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Sweeping it under the carpet: the role of legislators in corrupt practice in Nigeria

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Abstract:

Purpose

– This study aims to contribute to the emerging discourse on elite financial crime, with particular attention devoted to the role played by the legislature in corrupt practices in Nigeria. Separations of power, watchdog role of legislature and ideologies have become a major influence in democratic system. Legislative power has developed as a means of providing oversight functions over the executives, thereby inhibiting fraudulent practices in governments.

Design/methodology/approach

– The paper argues that the political institutional structures embedded with monopoly, discretion and little or no accountability facilitate financial corrupt practices within the legislature. The paper uses publicly available evidence to show that the legislators in developing countries are actively engaged in corrupt practices.

Findings

– The evidence provided in this paper shows that separation of power and representative democracy had not brought about transparency and accountability in government activities in Nigeria. Legislature often trade-off their constitutional power and their claim of service to the public interest by engaging in financial criminal practices.

Research limitations/implications

– This paper does not set out to provide a comprehensive analysis of political corruption. Instead, it considers the “dark” side of legislative practice by examining the involvement of legislature in facilitating corrupt financial practices in Nigeria.

Practical implications

– The inability of the regulators to effectively sanction legislators implicated in corrupt practices suggests that the current institutional and regulatory apparatus are not fully equipped in dealing with the financial criminal activities of legislators.

Social implications

– Despite the arrest and prosecution of some legislators, a number of cases are swept under the carpet. Therefore, this paper suggests that Nigeria need to reform its political system and institutions to promote transparency and accountability in government and to build trust in the legislative process.

Originality/value

– This paper considers the “dark” side of legislative practice by examining the involvement of legislature in facilitating corrupt financial practices in Nigeria.

Keywords:

[Legislators](#), [Discretion](#), [Corruption](#), [Accountability and transparency](#), [Criminal practices](#), [Monopoly](#)