
Research

Present-Day Nigerian Governance Expenditure for Covering Ill-Practices: Indices and the Future Damage to the Nigerian Economy

Anuforo Cajetan Chima¹, Albert Ulutorti Green², Achebe Gozie John³

¹Department of Economics and Development Studies, University on the Niger, Nigeria.

<https://orcid.org/0009-0000-3641-3948>

²Department of Religious Studies, University on the Niger, Nigeria.

³University on the Niger, Nigeria.

Correspondence should be addressed to: cajetan.anuforo@uniniger.edu.ng

Abstract: Public expenditure is a vital tool by which governments achieve national growth, provide security, and deliver crucial public services. In numerous developing nations, a substantial fraction of governance budget is frequently allocated to political survival tactics instead of developmental objectives. In modern Nigeria, there are rising worries about the escalating utilization of public resources for political patronage, influence cultivation, and the handling of governance disputes. These expenditures appear in multiple forms, including substantial political campaign financing, expensive legislative upkeep within the Nigerian Senate, foreign political lobbying in nations like the United States, security-related expenditures associated with insurgency operations, and financial patronage aimed at traditional rulers, religious leaders, and prominent political figures throughout the federation. This article analyzes governance spending metrics aimed at addressing political malpractices and evaluates their potential repercussions for the Nigerian economy. The report contends that when public resources are allocated to maintain political allegiance and reinforce power, the state's capacity to invest in productive sectors like infrastructure, education, healthcare, and technological advancement is considerably diminished. Over time, these expenditure patterns lead to fiscal strain, increasing public debt, diminishing investor confidence, and exacerbating socioeconomic disparities. The paper emphasizes the enduring hazards linked to these governance practices, such as diminished democratic institutions, decreased economic competitiveness, and the erosion of public faith in governance systems. Sustainable economic development in Nigeria necessitates enhanced transparency, fiscal discipline, and institutional reforms to guarantee public investment is allocated to national development rather than political consolidation.

Keywords: Nigerian Governance, Expenditure, Ill-Practices, Indices, Damage, Economy.

Introduction

Public spending is one of the most potent tools governments use to impact development. Infrastructure, healthcare, education, security, and economic growth should be prioritised to improve citizen wellbeing. However, governance expenditure in many nations occasionally goes beyond administrative needs to suit political agendas. When this happens, public funds are sometimes used to consolidate control, preserve political influence, or neutralise dissent rather than grow the nation.

Due to worries about public resource use, governance expenditure discussions in Nigeria have intensified. Nigeria has great economic potential and enormous natural resources, but governance issues have hindered its economic development. Public debate often centres on the use of governmental resources for political patronage and influence-building rather than development. In Nigeria, political spending takes several forms. These include large-scale election campaign spending, financial incentives for political actors to be loyal to ruling structures, and considerable overseas political lobbying. Public money is sometimes used to manage political connections with traditional authorities, religious leaders, and powerful stakeholders whose support is needed for political stability. Security expenditures during insurgency and internal strife are another governance expenditure. The Nigerian government has invested much in military equipment and security activities to combat security threats. National security is a government priority, yet defence spending transparency and efficiency have been questioned. Governance expenditure includes major legislative spending (Ogunsola et al., 2023). Policymakers have debated the cost of maintaining the Nigerian Senate and other legislative organisations. Salaries, allowances, constituency initiatives, and operating budgets account for much of national spending. Critics say these costs are disproportionate given the population's economic circumstances.

Another important expense is political campaign financing. Political parties and candidates in Nigeria compete financially in elections (Sule et al., 2022). Advertising, mobilization, logistics, and political outreach can require large campaign budgets. The ruling All Progressives Congress and other political parties operate in a political context where financial influence strongly affects electoral outcomes. Governance expenditure includes links with traditional and religious institutions beyond official political structures.

Many Nigerian communities still rely on traditional rulers for cultural authority and social stability. Religious leaders also impact vast populations. These institutions are typically supported financially or patronised by governments to maintain good relations.

Political dynamics among state governors also affect governance expenditure. State governors have significant power under Nigeria's federal government. Party ties and state alliances often shape national political stability. Financial and political incentives can encourage alignment with dominant political structures. Each of these expenditures may appear to support strategic governance goals, but their cumulative impact raises major budgetary sustainability and economic priorities problems. Large amounts of national resources spent on political influence rather than constructive economic investment can have serious long-term effects. Such spending habits affect the economy beyond fiscal concerns. They may raise public debt, restrict government investment in important areas, and lower economic productivity. These tendencies can damage investor confidence, private-sector growth, and social inequality. Democratic institutions can also be weakened by political patronage governance spending. Financial incentives for political loyalty may weaken institutional independence. This can weaken oversight bodies, limit public administration openness, and damage public trust in government. This article examines Nigerian political patronage and influence-building governance expenditure patterns. Key metrics of such expenditures and their effects on the country's economy are examined in the study. The paper examines government spending and political practice to demonstrate the economic implications of diverting public resources to political goals.

Understanding these processes is crucial as Nigeria faces economic issues such as inflation, unemployment, infrastructural deficits, and mounting public debt. Fiscal responsibility and a governance system that promotes national development above political consolidation are needed to address these issues. How well Nigeria handles its public resources will determine its economic future. Governance expenditure that supports development can spur economic growth. When such expenditure is substantially linked to political patronage, budgetary instability, institutional degradation, and reduced economic potential may result.

Indices of Governance Expenditure Used to Cover Ill-Practices in Nigeria

Governance spending in modern political systems typically reflects powerholder goals and strategic interests (Ntim, 2023). When political survival is the main goal of administration, public spending may be diverted to safeguard political authority, neutralise

dissent, and consolidate dominance. Nigerian governance expenditures have numerous characteristics that indicate political improper management or concealment. These indices are not often documented as political expenditures, but their patterns and implications reveal a governing framework that prioritises political supremacy over national growth.

The increasing employment of foreign lobbying companies to impact international perceptions of Nigerian governance is an important governance expenditure indicator. Governments and political actors seeking diplomatic influence and positive worldwide narratives engage in political lobbying in global political centres, particularly the UK.

Foreign policy lobbying often involves multinational consultant businesses, public relations agencies, and political intermediaries representing governments or political figures. Such contacts may try to influence foreign opinion, manage diplomatic relationships, or confront home political concerns. International lobbying can be a viable diplomatic approach, but using public funds to heal governance reputational damage rather than achieve national goals raises issues. Lobbying can be expensive and divert resources from domestic development if done without transparency or public supervision.

Foreign lobbying also indicates governance system structural flaws. Governments may utilise external image management instead of addressing the core causes of political criticism: corruption, economic mismanagement, or governance flaws (Hamzah et al., 2026). This strategy leads to public expenditures being utilised to manage perception rather than achieve actual reforms. Insurgency and internal conflict security expenditures are another important governance expenditure measure. Insurgency, banditry, and regional strife have plagued Nigeria for decades. The government has spent heavily on military operations, intelligence, and arms procurement to address these issues. Conflict inherently boosts defence spending, and governments must protect citizens and territorial integrity. However, opaque defence spending and acquisition raise worries. Large budget allocations for security activities may lead to financial problems.

Military equipment, ammunition, and logistical support are generally purchased through complex contracts with domestic and international providers (Hartley, 2023). Without control, these processes can lead to inflated contracts, fund diversion, and procurement inefficiencies. Persistent security problems can also lead to huge defence costs. Security is important, but excessive or poorly managed security spending can limit the government's investment in education, healthcare, and infrastructure (Yusuf & Mohd, 2022). Security expenditures may cause fiscal imbalance over time, especially if economic

growth lags behind government spending. Another governance expense index is legislative institution maintenance. Legislative salaries, allowances, and constituency projects account for a large portion of national expenditures. The Nigerian Senate is regularly highlighted in discussions about high governance costs. Democratic government relies on legislators' supervision, lawmaking, and constituency representation (Fagbadebo, 2023). However, fiscal efficiency and accountability are questioned when parliamentary office costs exceed national economic conditions. In addition to wages and allowances, legislators may receive funding for constituency development, administrative operations, and political mobilisation. Constituency initiatives are meant to develop local communities; however, their management can be opaque. In some political systems, parliamentary spending may also indicate allegiance. Governments seeking legislative support for programmes or political objectives may offer financial incentives, development funding, or strategic projects that strengthen executive-legislative coalitions. Such techniques may increase governance costs and reduce legislative monitoring, but they may temporarily stabilise politics.

Election campaigns are one of the most expensive aspects of democracy (Schnurr, 2022). Political campaigns in Nigeria sometimes require extensive investment in advertising, rallies, transportation, supporter recruitment, and media interaction. Political parties and candidates spend a lot on campaigns because elections are competitive (Avis et al., 2022). Current political parties, like the All Progressives Congress and others, depend on financial strength to succeed. Campaign spending may include private and indirect government funds. Public finances or state resources supporting political campaigns confuse governance expenditure and partisan political activity, raising concerns. Political commercialisation is also caused by excessive campaign spending. Candidates with large campaign budgets may seek public resources or political patronage to recuperate their investments. This loop reinforces a governing system that links political power to profit rather than service.

Traditional rulers continue to guide Nigerian communities and preserve culture. Governments work with traditional institutions to promote social stability and community support. Stipends, community development initiatives, ceremonial presents, and cultural event logistics may be given to traditional rulers. Such support can help community development and cultural preservation, but it can also be exploited to gain political support or stifle critics. Traditional institutions may become less neutral community leaders if they

become financially dependent on political authorities (Noak, 2024). They may feel pressured to align with governmental authorities that provide financial support instead of representing local populations. This trend can erode established institutions' legitimacy and impair their ability to mediate disputes and represent community interests. Nigerian society is shaped by religion and religious institutions. Politicians regularly work with religious groups to achieve moral validity and support. Donations to religious institutions, sponsorship of religious events, construction of worship structures, and pilgrimage funding are all types of financial interaction with religious leaders. Government-religious institution alliances can promote social development and humanitarian efforts, but they can also be used for political gain. Religious leaders breach the line between spiritual leadership and political advocacy when they publicly support political actors that provide funding. This may weaken religious institutions' independence and give the impression that spiritual authority is swayed by money.

State governors have significant power under Nigeria's federal government. Governors influence national political alliances and elections as crucial political actors in the federation. Political realignments among governors, especially during elections, may involve strategic agreements with national parties (Goodrich, 2025). Financial incentives, economic projects, and federal support programmes may affect party affiliation and political alliances. Governors may defect to parties with better political or financial prospects due to such dynamics. While political realignment is natural in democracies, financial incentives can considerably raise governance expenditure. This trend may also erode political party ideology and foster a transactional political culture.

Economic Implications of Governance Expenditure on Ill-Practices in Nigeria

Governance expenditure that is directed towards maintaining political dominance rather than promoting national development carries significant economic implications (Johnson, 2022). While such spending may provide short-term political stability or consolidate authority, its long-term impact on national economic performance can be deeply damaging. In the case of Nigeria, the diversion of public funds into political patronage networks, campaign financing, lobbying, and loyalty-building mechanisms contributes to structural economic weaknesses that affect national productivity, fiscal stability, and development prospects.

Understanding these implications is essential for evaluating the broader consequences of governance spending patterns. The effects extend beyond government

budgets and influence the entire economic ecosystem, including investment environments, employment opportunities, public service delivery, and social welfare.

Fiscal Pressure and Budgetary Imbalance

Politically motivated governance expenditure first strains national resources fiscally (Liu & Wang, 2024). Public spending becomes inefficient when a considerable amount of it goes to non-productive activities. A national budget balances government revenue and expenditure priorities. Too much money goes to political upkeep, such as campaign finance, patronage networks, and legislative incentives, limiting development funds. Because political structures consume large amounts of money, infrastructure, healthcare, and education may receive less support. This disparity keeps government expenditure rising without improving national production. Fiscal pressure forces governments to borrow more, raising public debt and state financial liabilities.

Weakening of Productive Economic Investment

Government spending that boosts the economy is productive investment. We invest in transportation infrastructure, industrial development, agricultural modernisation, technical innovation, and human capital. Political survival techniques consume government resources, reducing productive investment (Ronen, 2024). This cycle inhibits economic progress by underfunding vital industries.

For instance, inadequate transportation infrastructure investment raises prices. Poor road networks hinder farmers' ability to deliver produce to metropolitan markets. Limited educational financing affects the ability to train a qualified workforce to drive technical innovation and industrial progress. Long term, the economy struggles to diversify and compete globally.

Increased Public Debt and Financial Vulnerability

As governance expenditure rises without government revenue, public debt issues arise (Mose et al., 2024). Governments often borrow domestically and internationally to cover large spending deficits. Rising debt has become a major economic issue in Nigeria. When used for economic projects like infrastructure or industrial expansion, borrowing can be helpful. However, borrowing money for non-productive spending has little long-term economic advantage. Government revenue is increasingly used for debt payment, decreasing development programme funding. Government debt may raise interest rates and tighten borrowing conditions, limiting budgetary flexibility. This can make one financially vulnerable, especially during economic downturns or global market turbulence.

Decline in Investor Confidence

National economic progress depends on investor confidence (Phaju & Shrestha, 2024). Foreign and domestic investors consider governance stability, transparency, and policy consistency while investing. When political favouritism and financial inducements dominate governance expenditure, investors may consider the economy to be unstable or uncertain. Inefficient governmental expenditure, corruption, and lack of transparency might deter long-term investment. Reduced investor confidence slows foreign direct investment, industrial growth, and job creation. Economic prospects dry up as investment falls, raising unemployment and reducing economic mobility. Since international markets may view the national economy as dangerous, declining investor confidence undermines currency stability.

Institutional Weakening and Governance Inefficiency

Governance expenditure connected to ill practices weakens public institutions, another economic impact. Strong institutions that enforce regulations, monitor finances, and ensure public administration accountability are needed for economic management. Financial incentives may jeopardise institutional independence when utilised to influence politicians (Karimullah, 2024). If political allegiance is monetarily rewarded, regulatory, legislative oversight, and anti-corruption authorities may suffer.

Institutional weakness affects the economy. Weak regulations allow financial malfeasance, tax evasion, and poor resource allocation. Cost inflation, delays, and poor implementation can occur in public projects without strong oversight. Governance structures lose public trust as institutional credibility weakens. If public resources are mismanaged, citizens may be less likely to pay taxes or participate in civic activities.

Rising Socioeconomic Inequality

Financial incentives may jeopardise institutional independence when utilised to influence politicians. This concentration of resources might increase socioeconomic inequality. Financial incentives and government contracts help political elites and their networks, but regular individuals may have restricted economic options (Lassou et al., 2024). Healthcare, education, and social welfare may be underfunded.

Inequality can cause social tensions and resentment among citizens who feel excluded from national wealth. Economic gaps hinder social mobility, making it difficult for poor people to improve their finances. Inequality weakens social stability and national cohesion over time.

Inflationary Pressures and Economic Instability

Excessive governance spending may also cause inflation (Adewale, 2025). Government expenditure increases rapidly without productivity growth, increasing the economy's money supply. As products and services become more expensive, citizens' purchasing power decreases. Inflation hits low-income people harder since they spend more on food, transportation, and housing. Financial markets are also unpredictable due to inflation. Price instability makes long-term investment planning difficult for businesses. Domestic and foreign investors may be increasingly cautious as economic uncertainty rises.

Opportunity Cost of Political Expenditure

One of the biggest economic effects of governance spending on ill-practices is opportunity cost (Emmanuel). All political patronage funds are unavailable for national development. Schools, hospitals, renewable energy initiatives, technological innovation, and industrial expansion might be funded instead of political alliances, public opinion, and loyalty. Alternative investments can boost long-term economic growth, employment, and quality of life. Opportunity costs are high when government goals move from development to political maintenance. These squandered possibilities compound Nigeria's economic problems.

Future Damage to the Nigerian Economy

The long-term implications of governance expenditure directed towards political survival rather than national development present serious risks to the economic stability and prosperity of Nigeria. When public resources are consistently allocated towards maintaining political alliances, managing public perception, and consolidating political authority, the structural capacity of the economy to grow and compete internationally becomes weakened (Papayoanou, 2025). Over time, this pattern can create deep economic distortions that are difficult to reverse.

The potential future damage extends beyond immediate fiscal concerns and affects the broader economic architecture of the nation, including productivity, institutional integrity, social stability, and international competitiveness. If current patterns of governance expenditure continue without substantial reform, several long-term consequences may emerge.

Long-Term Fiscal Instability

Fiscal instability is a major long-term effect of politically influenced governance expenditure (Long et al., 2025). Public spending must match national revenue and

economic productivity for fiscal sustainability. Large amounts of government spending on non-productive political activities make economic sustainability impossible.

Budget deficits may require governments to borrow significantly to fund their spending (Onyedibe et al., 2022). As debt grows, government revenue must go to debt payment rather than development. This cycle makes borrowing required to maintain governance systems. Over time, heavy debt might limit the government's ability to respond to economic crises or invest in healthcare, education, and infrastructure. Fiscal instability makes the economy more susceptible to exogenous shocks, such as commodity price and financial market changes.

Decline in National Infrastructure Development

Infrastructure development is essential to economic progress (Foster et al., 2023). Businesses and citizens use roads, railways, power supplies, telecommunications networks, and water systems. Infrastructure development suffers when governance expenditure favours political patronage over development. Due to resource constraints or oversight, projects may be delayed, underfunded, or poorly executed. Poor infrastructure lowers economic productivity over time. Inefficient transportation raises prices, while unstable power hampers industrial growth. Higher operational costs may reduce businesses' domestic and international competitiveness. In the long run, the economy struggles to industrialise and innovate.

Weak Human Capital Development

Building a productive workforce that drives national economic growth requires human capital development through education, healthcare, and skill training (Sairmaly, 2023). Governance expenditures for political patronage may deplete social service resources. Insufficient infrastructure, teaching resources, and academic standards may plague schools. Equipment, trained staff, and vital drugs may be scarce in healthcare systems. These shortcomings reduce the population's ability to contribute to economic progress. Unhealthy and undereducated workers reduce creativity, productivity, and economic competitiveness. This could lead to long-term unemployment, underemployment, and informal economic activity.

Entrenchment of Corruption in Governance Systems

Political loyalty-focused governance expenditures will institutionalise corruption in governance structures. Corruption becomes acceptable when financial incentives are utilised to influence political behaviour (Heidenheimer et al., 2024). Public leaders may see

politics as a way to make money rather than serve the public. This attitude promotes public resource exploitation and lowers government ethics.

Corruption makes reform difficult once entrenched. Anti-corruption agencies may confront political pressure, and individuals profiting from existing arrangements may reject financial accountability measures. Corruption harms economic growth and government trust.

Erosion of Democratic Institutions

Sustainable economic growth depends on democratic institutions (Thelma, 2024). Governance with independent legislatures, open election systems, and accountable executive leadership promotes stability and long-term planning. Political actors, traditional leaders, religious institutions, and state-level authorities may lose independence if governance expenditure influences them. Political loyalty may be monetarily rewarded, while dissenters are sidelined. Democratic accountability suffers from institutional independence loss. Citizens may believe monetary influence determines political results more than democratic engagement. Perceptions like this can lower voting turnout and democratic confidence. Over time, weaker democratic institutions make policy decisions dictated by political survival rather than national interest.

Rising Youth Unemployment and Social Frustration

Nigeria has a huge youth population. If given enough jobs and entrepreneurial backing, this demographic advantage might boost economic growth. Employment is limited when governance spending goes to political patronage rather than economic development (Mlambo et al., 2022). Infrastructure initiatives that could create jobs may go unfunded, and unfavourable investment environments limit industrial progress.

As unemployment rises, young people may become disillusioned with governance. Limited economic prospects might raise migration pressures, informal or illicit economic activity, and criminal or insurgency recruiting. Long-term, a generation feels alienated from national economic progress, threatening social stability.

Declining International Economic Competitiveness

Competition in the global economy demands strong institutions, efficient infrastructure, skilled workers, and transparent governance (Challoumis, 2025). Strong public finances and political stability are typical of countries that attract investment and grow industrial capacity. Nigeria may lose global competitiveness if government expenditure prioritises political survival over economic development. Transparent and

predictable governance systems may attract investors. Exports, industrial expansion, and technology suffer from lower competitiveness. Nigeria may struggle to diversify its economy beyond conventional sectors, restricting long-term growth.

Loss of Public Trust in Governance

Politically motivated governance expenditure may have the greatest long-term impact on public trust (Garritzmann et al., 2023). Citizens expect government resources to benefit society. Governance institutions lose public trust when resources are seen as being exploited to sustain political power. Public distrust can lower civic engagement, tax compliance, and government policy acceptance. If citizens think public finances are mismanaged, they may not support national growth. Public trust can be hard to regain and may require considerable institutional reforms and transparency.

Conclusion

This essay examines Nigeria's governance expenditure on political control rather than national progress. Public expenditure is an important tool of administration, but using it for political patronage, loyalty, and image control has serious economic and institutional consequences (Hamzah et al., 2026). Foreign political lobbying, security-related spending during insurgency, the financial burden of legislative bodies like the Nigerian Senate, substantial political campaign financing, and financial patronage of traditional rulers, religious leaders, and prominent political figures have been identified as indicators of these expenditures. These investments may achieve immediate political goals, such as strengthening leadership or government stability, but they have troubling long-term effects for the national economy. Public resources diverted to political survival reduce the state's ability to invest in economic areas. Political networks and patronage structures consume a lot of public funds; therefore, infrastructure development, human capital investment, technical innovation, and social welfare programmes often get neglected.

The economic effects of these spending changes are complex. Fiscal pressure grows if government spending rises without productivity or income gains (Moore, 2023). Increasing government debt, investor scepticism, and institutional dysfunction worsen economic problems. These factors cause economic stagnation, job loss, and rising inequality. Governance expenditure used for political influence threatens democratic institutions. When financial incentives outweigh political allegiance, political institutions may lose autonomy. Traditional and religious groups may face pressures that weaken their neutrality and moral authority, while legislative entities may struggle to supervise.

The main issue is that these governance methods may undermine Nigeria's economy in the long term. Sustainable development requires openly allocating public resources to industries with long-term economic benefits. Governance expenditure tied to political patronage results in major growth opportunities being lost.

Without considerable change, Nigeria may become more economically vulnerable. Fiscal instability, weak institutions, and popular mistrust of government may hinder the nation's development goals. Political leaders, institutions, and individuals must prioritise accountability, openness, and budgetary responsibility to ensure the nation's future. Modernising governance systems and institutional supervision is essential to solving these issues. Instead of political consolidation, public funds should support national growth. Nigeria will only reach its economic potential and create a governing structure that can support its people with these reforms.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and discussions presented in this study, several policy and institutional recommendations are proposed to address the challenges associated with governance expenditure directed towards political patronage and ill-practices in Nigeria.

1. One of the most critical steps towards addressing governance expenditure challenges is improving transparency in public financial management. Government budgets, procurement processes, and expenditure reports should be made publicly accessible and subject to independent scrutiny. Transparent financial systems enable citizens, civil society organisations, and oversight institutions to monitor how public resources are utilised.

2. Political campaign financing represents a significant source of governance expenditure that can contribute to corruption and misuse of public funds. Electoral regulations should establish clear limits on campaign spending and require political parties and candidates to disclose their funding sources.

3. The financial cost associated with maintaining political institutions should be carefully reviewed to ensure fiscal sustainability. Operational expenses within legislative institutions, including those of the Nigerian Senate, should be evaluated to identify areas where expenditure can be reduced without compromising institutional effectiveness.

4. Independent oversight institutions play a crucial role in ensuring accountability in governance. Anti-corruption agencies, legislative oversight committees, and auditing

institutions must be empowered with adequate legal authority and operational independence to investigate financial misconduct.

5. Given the significant financial resources allocated to security operations, transparency in defence procurement processes is essential. Clear procurement guidelines, competitive bidding procedures, and independent auditing mechanisms should be implemented to ensure that defence expenditures are managed efficiently.

6. An informed and engaged citizenry plays an important role in promoting governance accountability. Civil society organisations, investigative journalists, and academic institutions should be encouraged to participate actively in monitoring public expenditure and governance practices.

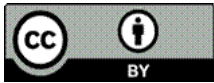
7. Ultimately, sustainable reform requires a transformation in political culture. Political leaders must demonstrate a commitment to ethical governance and responsible stewardship of public resources. Leadership training programmes, ethical standards within political parties, and civic education initiatives can contribute to fostering a governance culture that prioritises public service over personal or political gain.

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