



## **An Assessment of Corrupt Practices in Nigeria's Political System: A Rawlsian Approach**

CHIDI PAUL ORJI

University of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Umuagwo, Imo State, Nigeria

TIJANI TAIWO EGBERONGBE

Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria

PETER DAMIAN EZECHI CHUKWU

Gregory University, Uturu Abia State, Nigeria

RUFUS GODSWILL NWAGBARA

Babcock University, Ilisan Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria

**Abstract.** It is no longer only conjecture that corruption exists in Nigerian society; rather, it is now seen as a national embarrassment. In contemporary Nigerian society, it is among the primary issues brought on by the persistent corruption. Many attempts to halt the spread of this beast have been made at different times throughout the history of our nation. The research paper employed conceptual, critical, and analytical methodologies to try to answer the question of what Rawls' ethical philosophy would suggest and recommend about the effects of corruption on contemporary Nigerian society. According to Rawls, the primary concerns of ethical philosophy are proper human behavior and the underlying tenets of society. Rawls contends that rather than being coercive or punitive in nature, policies should be created that are primarily preventative. Codes of ethics that specify appropriate conduct for both individuals and governments are examples of such policies.

**Keywords:** John Rawls, Corruption, Ethical Philosophy, Nigeria

### **1. Introduction**

Nigeria is certainly wealthy in both people and natural resources. However, the poverty there is partly caused by corruption and dishonest behavior, as well as the consequences for the country's aspirations for

development. As stated by Adefarasin (2009), "the phenomenon of corruption seems to be the unofficial ideology, the universal language spoken and understood in all parts of Nigeria." This sums up the danger of corruption. One of the primary problems Nigeria is now facing is corruption. Corruption remains a deadly disease in Nigeria. Corruption has led to the breakdown of the economy, the infrastructure, the health and education systems, and other aspects of day-to-day existence. Numerous Nigerians are still impacted by it. The Nigerian Christian Church cannot claim to be independent of it. What facets of Nigerian society are free from corruption? Does it fall under the purview of our government's executive branch, legislative branch (such as the Senate, House of Representatives, State Assemblies, Local Governments), judicial branch (such as courts), uniformed establishment (such as the military, police, immigration and customs services, prisons, civil and administrative services, education and health sectors, or private sector? The entire nation is facing problems that require immediate attention, if we are not deceiving ourselves. The church and all Nigerians must decide to eradicate corruption in Nigeria at all costs (Emenyeonu, 2007).

The detrimental nature of corruption, according to Shehu (2006), includes givers and takers who are unable to acknowledge the existence of corruption as

well as cases of bribery and extortion. Its complexity also means that we still don't completely comprehend the extent of its impacts. If corruption is a complicated issue, then a thorough comprehension of its impacts must take into account both the individuals involved and the particular circumstances surrounding it. Corruption, whether on a major or local scale, is seen to be more prevalent in countries with lax enforcement of the law. Additionally, corruption might be either active or passive.

Whatever the classification, it has its own contextual consequences. According to a related development, corruption is a real issue that affects most Africans. It includes overt theft, embezzlement of public funds or other wrongdoing of state property, nepotism and favor-giving to personal acquaintances, and the misuse of public power to demand benefits and payments (Desta 2006). Political corruption is the illegal, immoral, and sanctioned use of one's official or political position for one's own benefit or profitability. Political corruption uses the word "political" to imply public affairs. With its organized public institutions, the state is a human community. The word refers to the state's official assets, resources, fortunes, enterprises, and institutions. An official may engage in corruption against the state or its agencies in order to further personal or private advantage. This is referred to as political corruption. The word "political" therefore describes something that is governmental, public (as opposed to private), or administrative. It implies that an act of corruption directed at a private or non-governmental group will not be considered political corruption. John Rawls' Ethical Philosophy as a Solution to Endless Corruption in Contemporary Nigerian Society is what the research aims to explore in order to achieve this. In order to provide solutions, the research will attempt to apply this theory to the problem as it relates specifically to Nigeria.

### 1.1 A Brief Description of Rawls' Theory of Justice

Rawls bases his ethical theory on what he calls the conditions of justice. Rawls argues that when these criteria are satisfied, the issue of justice typically arises. Objective circumstances and subjective circumstances are the two types of conditions of justice that Rawls distinguished. These circumstances, in Rawls' view, are what enable cooperation and make it necessary in day-to-day interactions. (1) According to Rawls, the objective circumstances of justice are comprised of three elements: a shared physical location, a justifiable lack of resources, and the capacity to help or harm. The two elements that make up subjective circumstances of justice are disagreement and mutual indifference. Rawls argues

that this is a collaborative effort for both parties' gain. The distribution of the venture's benefits is determined by the guiding concept of fairness, according to Garcia (2005:14–15). Thus, in Rawls' theory, we may substitute "justice" for "morality" and "morally" for "justly." The two guiding principles of Rawls' theory are the original position and an egalitarian notion of justice. It is a process for assessing and justifying possible justice principles in order to determine which of them is the most logical. The vision is liberal in that it aims to bring the concepts of equality and liberty together in a single paradigm, but it is controversial in that it stresses some liberties more than others and promotes a particular kind of equality.

The Equal Liberty Principle is the first of Rawls's principles, while the second is occasionally divided into two parts: Equitable Treatment of All defended by the First Principles. According to Rawls (1999:53), these include the following: political liberty, which includes the freedom to vote, hold public office, and participate in free speech and assembly; freedom of conscience and thought; freedom of the person, which includes the freedom from physical assault and dismemberment (including psychological oppression); the right to own personal property; and freedom from arbitrary arrest and seizure. The objective is to safeguard civil rights that may very well be enshrined in a political constitution. Rawls argues that the Principle of Equal Liberty is one of the principles that self-interested rational persons behind the curtain of ignorance would choose to structure society around because society is egalitarian and every individual has an equal right to the greatest extent of liberties that are compatible with similar liberties for all. All applicants must be allowed to compete for jobs and benefits under reasonable competition, according to the second principle, the Principle of Equal Opportunity. "Fair equality of opportunity may be contrasted with formal equality of opportunity of career open to talent," Garcia states (2005: 14).

Regardless of their experience or suitability for the post, a position is considered to be in accordance with the concept when it is open to all interested parties. These jobs include those in universalities, desired employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities that necessitate financial access. It is a violation of formal equality of opportunity when benefits are given out in any manner other than based on the credentials of the candidates. In a culture where only children from affluent homes may develop the skills and other qualities that make them good candidates, this criterion may be met. It is necessary to establish institutions that guarantee all individuals with similar intrinsic abilities and goals an equal opportunity to

effectively compete for jobs that award above-average shares of core social goods. To ensure equitable equality of opportunity, this is required. In a sense, the perfect example of a meritocracy is a society that maintains equitable equality of opportunity. According to the Difference Principle, social and economic inequalities should be designed to maximize benefits for the most disadvantaged person. This concept ensures that people can acquire privileged positions without faced prejudice on the basis of trivial requirements. Fundamental liberties are further protected by the added condition that the first principle has strict lexical precedence over the second.

This shows that one cannot accept a lower level of civil liberty when doing so would greatly help the most disadvantaged elements of society in terms of fair equality of opportunity or other goods, nor can one trade fundamental rights for advantages under another justice principle. People who are "free and rational person could choose or accept as a fair basis for social cooperation," in Rawls' words (1971:11), have to decide on this in a "initial situation." The principle of diversity is also strictly linguistically subordinated to the nondiscriminatory idea of fair equality of opportunity.

Only when economic expansion produces an atmosphere that permits individuals to effectively exercise their fundamental rights- and not previously- is this concept appropriate. According to Rawls, inequalities will always exist among the constituents of any particular social system. These differences include social, political, economic, and natural status differences. The morality (or justice) principle that Rawls feels ought to direct human connections in an ideal society may thus be determined by proposing a "original position" in which individuals congregate and agree to adopt a set of rules to regulate their social activities.

The original position, according to Rawls and Kant, is a hypothetical one in which individuals are free to choose morally righteous values without prejudice since they are living in the "veil of ignorance," or without knowing who they are or where they belong into society. Each individual must make a "rationally prudential choice" about the kind of social organization they will join as humans are only permitted to have a broad awareness of "life and society," according to Rawls. Man is forced to adopt a global perspective that is closely related to ethical reasoning in the lack of any specific self-knowledge. In order to establish the "original position," Rawls presents a theoretical "veil of ignorance." The evil of ignorance allows a particular conception of justice to be chosen by consensus because no one knows, first

and foremost, where they fit into society, their class, their position, or their social status, nor do they know how their natural abilities and endowments, such as intelligence and strength, will be distributed. Arneson (2007) claims that the original position argument exemplified a fair procedurals standard of justification, meaning that what is right is what people who subscribe to an ideal procedure would accept as right.

Additionally, no one comprehends his moral compass, his well-thought-out life plan, or even the distinctive features of his character, such his pessimism, risk aversion, or liability. (1971, Rawls, 140–141) According to Rawls, the primary objective of the original agreement was to preserve the principles of justice for the basic welfare of society. The principles of justice are determined by the choice that rational persons would make in this hypothetical scenario of equal liberty. In a starting position of equality, these are the ideas that free and rational individuals concerned with advancing their own interests would accept as defining the essential conditions of their partnership (Rawls, 1971:11–12).

Drawing from this assertion, Rawls's hypothetical situation enables individuals to make decisions based on a generally recognized framework that states: a. All individuals have an equal right to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme for all; and b. Only those political liberties, and only those liberties, are to be guaranteed their value in this scheme. b. In order for social and economic differences to be considered favorable, they must be primarily advantageous to the most disadvantaged elements of society and must be connected to employment and positions that are available to everyone under fair equality of opportunity. According to Rawls's theory, an individual's advantages are represented by their ownership of multifunctional commodities, often known as main social goods. These goods, in Rawls' view, are those that a person would logically want more of rather than less of given everything else they desire. To acquire and execute two moral powers—the capacity to embrace and pursue a conception of the good and the ability to interact with others on fair terms—any rational person would prioritize and strive for fundamental goods, according to (Rawls, 1996:106 and 178. The core social goods are thought to be the fundamental freedoms and rights safeguarded by the first portion of the second principle, which includes fair equality of opportunity, freedom of movement and choice of work, income and wealth, and the social foundations of self-respect (Rawls 1996:180).

A society is composed of individuals who come together to construct it, according to Rawls. A society is said to be well-ordered if all of its members share the same moral and ethical values and are aware that the core social institutions typically uphold these values. When considering justice, Rawls argues that what is most essential is the basic structure of society—the ways that significant institutions like the family, the political system, and the economic system interact to affect people's prospects in life. As a result, the principles of justice are supposed to control society's basic structure. Furthermore, social justice imposes ancillary duties on individuals: if there are just institutions, they must abide by their rules; if not, they must endeavor to create just institutions, to the degree that doing so is likely to be successful and does not put the striving individual at undue risk. This implies that any set of ideals that are universally embraced must also be equitable for all people, as they wouldn't be embraced by everyone if they weren't equitable for everyone. Considering this,

## **2. An Examination and Evaluation of John Rawls' Theory of Justice**

A Theory of Justice, his landmark work that was released in 1971 and sparked important discussions in political theory and ethics. It is crucial to talk about simply the fundamentals of this theory of justice because a thorough discussion is not feasible in the current intellectual endeavor. The goal of Rawls was to develop an alternative to utilitarianism for the idea of justice. According to Rawls, who believes utilitarianism poses a threat to society, any theory, no matter how beautiful or cost-effective, must be rejected or altered if it is false, and any laws or institutions, no matter how effective and well-organized, must be changed or eliminated if they are unfair. Therefore, justice rejects the idea that a larger benefit shared by all justifies the sacrifice of freedom for individuals. It does not permit the greater total of benefits received by many to offset the sacrifices made by a select few. Truth and justice are unwavering as they are the primary qualities of human endeavor (Rawls, 1971:10).

Hence, Rawls' political and moral views are in line with those of social contract theorists like as Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. He began by proving that fairness is a fundamental virtue of all social institutions and that society is governed by a social contract. Having studied under Kant, Rawls clearly framed his objective as Kantian by stating that in order for justice to prevail, a set of moral precepts must be generally accepted. The Kantian interpretation of Rawls's work has been disputed, though; this will be

covered in more detail later in this chapter. The fact that Rawls's work draws philosophical resources from both the rationalist and sentimentalist enlightenments, according to Frazer (2007), enriches it. When it comes to enlightenment, Immanuel Kant represents the rationalist school, whereas David Hume and Jean Jacques Rousseau represent the sentimentalist school.

Furthermore, Frazer clarified that it is useful to comprehend their opposing conceptions of moral and political reflection as incorporating two distinct parts in order to appreciate Rawls's debt to both the sentimentalist and the rationalist Enlightenment. To use Hume's most well-known distinction, they provide both a theory of what "is" and a theory of what "ought to be"—a descriptive moral psychology that explains what happens when we reflect on morality and politics, and a normative psychology that explains why the standard we arrive at through such reflection needs to be regarded as authoritative. In contrast to sentimentalism, which views contemplation as including both feeling and imagination, rationalism views reflection as involving just logical knowledge. Although rationalism views normativity as authoritative legislation by the faculty of reason here linked with our genuine, free self, sentimentalism views normativity as the reflective stability of a mind capable of bearing its own comprehensive survey. Frazier 2007:4

## **3. Assessment and Reactions to Rawls's Theory of Justice**

Many philosophers have interpreted and questioned Rawls' theory of justice in different ways. We'll talk about the fundamental viewpoint and objections here. These consist of the egalitarian objection of social justice principles, the liberal interpretation and examination, and the Marxist interpretation and assessment.

### **3.1 A Liberal Discussion of Rawls's Justice Theory**

Liberalism generally addresses questions about the nature of society and the essence of the individual. Individualist social analyses are typically linked to it. Over the past few decades, collectivist interpretations of liberal society have gained popularity again under the moniker "collectivism to support communitarian." According to Sandel's well-known critique of Rawls from 1982, liberalism had to be predicated on an abstract idea of people as distinct individuals with commitments, values, and interests that belong to but never comprise the self. However, the "liberal-communitarian" discussion eventually entailed extensive moral, political, and sociological

disagreements over the characteristics of communities as well as the rights and obligations of their constituents; the debate's central question was what liberal selves were. Sandel believed that Rawls's liberalism's fundamental fault was its unrealistically abstract conception of the self, as Rawls's theory of justice can only be meaningful if the individual adopts the notion of the pure autonomous chooser. According to Rawls, it makes sense to distinguish people who possess a pure capacity for choice. These persons may reject any or all of their attachments and ideals while still maintaining their identity. According to Sandel, a theory of the person, or more specifically, a theory of the moral subject, must address the concerns at one end of a theory of justice.

### 3.2 Marxist Examination of Rawls's Justice Theory

Isham (2010) offers three main arguments of Rawls's principles of justice from a Marxist standpoint. The first is that the concept of justice is entirely ideological and aims to justify social inequality. When Marxists assert that views about justice are ideological, they may be referring to notions that are exclusive to a class or social group or that serve to legitimize a dominating political authority. The capitalist class, the bourgeoisie, or the owners of the means of production would be the specific social class in question for a Marxist; however, a close examination of Rawls's principle of justice favors the proletariat over the bourgeoisies, and their focus on extolling production over distribution (a tendency towards historical materialism) forms the basis of their ideological argument. Rawls is accused of ignoring a fundamental inequality between capitalists and workers, to which Rawls' theory suggests that workers control the means of production (2001:139).

According to Rawls, wealth and authority are both subject to the difference principles because "the second (principle of justice) hold that social and economic inequalities, for example inequalities of wealth and authority, are just only if they result in the compensating benefits for everyone, and in particular for the least advantaged members of society" (Rawls, 1971:14-15). A Rawlsian might also argue that if there is a fundamental inequality (in decision-making or income) between capitalist and worker, the contracting parties in the original position behind the veil of ignorance would not choose a society in which the capitalist-worker relationship existed. A Rawlsian could accept the class interest argument and ask how classes band together to change their historical circumstances. Thirdly, there is the question of whether or not justice talk is useful. Marx is credited by some with arguing that class interest should take

precedence over calls for social change, as he believed that ethical claims and well-developed arguments were of little to no value to the ruling class. In the fight for social transformation, appeals to justice and ethics have played a significant role and will continue to do so. Additionally, it should be noted that these appeals, though they might not accomplish much on their own, play a crucial role in fostering action and strengthening the collective will.

### 3.3 An Egalitarian Examination of Rawls's Theory of Justice

All people are, in principle, equal and ought to have the same social, political, and economic rights and opportunities, according to egalitarian principles. In line with Rawls, the difference principle, also known as the democratic interpretation of equality, is a strongly egalitarian concept in that it holds that an equal distribution should be chosen unless there is a distribution that benefits both parties. Although Nozick agree with Rawls that utilitarianism is not a sufficient theory for morality, Nozick's "Entitlement Theory" (1974) criticizes the procedures by which Rawls's rule of justice is arrived at with a strong criticism pointing at economic and political concerns in Rawls's principle of justice. In contrast to process principles, the fundamental claim is that Rawls' principles can only produce end result principles. Furthermore, because Rawls' conception of justice is not merely normative, critics like as Amartya Sen, Leonard Choptiany, and Olivier Johnson contend that his logical reasons cannot be really binding as principles of justice. According to Sen (2008:335), Rawls's theory of justice begins with the demand for fairness in order to arrive at his principles of justice. The main focus of this theory is the notion of mutual obligations for social cooperation due to shared benefits, which is the mainstream in theories of justice.

He does, however, point out several shortcomings in Rawls' theory of justice. Rather than focusing on how to make society fairer, Rawls' theory of justice is accused of essentially guessing on the characteristics and requirements of the perfectly just society. Sen states that "this" focus lends a transcendental quality to the philosophy of justice. Sen calls Rawls' approach "transcendental institutionalism" and contends that any workable theory of justice must start by acknowledging that there are often conflicts between ideals. Sen maintains that justice may be achieved in conflicting situations by weighing the available options, negating the need for Rawls' ideal conception of justice (Sen, 2008). He goes on to say that while the transcendental approach to justice is not new—it dates at least to Thomas Hobbes' works from the

seventeenth century—recent ideas have significantly strengthened its support.

The character of a completely just society as viewed from the standpoint of fairness is thoroughly examined by Rawls in his study of "justice as fairness." While some political philosophers have adopted a different stance regarding the needs of justice" (Sen, 2008). Cohen (1992) claims in his *Egalitarian Critique of Rawls* that socialist egalitarians view equality as a means of improving the condition of the poor rather than as a core principle. For example, Rawls tends to believe that the transcendental method is the only one that can help us comprehend what justice is. There is a significant disagreement between Nozick and Thomas Nagel about the significance of entitlements and historically grounded rights, while their departures from Rawls are more nuanced (Sen, 2008:337-338). The second is the realization of the fundamental liberty principle, which states that the Difference Principle should regulate how social goods are distributed. Inequalities should only be justified if and when they are required to improve the least fortunate people's circumstances; in fact, it would be illogical to reject them in favor of strict equality among people if certain wealth and power disparities would frequently improve everyone's lot (Rawls, 1971:546).

#### **4. Political Discourse and Ethical Standards**

The question of whether politics and ethics are related has been argued by philosophers and politicians from the beginning of intellectual thought. The issue of where to put those crucial ideas that are immediately relevant to the conversation, such right, good, virtue and vice, individual liberty, and the public interest, was also meant to be addressed. The most important question, however, is how much politics should be governed by accepted moral standards and ideals. This inquiry has given rise to two conflicting points of view. The Aristotelian and Machiavellian schools of thought are two extremes, diametrically opposed factions. Moral virtue, according to Aristotle, is the ultimate aim of all human endeavors, including political activity, since it ultimately ensures the happiness of the individual and the community as a whole. The Machiavellian advice offered to "The Prince," however, asserted that the rise of the concept of morality in politics was not necessary due to either human nature or political mechanisms. He exhorted candidates and political leaders to put politics aside when evaluating the potential impact of morality.

Regardless of one's stance, politics and ethics appear to be related in some manner. Politics and ethics both have a part in guiding and regulating human conduct.

Politics, with the administration of state power at its center, regulates relationships between groups, various socio-political institutions, and the state, whereas ethics regulates individual interactions and group exchanges. The difference between private and public morality in social interactions is indicated by the extent to which these two ideas may be connected in various ways. Every person is a moral being with a private and public existence, according to the message. The distinction between politics and morality was minimal, if it existed at all, in the early theories of politics and ethics. Plato and Aristotle did not distinguish between these two concepts in their moral and political theories. In other words, it is pointless to engage in political activity without defining individuals' roles within it. People's moral position basically justifies the significance of political acts in their lives.

Since "ethics is at the same time politics" in their thoughts, Aristotle believed that politics and personal morality were inseparable. According to Aristotle's teleological philosophy, human activities need to be judged by the results they produce. Happiness for all is the most important thing to him. In his book "The Leviathan," Thomas Hobbes contrasted Aristotle's ideas. People are self-interested, he said. His famous idea of "war of all against all," which he asserted would happen in the natural state and lead to horrible conflict amongst humans, served as an example of this. Hobbes contends that in such a disorderly and conflict-ridden setting, moral and fair norms are out of place (Gareth, 2001). Hobbes' viewpoint was opposed by early intuitionists like as Henry More, Ralph Cudworth, and Samuel Clarke. They hold that morality is objective and universal (Clarke, 1996). Other philosophers, such as Hume and Hutcheson, maintained that moral judgment cannot be founded purely on reason. Moral principles must be central to political activity as politics cannot exist without them. To put it another way, we ought to focus more on the ethical implications of the political choices we make.

#### **5. Corrupt Practices within Nigeria's Politicians**

Members of Nigeria's political decision-makers have been involved in several examples of corruption, some of which are examined in this article. Political leadership class corruption dates back to the colonial era, as was previously mentioned. Corruption has been a part of Nigerian politics since the country's contemporary public service administration was established (Ogbeidi, 2012). The Foster-Sutton Tribunal of Inquiry looked into Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe's role in the operations of the now-defunct African

Continental Bank in 1956. Azikiwe was the premier of the erstwhile Eastern Region. The norm of conduct for public officials states that a government official's private economic interests must be put aside while they hold a position of public trust. Ogbeyi (2012). General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, a former military leader, the late General Sani Abacha, a former head of state, and the late Alhaji Abdulkadir Ahmed, a former governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, were accused by the 1994 Okigbo Panel Report on the Reorganization and Reform of the Central Bank of Nigeria of mismanaging an estimated \$12.4 billion oil windfall between 1988 and 1994 (Ogbeyi, 2012).

The federal government received a summary of the panel's conclusions, which claimed that the regime of General Ibrahim Babangida colluded with top officials from the Central Bank of Nigeria to use the full money for questionable or ineffective projects. Using covert accounts and other means, Babangida's successors persisted in embezzling the country's funds even after he left office in August 1993. According to the Okigbo Report, General Babangida approved the 1988 commitment of 65,000 barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil to finance high-priority projects such Shiroro Hydroelectric Projects, Itakpe Iron Mining, and Ajaokuta Iron & Steel (Ogbeyi, 2012). Political parties have been the main conduits for the spread of corrupt practices in Nigeria, such as extortion and godfatherism. More than N1 billion in bribes were allegedly given to delegates at the ruling People Democratic Party (PDP)'s 2003 Special Convention, where the presidential flag bearer was chosen, on the ninth floor of the Nicon Hilton Hotel in Abuja. The account was also intended to be used to build up reserves and pay off foreign debt. The amount was then increased to 105,000 barrels per day, and then to 150,000 barrels per day at the beginning of 1994 (Adekeye, 2003: 29).

## **6. Assessment of Corruption in Nigeria's Political Structure**

Corrupt practices are a worldwide issue, and no country is completely immune to their terrifying hold. On the other hand, the degree of corruption's prevalence and the people's sincere, committed desire to abolish it are what set one nation apart from another on the perception of corruption index (Ocholor and Basse, 2010). Nigerian society is rife with corruption, which affects both public and private industry and trade, civil society, and politics. Our moral principles and values have deteriorated as a result of this pervasive corruption. Without a basic dependence on ethical principles like justice, transparency, compassion, accountability, and service-oriented

leadership, it emphasizes the pointlessness of trying to create a democratic community. It is an example of a leadership style that puts the vested interests of a small group of individuals ahead of the masses, which philosophers often proclaim to be the cornerstone of political society (Uduigwomen, 2009). Explaining the moral justifications for our actions is the aim of ethics, which encompasses all human activity as long as it is moral. Ethical ideals are based on the metaphysical foundations of man as a rational, free, and morally oriented being who is oriented toward goodness, moral self-actualization, and perfection; as a being with an intrinsic teleological orientation toward God; as a moral agent with an innate moral principle- an innate conscience open to divine and human positive laws; and as a social being who can only be fully satisfied in the context of continuous social interaction.

Nigeria has had corruption since before colonization. A Colonial Government Report (CGR) from 1947 states that the Africans' historical background and public moral beliefs are very different from those of modern Britons. The financial security of the African government worker is an issue. (Okonkwo 2007). Government representatives were charged of misusing monies for their own gain prior to independence (Storey, 1953). Over time, Nigeria's wealth has declined while the standard of life for its citizens has barely increased. Widespread corruption characterized the First Republic, which was headed by Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and President Nnamdi Azikwe. Government employees stole from the public coffers with no repercussions. Federal officials and ministers shamelessly showed off their wealth. In actuality, it seemed like there were no morally upright persons in the First Republic's political leadership. The First Republic Nigerian upper class's political orientation was centered on utilizing politics to achieve their financial objectives, which included earning money and leading comfortable lives. Nigerians had long waited for such a wind of change to free them from the grip of the ruling elite, and the military gained popular support for the coup as a direct result of the First Republic's corruption. Although some important First Republic figures died, the nation celebrated widely (Ogbeyi, 2012). Political leadership is defined as the governing elite in charge of a political entity's business and financial activities.

This is accomplished by setting and influencing policy priorities that affect the territory through a variety of organizations and decision-making mechanisms meant to promote the territory's orderly growth. It may also be considered the human element overseeing a ruled territory's administrative systems. According to Ogbeyi (2012), this encompasses both people who are

in positions of authority inside the government and those who want to become so through elections, coups, appointments, election fraud, conquest, inheritance, or other methods. However, in a broader sense, political leadership encompasses both the ruling elites who directly manage the affairs of a territory and the entire political class that has the ability to influence how government functions, even in the background (Ogbeidi, 2012). Whilst there is no widely acknowledged or comprehensive definition of corrupt action, the bulk of definitions put a significant focus on exploiting public authority or positions for personal benefit. The phenomena is defined as "a weakening of virtue and moral ideas" in a basic lexicon (Lewis 2006). According to the World Bank and Transparency International (TI), a well-known global company that keeps an eye on and fights corruption, corruption is the abuse of public office for one's own benefit or the benefit of a third party.

Political corruption may be broadly defined as immoral action that contravenes the laws of the political system in light of these criteria (Heidenheimer and Johnston, 1993: 6). To put it simply, political corruption may be done to maintain power as well as for individual and group benefit. It is customary to link these two types of political corruption. In actuality, both strategies are connected to some of the most well-known instances of political corruption (Ogbeidi, 2012). In addition to stealing and showing partiality, politicians frequently engage in public and private sector wrongdoing, including bribery, extortion, influence peddling, and fraud. Good governance, sustainable development, democratic procedures, and moral business conduct are all threatened by corruption (Ogbeidi, 2012).

## 7. Conclusion

Political corruption, which is the abuse of one's official or political position for one's own benefit in defiance of accepted moral or legal standards, has been demonstrated by this research to be a prevalent feature of government operations across all human civilizations. Even though it is constantly denounced, corruption remains a global issue. It is obvious that an acceptable explanation for this phenomenon has to be found. The majority of social scientists seem to think that defects in the legal and political processes, as well as the economic standing of individuals, are the causes of political corruption. To accomplish all of these objectives, it is advised that Nigeria's anti-corruption laws be harmonized to increase the effectiveness of the anti-corruption campaign. The government must improve living standards in order to fight corruption. In order for Nigerians to understand, uphold, and

practice their moral and ethical behaviors, education is also necessary.

## References

- AdeAdefarasin V.O (2009) "Consequence of corruption, unethical practice and Africa's quest for development In Democracy, Leadership and accountability in Post-Colonial African"
- Tony Edoh, Terhemba Wuam (eds) Markurdi, Aboki Publishers.
- Adekeye, F. (2003). "30 Most Corrupt Public Institutions in Nigeria." *Newswatch*, December 22. Amundsen, I., Pinto, D.E. and Andrade, V. (2009) Public Sector Ethics [online]  
<http://www.cmi.no/publications/file/3290-introduction-to-public-sector-ethics.pdf>
- Clarke.P & Linzey (1996). "Politics" A. Dictionary of Ethics, Theology and Society. London: Routledge.
- Cohen G.A. (1992), *Incentives, Inequality, and Community*, The Tanner Lectures on Human Values, vol 13, Salt Lake City, UT, University of Utah Press.
- Dest, Y. (2006) Designing Anti-Corruption Strategies for Development countries: A country study of Eritrea: *Journal of Developing Societies* 4, 421-449.
- Friedman, T.L. (2005) *The World is Flat*. Douglas & McIntyre, LTD, Canada
- Garofalo C. & Geuras D. (2007). *Practical ethics in Public Administration*. Vienna, VAG: Management Concepts, Inc.
- Garret, S. (1994). *Ethics and international affairs: Political leadership and problem of dirty hands*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Gareth.M. (2001). "Moral Development". In(ed)Becker L. & Becker. C. Encyclopaedia of Ethics. (2ndedition) Vol 2. New York: Routledge.
- Haruna, M. (2009). Perspective: Azie and other Matters Miscellaneous. Retrieved from <http://www.gamji.com/haruna/haruna10.htm>
- Kant, I. (2002). *Metaphysics of Morals and Critique of Practical Reason*. London: Fulcrum Press.
- Lewis, A. (2006). "Corruption." In worldweb. Princeton: Princeton University.
- Magid, A. (1976). *Men in the Middle: Leadership and Role Conflict in a Nigerian Society*. New York: Holmes & Meier.
- Nussbaum M. (2000). *Women and Human Development*, New York: Cambridge University.

- Ochulor and Bassey (2010). *Analysis of Corruption from the Ethical and Moral Perspectives*. European Journal of Scientific Research Vol.44 No.3, pp.466-476
- Ogbeidi (2012) Political Leadership and Corruption in Nigeria Since 1960: A Socio-economic Analysis. *Journal of Nigeria Studies* Volume 1, Number 2.
- Okigbo (1994). Panel Report on the Re-organisation and Reform of the Central Bank of Nigeria.
- Okin S. (1989). *Justice, gender and the family*. New York; basic Books.
- Omoregbe, J. (1993). *Ethics: A Systematic and Historical Study*. Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Ltd.
- Rawls J (1971) *A theory of justice*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_(1999). *Collected Papers*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- \_\_\_\_\_(1999) Kantian constructivism in moral theory. *The journal of philosophy*, 77(9); 515-572.
- \_\_\_\_\_(2001). *Justice as fairness; A Restatement*. Edited by Erin Kelly, Cambridge
- \_\_\_\_\_(2005). *Political Liberalism*. Expanded edition. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_(1999). *A Theory of Justice*. Revised Edition. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Sandels M. (1982) *liberalism and the limits of justice*. Cambridge: Cambridge university press.
- Sendjaya, S. (2005). Morality and leadership: Examining the ethics of transformational leadership. *Journal of Academics Ethics*.
- Shehu, A.Y (2006), *Recovering the Proceeds of Corruption; The Challenges for Developing Countries*, *Nigeria Journal of Economic and Financial Crime*, 1(1).
- Sklar, R. L. (2004). *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation*, 1st Ed. Trenton, New Jersey: African World Press Inc.
- Uduigwomen, A.F. (2006) *Introducing Ethics: Trends, Problems and Perspectives*. Jochrissam Publishers, Calabar.