we keep pretending that she is only slightly indisposed.

The Implication of political corruption in Nigeria's development has made Nigeria a r Fourth World country and the reasons for these are;

- a. Political corruption undermines structural and institutional efficiency
- b. Political corruption amplifies mediocrity and incompetence
- c. Political corruption increases poverty and unemployment
- d. Political corruption destroys productivity and creativity

- e. Political corruption erodes good governance (Quantitative and Qualitative transformation)
- a. **Political Corruption Undermine Structural and Institutional Efficiency:** This is one of the deadliest consequences of political corruption as perpetrator destroy the fabric of the morality that guide doing government business on the one hand and the institutions on the other hand, the will of these institutions are illegally bent to favour a particular Government official(s)
- b. **Political Corruption Amplifies Mediocrity and Incompetent:** This is one of the traumas Nigerians have to go through due to tribalism, nepotism and religion, Competence and expertise are sacrificed on the alter of political corruption, No wonder in Nigeria a lot of Nigeria's ss Politicians have to resort to forgery and falsification of the document(s) to make them remain in the system even when they are “bankrupt” of capacity and capability(Achebe,2011).
- c. **Political Corruption Increase Poverty and Unemployment:** This is one of those negative implications of political corruption, as employment is based on godfatherism in Nigeria, and when unemployment is on the increase the level of poverty will also increase and this also has a trickling effect on insecurity on the one hand and underdevelopment on the other hand.
- d. **Political Corruption Destroys Productivity and Creativity:** Due to the hiring of those who are not qualified or less qualified into public offices due to the issue of quota, catchment area and national spread, those who are qualified and creative are left out by those politicians who are elected into public offices to push this narrative through and the after effect of this is that it negatively affect national development as productivity is affected (Igbuzor, 2008).
- e. **Political Corruption Erodes Good Governance:** The hallmark for leadership at various levels in the Nigerian political system is to achieve quantitative and qualitative transformation and good governance is a catalyst for this, but due to the presence of corruption good governance is eroded and development becomes a mirage, no wonder the public perception that Nigeria’s Democracy is too expensive to manage aside that is public corruption where the executives both elected and selected always want to be part of the procurement

contract in Nigeria, this singular action has made nonsense of good governance because accountability and transparency are lost which is injurious to good governance, (Baha, 2020).

7. Conclusion and Suggestions

Countries with the prevalence of political corruption hardly develop meaning that Political Corruption is a “Killer” of development, and was discovered in this paper that Nigeria is one of those countries battling Political Corruption. no wonder Nigeria is battling for survival, it can no longer pay salaries, and social amenities are in a comatose situation, yet Nigerian politicians smile to the bank at the expense of good governance, nation-building and national development. Can anything be done to save the already bad situation this paper argues that there is a way forward out of the consequences created by Political Corruption, especially in contemporary Nigeria, and the way forward by way of suggestions are:

1. There should be an act of the National Assembly creating the National Tribunal on Political Corruption (NATRIPOC) to deal with offences bordering on Political corruption such as vote buying, corrupting the General public, involvement in public procurements and other issues that bordered on political corruption defined by National Assembly through public hearing.
2. There should be a massive drive to educate the people as literacy is a potent weapon in the fight against all forms of corruption, ignorance on the part of the citizens tends to fertilize political corruption. It is only with education that people can be exposed to the activities of politicians

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