

# Political Corruption is the Despicable Spectrum Responsible for the Economic Downturn in Nigeria: Religious Perspective

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## Abstract

The pact of political corruption is the major encumbrance declines central part of democratic mechanisms that lead to economic meltdown and government failure in Nigeria. In essence, political corruption is the major spectrum orchestrates the downward spiral of economy in Nigeria. This is avowed through former president Good luck Jonathan led administration that designs counterfeit theory on democracy as such, democracy is a system of government structured by political cabal with the power of some people formed by the influential people to intimidate other people. This study discovered that the severity of political despicability in Nigeria has gone beyond control to have implicates three tiers of government with diversity of fraudulence and deceptive kleptocracy. The outcome of this paper highlights forms of corruption abound through political godfatherism and political henchmen in Nigeria such as giving and receiving bribes, nepotistic factionalism, budget padding, inflation of contracts and later abandoned without consequential fear, abuse of public property, pilfering of government fund into private accounts, misappropriation of allocation, money laundry by public officers, as well as using proxy names to open account or buy opulent property. The manuscript demonstrates that high scale corruption of our leader is but consider as harmful effects on economic and political development. The premise of this manuscript is to justify the mode of political conundrum in Nigeria with the non-violence and dynamic system of governing political affair according to religious perception. The study concludes on the hypothesis that political corruption responsible for Nigeria underdevelopment and that politicians are to blame for the economic recession and poor performance of the Nigerian government at large.

**Keywords:** Democratic mechanism; Counterfeit theory; Political conundrum; Despicable spectrum; Religious perception

## Introduction

Political corruption is the major spectrum orchestrates the descending spiral on Nigeria's economy. This vicious act is the use of government power to overawe less privilege people for private gain. According to Amundsen [1] political corruption is the manipulation of political institutions procedure which influences the institutions of government and the political system that frequently leads to institutional decay.

There is no gain in saying that political corruption is the exploitation of political authority to clinch and accumulate clandestine gain in order to stick with the power. In essence, this is a form of corruption engendered by assemblage of people that one way or the other gain ground and link to the political godfather. The stance of political godfatherism as the start all, be all and known all the strategies and techniques otherwise known as game of blood is the highest level of corruption in the political theory.

Therefore, political corruption is similar to corruption of greed as it affects the manner in which decisions are manipulated in political institution with rules of procedure and distort the institution of government [2]. Consequently, Keeper [3] examines the terrible nature of corruption in politics and came to conclusion that, in spite of prerequisite and various experimental to checkmate political institution from being corrupt through different anticorruption campaigns none has succeeded in reducing let alone eliminates corruption from contemporary politics.

Conversely, this concept of democracy in Nigeria is totally different from how people in other country assimilate it. The reason being that, democratic system of government in Nigeria does not allow the general public to derive from government because there is viaduct bridge between government and the people. Meanwhile, it is essential to know that democracy is a system of government in which the people control

decision making. According to Omotola [4] democracy is a system of government that ensures that power belong to the people.

Apparently, the country witness a lot of tragic events since independent but efforts to establish a just and efficient administration have been frustrated by corruption because this vicious act exists in every surface of our society. To this effect, all ministries have witness cases of fraudulent and corruption one way or the other in socio-political life most especially during the administration of former president Goodluck Jonathan in which all of his political caucus have been found with different cases of corruption.

Despite the sonorous agenda of President Buhari led administration on the solution to put Nigeria's economy back to normal and to cripple the influence of corrupt politician through substantial programmes such as fight against corruption, kill corruption before it kills you, change start with me and many others, yet the proper understanding of the meaning of corruption and its moral implications are important in order to redeem the problems that go with corruption.

However, the disastrous impact of political corruption in Nigeria is not only about the deception of election but also thrust some politicians to maneuver from entire promising manifesto to criminal policies.

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This paper uses religious perspective to examine the role of political henchman in the economic meltdown.

## Statement of the Problem

It is evident that political corruption was entrenched in Nigeria by political potentiality of splinter group known as 'Political Cabal' formed by group of influential people to petrify others. According to this political institution, democracy which is the government of the people by the people and for the people has changed to a system of government structured by Political cabal with the power of some people formed by the influential people to intimidate other people.

Meanwhile, political corruption has become one of the implacable problems plaguing social, political and economic growth in Nigeria. This can be ascertain through the assessment of Eni et al. [5] who was of opinion that, the scourge of corruption is manifested in youth restiveness, social insecurity, conflict, social uprisings, civil wars to mention few. According to him, this requires urgent attention in order to rescue Nigeria from imminent political collapse.

Meanwhile the pact of political corruption is the major encumbrance declines core democratic mechanisms that lead to underdevelopment and economic depression in Nigeria. In the light of this, corruption is a contagious disease which spread severely into the framework of Nigeria polity. To this effect, all government institution in Nigeria has turned into a corrupted enterprise where instead of holding power in trust for the people, they held power for their self-centeredness and political egoism [6].

This Political corruption is the major spectrum brings about recession of economy in Nigeria. Therefore, the study accentuates forms of corruption in Nigeria such as giving and receiving bribes, budget peddling, inflation of contracts and later abandoned without consequential fear, abuse of public property, pilfering of government fund into private accounts, Misappropriation of allocation, Money laundry by public officers, as well as using proxy names to open account or buy opulent property.

## Literature Review

The meaning of corruption gives indescribable impression to academic patronage as many scholars in politics dispute on what meaning should be given to it because of various forms of corrupt practice have been manifesting in societies [7]. In essence, corruption is the abuse of influence, exploitation of power, misuse of authority and mismanagement of public fund by the individual or government official through which the entrusted office end up with Malthusian theory [6].

Edoh [8] pointes to the negative effect of corruption to have affected political stability in Nigeria in such a way that both political parties and electoral process have been plagued with corrupt practices and electoral irregularities which include violence, stuffing of ballot boxes, rigging, intimidation and elimination of contender rivalry, bribery of electoral officials and party agents in order to have a free hand to change result at polling boots.

Eni et al. [5] admits that, it is apparently clear that politics in Nigeria has been conversely changed to the opposite of visage in other developed country. The reason being that Nigeria politicians are still in the backward in terms of political credibility that swallow up with violence, political corruption, greed, unfulfilled promises, tribalism and intimidation. In the light of this, Olarinmoye [9] confirms that political parties are formed, structure and control by the godfather and political

henchman in the society who believe that control government and political power should be their clandestine gain which prompt them to pursue interest that are parochial, self centered and unsophisticated to the object of democracy.

As a result of this assertion, political corruption can be bifurcated in to two divisions, either misuse of government power to embezzle and accumulate wealth which simply known as kleptocracy or using state allocation to preserve power for political ally and for party functionality which known as political gombeeism. However, it is necessary to comprehend that the political system in Nigeria has been faulty and corrupt. This is manifest in different sectors across the country thereby causing poverty, incessant violence and drastic reduction of peaceful coexistence Onukwufor [10].

Kew [11] is of opinion that Nigeria government remains distance from serving the interest of its people. According to him, politics at all level are dominated by powerful mandarin who built vast patronage networks in political offices to expand their personal fortunes. These leaders have unabashed mind to disregard the rule of law which lead to lack of independent judiciary ad legislature [12]. Meanwhile, the political gladiators constantly manipulate the people and political processes to advance their selfish agenda while the society remains pauperized and the people wallowing in abject poverty [13].

However, Onukwufor [10] reiterates that, a lot of Nigeria politicians have deviated from their public role into making wrong choices for their private ends which have bad consequence on the country's developmental process and thus led the country into state of poverty in economic meltdown.

In essence, this paper argues that political corruption need implicit and explicit attention not only because it serves as a hazardous encumbrance which obstruct the effective agenda but also as a major stumbling block for achieving sustainable development in Nigeria. Altruistically, this research is of relevance as part of effort in fighting corruption and strengthening the economy meltdown in Nigeria, this paper therefore proffers apt solution to the formation of political corruption through the enlightenment of *Qur'anic* perception and the justification of *Islamic* scholars.

## Conceptual forms of Political Corruption in Nigeria

Corruption is the major incommodious predicaments distressed Nigeria in this 21<sup>st</sup> century [6]. In essence, this corrupt act is the exploitation of power by the government officials for illicit and private gain. Further to, political corruption involved any function between private and public sectors through which confidential goods are illegitimately transformed into private regarding payoffs.

As a result, Gray et al. [14] characterized act of corruption as bribery and extortion that necessarily involve two parties to carry out the deal of fraud and embezzlement. However, the forms of political corruption in Nigeria are varying from one state to the other depending upon the modus operandi and the strategy adopted to hypnotize general public, the most common form of corruption in Nigeria includes.

### Bribery

Bribery is a fragrance ingredient in the hand of politicians in Nigeria which is as useful as the essence of salt in the chowder soup. In fact, some of political henchmen in Nigeria propound that, bribery is the secret key to open door of success. Meanwhile, in the terminology of law, according to Mahtabi et al. [15] bribery simply means financial

output giving to appointed officer or unofficial or municipality in order to do administrative tasks.

In respect of *Islāmic* law, the stance of *Rashwah* (bribery) is any illegitimate present or gift provide by the pessimistic shakedown to either mollify or placate person in charge to return favor. Simply put, bribery is the money or other package of item given to someone in return of either legal or illegal favor. It may be a conductor on the lookout for freedom from police to boycott necessary inspection, it may be between convicted prosecutor and the judge to get detestable judgment or between contractor and entrepreneurship as well as unusual deal between employer and the job seeker to uphold available slot to mention few. Meanwhile, the prophet Muhammad SAW condemned giver and receiver of bribery. In the light of this, *Qur'an* says;

*O you who have believed, do not consume one another's wealth unjustly but only [in lawful] business by mutual consent. And do not kill yourselves [or one another]. Indeed, Allah is to you ever Merciful Qur'an 4:29.*

Bribery is totally forbidden in *Islām* because it is a form of package used to legalize illegal act that could either undermine the right of others or caused mischief to the innocent people in a given society. That it is while the glorious *Qur'an* unequivocally charged Muslims not to ride roughshod over the right of others with the aid of bribe, thus

*And do not consume one another's wealth unjustly or send it [in bribery] to the rulers in order that [they might aid] you [to] consume a portion of the wealth of the people in sin, while you know [it is unlawful] Qur'an 2:188.*

### Budget padding

Padding of budget is another political corruption that dastardly destroy Nigeria budgetary and financial plan. This form of political corruption has being existing since the adoption of democracy itself but recent come to limelight through the confession of the suspended chairman of appropriation Honorable Abdulumumin Jibril, the Kano lawmaker who reported to have confessed about padding of 2016 budget, according to him

*the padding scandal involved ten principal officers including the speaker Yakubu Dogara and his deputy among others to have share ten billion naira in fraudulence. He regrettably agreed to have benefited 650 million as the office maintenance allowance for the members of the house of representative [16].*

Despite the fact that more than 80% Nigerian were crying in starvation because of economic recession, yet some mischievous sprite politicians are sharing huge amount of money that enough to revitalize a whole state. It is pertinent to be recalled that *Qur'an* outlaw unfair accretion of wealth as mention in

*Qur'an 9:35 thus: On the Day when heat will be produced out of that (wealth) in the fire of Hell, and with it will be branded their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs, their flanks, and their backs.- "This is the (treasure) which ye buried for yourselves: taste ye, then, the (treasures) ye buried!" [17] Qur'an 9:35.*

By implication, *Islamic* philosophy revealed the gravity of sin in padding any official document that has been signed and countersigned by two advocates involves in the deal. Whoever deceitful or secretly make change, altered, amend or modify agreement that has been well preserved will incur the wrath of *Allāh* upon himself in the day of accountability. In line with the consequence of altering the conserved

document for any materials gain, Almighty *Allāh* illustrate the reward with the longest verse in the glorious

*Qur'an*, thus“*Let no scribe refuse to write as Allah has taught him. So let him write and let the one who has the obligation dictate. And let him fear Allah, his Lord, and not leave anything out of it. But if the one who has the obligation is of limited understanding or weak or unable to dictate himself, then let his guardian dictate in justice. And bring to witness two witnesses from among your men. And if there are not two men [available], then a man and two women from those whom you accept as witnesses - so that if one of the women errs, then the other can remind her. And let not the witnesses refuse when they are called upon. And do not be [too] weary to write it, whether it is small or large, for its [specified] term. That is more just in the sight of Allah and stronger as evidence and more likely to prevent doubt between you, except when it is an immediate transaction which you conduct among yourselves. For [then] there is no blame upon you if you do not write it. And take witnesses when you conclude a contract. Let no scribe be harmed or any witness. For if you do so, indeed, it is [grave] disobedience in you. And fear Allah. And Allah teaches you. And Allah is Knowing of all things” Qur'an 2:282.*

### Inflation of contract with bounce back technique

This is another political strategy used by Nigeria politician to build up gargantuan wealth. Bounce back technique involve the use of unwarranted contract as a means of gratifying political gangster to embezzle public money because of their financial support during campaign, psychological influence or logistic support.

This act of political corruption is affecting the growth and development of capital project in Nigeria. Awarding a constructing contract to the person who does not know anything about construction or giving supply of office equipment to somebody who was happen to be bricklaying, this is in fact contradict the code of contract review but politician will tell their ally that, just go and do part of it and jail the rest.

By implication, *Islāmic* teachings elaborate the justification on the theory of end justifies the means, because Allah will ask where and how you gathered your wealth. In the light of this,

*Qur'an* explained thus,“*O you who have believed, indeed many of the scholars and the monks devour the wealth of people unjustly and avert [them] from the way of Allah. And those who hoard gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah - give them tidings of a painful punishment” Qur'an 4:34.*

As a result of this scandalous fraudulence act of politicians, some state in the country strategically used the same deficiency or insufficient hitch that causing a setback to the state as logic of campaign. The point being, since 1999, some of the dreadful roads are still the same thing despite the fact that it has been contracted to different politician and they embezzled the money without query because of the bounce back strategies.

### Nepotistic factionalism

Political nepotism is a system of government whereby well-equipped contract is approved for or high rank position is given to selected people with the preference of the political influence due to close relationship. This form of corruption is responsible for the incessant predicaments bedeviling Nigeria democracy. Through this obnoxious selection many graduate have been rendered jobless because they don't have godfather, many contractors have turn to beggars simply because

they do not have link to the government official, many officials in the system were not promoted for donkey years because the government ally and close relative has overtook their opportunities.

In addition to the above given clarification, nepotism or favourism is the imposition of leader or political appointment without due process be it family member, ally, political crew, or relative against the will of the general public. Nepotism is a criminal offense in Islam because it is but creates a division against humanity. In essence, *Islām* forbid any inward and outward appearance of nepotism in leadership not only because it only favors closed relative to get position of responsibilities but also undermine right of other people who can hold the position better. As a result of this, *Qur'an* emphatically submits that,

*"O mankind, indeed We have created you from single soul, male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted"* *Qur'an* 49:13.

Against the will of the creator, nepotism as a system of government responsible for the brutal violence and opposition remonstrations that predominant in Nigeria because political ruling party in Nigeria build up their government caucus like a family member. In apparent circumstances, the incumbent government cannot convict the illicit member irrespective of the criminal charges due to political oath of allegiance between them. This political Conundrum is one of the principal dilemmas demote the furtherance of democratic system of government in Nigeria. By implication,

*Qur'an* says, Say, "Have you considered your 'partners' whom you invoke besides Allah? Show me what they have created from the earth, or have they partnership [with Him] in the heavens? Or have We given them a book so they are [standing] on evidence therefrom? [No], rather, the wrongdoers do not promise each other except delusion" *Qur'an* 35:40.

Meanwhile, whoever responsible for the splitting up the unity of a nation because of love and affection or instigates a division of humanity with ephemeral power, to have forcefully appointed a person in charge of social-political responsibility without due process to lead will probably incur madden of Allah upon their self and such nation will not grow.

### Electoral fraud

Electoral fraud is another abyss turning down the stance of democracy in Nigeria through which political deception is used to outmatch election result. Meanwhile, electoral corruption in Nigeria is the process of subversion of electoral process by individuals who are greedy for personal enrichment that electoral success underwrites with control of political apologist [9].

As a result of this, Nigeria cannot organize credible free and fair election for the high-quality and determined leader because electoral crew has been mastermind by political godfatherism. Despite the fact that Independent Electoral Commission (INEC), is an institution that has autonomous power to make final decision on the elected leader, yet their control is under the influence of some political principality of Nigeria (PPN). Omolusi confirms that political parties are interested in actualize electoral and political gains that can only be accomplished to satisfaction through the effective deployment of the parties' organization resources at the local, intermediate and national level.

In the light of this, *Qur'an* 2:42 condemns any form of delinquent fraudulence and dishonest that can lead to misappropriation of truth.

That why the most High said,

*And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it].* *Q2:42*

Another verse also read thus, *"And who is more unjust than one who invents a lie about Allah or denies the truth when it has come to him? Is there not in Hell a [sufficient] residence for the disbelievers?"* *Q29:68*

To this effect, Awopaju [18] propounds that Nigeria has enormous challenges concerning election which as a result made Nigeria democracy an optical illusion among the member nations in the world. According to him,

*"Nigeria always emphasize that electoral procedure by which political office holders will procure political power should be crystal clear from all sort of corruption and fair because as soon as one get to office through fraud and rigging of elections and through the employment of violence, he negates democracy and creates avoidable crack in the entity"*

### Open account with proxy name

This is another form of corruption entangled with money laundry and fake account that recently exposed in Nigeria through abet of Bank Verification Number (BVN). Many politicians put forward a subterfuge tactic of money laundry through which huge amount of money will be domiciled into the bank account of a person such as houseboy, housemaid, gateman, platonic friend or their children and relative who does not has signatory right to the account.

The role of EFCC towards money laundry and war against corruption is worthy of mentioning. Due to political stigma and fear of EFCC, some of this crooked politician berried billion of Naira inside their suck-away, while other bought colossal property in name of their children. Meanwhile, such money is enough to bail out Nigeria from economic recession. Some of these baron politicians have been caught while many others at large with their behemoth money hidden in an unsuspected place. That why Quran says;

*"And let not those who covetously withhold of the gifts which Allah Hath given them of His Grace, think that it is good for them: Nay, it will be the worse for them: soon shall the things which they covetously withheld be tied to their necks Like a twisted collar, on the Day of Judgment. To Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do [17]"* *Qur'an* 3:180.

In the light of this, *Islām* completely forbid hoarding of money, acquisitiveness and covetousness which engulfed the mind of our politician in Nigeria. In fact, such act are explained at various places in the glorious

*Qur'an* such as, *Qur'an* 2:177, , *Qur'an* 2:262-263, *Qur'an* 2:270-273, , *Quran* 17:26-28 *Qur'an* 47:38, *Qur'an* 47:7, *Qur'an* 61:10-11, *Qur'an* 9:35 among many others.

### Suggestions

- The ruling party must demonstrate transparent, integrity and accountabilities commitment to convince the general public of advantage of democracy.
- War against corruption must not be selective if federal government wanted to curtail the wing of corrupt people

because some criminal politician are trying to mingle the privilege of being ruling party ally to escape conviction while opposition party are being hunt down to their nail.

- Political authority should honor their integrity to avoid any form of bribe consumption to enable less privilege to benefit from democratic system to be function.
- Federal government should review the act of money laundry, this amendment is necessary because political commando in Nigeria believed that even if they were caught with public money they will just return it and go Scott free.
- The judiciary should support government in fighting against corruption; they should not assist any politician to take legal action against government official to delay justice.
- All the politician should fear Allah (God) who will ask them to account for their position and wealth.

## Conclusion

The emergence of political corruption in Nigeria destroys social-economic and political value of the nation as a whole and Ipso facto undermines sustainable development of the country. These corrupt political teammates transform political ascendancy in Nigeria into corrupt enterprises where instead of holding power in trust for the people they held power in trust of political contusion.

This study discovered that political Cabal in Nigeria has gone beyond control to have implicates three tiers of government with diversity of fraudulence and deceptive inclination.

Regardless to the opinion of Nwaobi [19], who revealed that Nigeria is one of the countries where source of wealth is of no concern to the public and government. Influential politicians who are known to be corrupt are regularly courted and honor by communities, religious body, social clubs and other private organization.

It is pertinent to be mentioned that big men are the greatest criminals in Nigeria especially politicians that are striving subserviently through criminal viaduct for the pursuit of political ambition. Ogege [20] submits to the fact despite the strenuous attempt of past and present administration to combat corruption, the problem remains persistently endemic with disastrous consequences for the Nigerian society. To this end, Quran says;

*Do they not travel through the earth, and see what was the End of those before them, - though they were superior to them in strength? Nor is Allah to be frustrated by anything whatever in the heavens or on earth: for He is All-Knowing. All-Powerful* [17] Qur'an 35:44.

The verse cited above is enough for the current politicians to ruminate on the prehistoric format of political system of government in Nigeria during the era of Obafemi Awolo and his contemporaries. This concludes that the only solution to crippled the widespread of corrupt people is to go after Cabal of political criminal and bring them to book, if federal government could able to bring three or four of them to book the rest will fear and the nation will return to normalcy.

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