

Lies And Political Deception in Nigeria: Philosophical, Psychological, and Empirical Perspectives on the All-Progressives Congress (APC)

JOEL BULUS DANIEL¹, JOSIAH DAVID HASSAN JR², ZACHARIAH AUDU KATOH³

^{1, 2, 3}*Department of Christian Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts, Kaduna State University (KASU), Kaduna, Nigeria*

Abstract- This article explores the philosophical and psychological origins of lying and deception in daily life, grounding its analysis in both classical and contemporary scholarship. Drawing on Michael Lewis's influential research (Lewis 2015:128), DePaulo et al. (2004:147), and the voices of leading figures like Paul Ekman (1985:42), Robert Trivers (2011:5), and Richard Byrne (Byrne & Corp 2004:1693), the article offers a multidimensional examination of deception as both an adaptive and corrosive force in human affairs. Empirical studies reveal that, on average, people tell two lies per day (DePaulo et al., 2004:147), but those serious lies, those with the greatest consequences, are overwhelmingly reserved for close relationships and political contexts. In the Nigerian context, recent studies show that over 60% of serious political lies are told within party structures, leading to significant internal crises, defections, and public distrust (DePaulo et al., 2004:147; Sambo et al., 2022:81; Ita et al., 2024:115). Additionally, textual analyses of netizen responses to the APC's controversial same-faith presidential ticket revealed that 37.7% strongly agreed and 44.3% agreed that party actions undermine internal democracy and social cohesion (Ita et al., 2024:115; Akpe et al., 2024:222). The narrative is enriched by direct engagement with primary sources and scholarly debates, providing a textured account of how deception operates from the micro-level of personal interactions to the macro-level of institutional politics. A focused case study of the All-Progressives Congress (APC) in Nigerian politics (from its inception to 2026) demonstrates how patterns of lying and deception become embedded in political structures, shaping public trust, democratic processes, and society's ethical landscape.

Keywords: Political Lies, APC, Nigeria, Internal Party Democracy, Godfatherism, Deception.

I. INTRODUCTION

Lying and deception, as Plato contended in his theory of the “noble lie,” are deeply embedded in human society and political structures (Plato, Republic). He argued that such lies might be justified for the sake of social harmony, a view foundational to Western political thought. However, Immanuel Kant (1797/1996) directly opposed this, insisting that truthfulness is a categorical imperative. For him, lying is always morally wrong, regardless of consequences. Niccolò Machiavelli (1532/2007), in contrast to both, regarded deception as an indispensable tool of statecraft. He advised rulers to deceive when necessary for the public good or political survival.

William James's pragmatism (1907) further complicates this debate by suggesting that truth is a property of beliefs that “work” in practice, not merely those that correspond to facts. Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953) and Donald Davidson (1984) argue that truth is a normative ideal essential to meaningful communication and social accountability. Its systematic violation in politics is doubly damaging: it undermines trust and the possibility of understanding. Hannah Arendt (1967:13) offers a sobering warning: “The moment we no longer have a free press, anything can happen. What makes it possible for a totalitarian or any other dictatorship to rule is that people are not informed.” She argues that the normalization of lying in politics undermines judgment and action, creating a “defactualized” public realm in which shared reality is lost (Arendt 1971:9). This theoretical background sets the stage for understanding how these philosophical themes manifest in Nigerian politics and the APC.

In Nigeria, such philosophical arguments are urgently relevant. The APC's history is marked by contested narratives, propaganda, godfatherism, strategic messaging, and the manipulation of truth for political gain. Scholars such as Oparinde, Okoroiwu, Ononogbu, Ita, and Akpe have empirically documented these trends, showing that political choices, such as the controversial same-faith ticket, can exacerbate fault lines and erode trust. This article builds on their work, situating the Nigerian experience within a global scholarly conversation.

Lying and deception, as Plato contended in his theory of the "noble lie," are deeply embedded in human society and political structures (Plato, Republic). Plato argued that such lies might be justified for social harmony, a position directly challenged by Kant, who insisted that truthfulness is a categorical imperative and that lying is always morally wrong, regardless of outcome (Kant, 1797/1996). Machiavelli, in contrast, viewed deception as an indispensable tool of statecraft, arguing in *The Prince* that rulers must not hesitate to deceive if doing so serves the public good or ensures political survival (Machiavelli, 1532/2007).

Contemporary theorists expand and complicate these debates. William James's pragmatism holds that truth is a property of beliefs that "work" in practice, not merely those that correspond to facts (James, 1907). Wittgenstein and Davidson further argue that truth is a normative standard underpinning meaningful communication and social accountability (Wittgenstein, 1953; Davidson, 1984). Hannah Arendt warns that the normalization of lying in politics undermines the very possibility of judgment and collective action, creating a "defactualized" public realm (Arendt, 1967, 1971).

In Nigeria, these philosophical arguments are not abstract: the APC's history is marked by contested narratives, propaganda, godfatherism, strategic messaging, and the manipulation of truth for political gain. Scholars such as Oparinde, Okoroiwu, Ononogbu, and Ita have empirically documented these trends, while Akpe and colleagues have shown that party choices, such as the controversial same-

faith ticket, can exacerbate societal fault lines and erode trust.

II. STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

In Nigeria's contemporary democracy, patterns of political deception, elite manipulation, and the breakdown of norms of truthfulness remain deeply entrenched and frequently undermine democratic consolidation. The normalization of lying within party structures, especially in the APC, raises urgent questions about the ethical, psychological, and institutional factors that enable deception and corrode public trust. This study seeks to address why political lies remain pervasive in Nigeria's democracy, how they are sustained by party dynamics and elite interests, and what theoretical and empirical insights can illuminate effective pathways toward greater accountability and truthfulness.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS: THE NORMATIVITY OF TRUTH AND ELITE THEORY

This study draws on two complementary theoretical frameworks. First, the normativity of truth (Davidson, 1984:308; Wittgenstein, 1953; Kant, 1996:429; Arendt, 1971:9) provides a philosophical foundation for understanding why truth-telling is a core ethical and social obligation in politics. Truth is not merely descriptive, but a normative standard that reinforces communication, trust, and public accountability. When truth norms are eroded, as Arendt warns, society loses the very sense by which it takes its bearings in the real world, and democratic judgment collapses.

Second, elite theory and the concept of manufactured consent (Pareto, Mosca; Chomsky & Herman 1988:2) explain how Nigeria's political elites manipulate party structures, control narratives, and employ media and deception to consolidate power. This framework is crucial for analyzing practices such as godfatherism, elite-driven candidate selection, and media messaging within the APC case study and Nigerian politics at large.

Together, these frameworks clarify the stakes of political deception in Nigeria: they show why truth matters ethically and institutionally, and how elite manipulation subverts democracy and public trust.

IV. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

For the purpose of this study, several key terms are defined as follows:

- Political deception refers to the intentional distortion, omission, or manipulation of facts by political actors to gain or maintain power (Ekman 1985:42; DePaulo et al. 2004:147).
- Truth is understood as both a descriptive and normative standard, following Davidson (1984:308) and Arendt (1971:9).
- Godfatherism describes the informal system of elite patronage and candidate imposition in Nigerian party politics (Ikeanyibe, 2014:772; Ita et al. 2024:115).
- Internal party democracy refers to transparent, participatory processes for candidate selection and decision-making within political parties (Okoroiwu & Ononogbu 2016).

These definitions anchor the analysis that follows and ensure conceptual consistency throughout the article.

V. PHILOSOPHICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF LYING

The study of lying and deception requires an interdisciplinary approach that combines philosophical inquiry into the nature of truth and ethical conduct with psychological research on the development, function, and consequences of deception in human life. Philosophers investigate the justifications, boundaries, and dangers of lying in moral and political contexts, while psychologists provide empirical evidence on how and why deception emerges, adapts, and sometimes becomes institutionalized. Together, these perspectives reveal that lying is not merely a personal failing but a phenomenon with profound implications for social trust, leadership, and the legitimacy of political systems, especially in complex environments like Nigerian politics.

i. The Normativity of Truth

The normativity of truth holds that truth is not only descriptive but also prescriptive. It is a shared social and ethical standard that guides our beliefs, assertions, and judgments. Davidson (1984:308) states, “The concept of truth is essential to the concept of communication,” underscoring that language, understanding, and trust all presuppose an orientation toward truthfulness. For Wittgenstein (1953), the very possibility of meaningful language and thus politics depends on a background of shared practices and commitments to truth. Kant (1996:429) goes further, arguing that truthfulness is a duty owed not only to others but to oneself, forming the basis of moral community.

In political contexts, the normativity of truth is crucial for democratic accountability and public trust. As Arendt (1971:9) warns, when truth norms are eroded by persistent lying, “the sense by which we take our bearings in the real world” is lost, and both judgment and collective action become impossible. In Nigeria, the persistent violation of norms of truth by political actors undermines democratic consolidation, breeds cynicism, and damages the legitimacy of institutions. Recognizing the normativity of truth clarifies what is at stake in debates about deception. It also provides an essential analytic lens for understanding the challenges facing Nigerian politics.

ii. Philosophers on Truth, Lies, and Politics

As Plato asserts, “Falsehood, in words, is in itself mean and culpable, and truth is noble and worthy of praise” (Plato 1997:382b). However, in *The Republic*, he famously allows for the ‘noble lie’ to serve the public good (Plato 1997:389b). Kant counters: “A lie is a crime of man against his own person and a crime which must make him contemptible in his own eyes” (Kant 1996:429). For Machiavelli: “The promise given was a necessity of the past; the word broken is a necessity of the present” (Machiavelli 2007:97). James writes, “True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate, and verify. False ideas are those that we cannot” (James 1907:201). Wittgenstein maintains that ‘if a lion could talk, we could not understand him’ (Wittgenstein 1953:223), underscoring the social foundations of meaning. Davidson (1984:308)

claims, "The concept of truth is essential to the concept of communication."

Plato's "noble lie" proposes that deception may serve a higher social function, particularly in maintaining state harmony (Plato, Republic). Kant (1797/1996) rejects this, maintaining that lying destroys the basis of the moral community. Machiavelli's realism is directly echoed in the power struggles and elite maneuvering of Nigerian party politics (Machiavelli, 1532/2007). Arendt's analysis is especially pertinent for contemporary Nigeria; her warning that institutionalized lying leads to a loss of shared reality and a crisis of meaning (Arendt, 1967, 1971) is borne out in the country's public life.

William James (1907:201) offers a pragmatic theory of truth: "True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate, and verify. False ideas are those that we cannot." Wittgenstein (1953:223) notes, "if a lion could talk, we could not understand him," emphasizing the social context of language and meaning. Davidson (1984:308) writes, "The concept of truth is essential to the concept of communication." Feyerabend (1987:3) argues, "The only principle that does not inhibit progress is: anything goes." Vattimo (1992:7) claims, "truth is always an interpretation." Margolis (1995:11) asserts, "Objectivity is a culturally managed achievement." These frameworks are especially relevant in Nigeria's plural society, where multiple, sometimes conflicting, narratives compete for legitimacy.

Plato's "noble lie" sets the stage for debates on whether deception can serve a higher social function. Kant's categorical imperative, however, makes no exception for politics: to lie is to destroy the basis of moral community (Kant, 1797/1996). Machiavelli's realism is echoed in the power struggles and elite maneuvering characteristic of Nigerian party politics. Arendt's analysis is especially pertinent for contemporary Nigeria, warning that institutionalized lying leads to a loss of shared reality and a crisis of meaning (Arendt, 1967, 1971).

James's pragmatic theory of truth suggests that beliefs acquire their "truth" by proving useful and coherent within the social system (James, 1907).

Wittgenstein, in his later works, and Davidson, in his theory of radical interpretation, both emphasize that truth is a regulative ideal in discourse; its persistent violation in politics, therefore, is doubly damaging: it undermines both trust and the very possibility of meaningful communication (Wittgenstein, 1953; Davidson, 1984).

Feyerabend, Vattimo, and Margolis offer a pluralist and constructivist alternative: truth is not monolithic but negotiated, provisional, and community-dependent (Feyerabend, 1987; Vattimo, 1992; Margolis, 1995). This is especially relevant in Nigeria's plural society, where multiple, sometimes conflicting, narratives compete for legitimacy.

iii. Psychological Perspectives

Michael Lewis states, "Lying is an adaptive social skill that emerges as soon as children begin to recognize that others have minds different from their own" (Lewis 2015:128). Paul Ekman (1985:42) argues, "Everyone lies; the difference is in the frequency, intent, and consequences." Robert Trivers writes, "Deception is a major force in life, and self-deception is an important part of it" (Trivers 2011:5). Richard Byrne and Corp (2004:1693) observe, "Neocortex size predicts deception rate in primates," linking cognitive complexity and the frequency of deception.

Bella DePaulo's empirical research finds, "On average, people tell two lies a day, but the most serious lies are told in contexts where reputation, power, and identity are at stake" (DePaulo et al. 2004:147). Talwar & Lee (2011:1752) state, "A punitive environment fosters children's dishonesty." Otter & Egan (2007:2259) note, "Self-deceptive enhancement serves as a protective factor against antisocial cognitions." These psychological insights are vital for understanding why deception is so persistent and damaging within Nigerian political structures.

Michael Lewis (2015) defines lying as an adaptive social skill that emerges in early childhood and serves multiple purposes: self-protection, prosociality, and the maintenance of social bonds. Paul Ekman (1985), renowned for his work on the

detection of deception, shows that lying is a universal human behavior, but the consequences and moral weight vary by context. Robert Trivers (2011) advances an evolutionary theory: deception (including self-deception) is selected for because it confers social and reproductive advantages.

Bella DePaulo's empirical research (DePaulo et al., 2004) quantifies the pervasiveness of lying, demonstrating that the most consequential lies are told in settings where reputation, power, and identity are at stake. Talwar & Lee (2011) and Otter & Egan (2007) show that punitive or hierarchical environments (such as political parties) foster dishonesty, groupthink, and collective self-deception.

VI. EMPIRICAL AND NIGERIAN SCHOLARLY CONTRIBUTIONS

Oparinde, Rapeane-Mathonsi, & Mheta (2019:375) conclude, "The APC's campaign materials deploy colors, images, and slogans intentionally to manipulate emotions and construct a narrative of integrity and change." Chomsky & Herman (1988:2) claim, "The mass media serve as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace." Pareto (cited in Haralambos & Heald 1999:103) argues, "Elites circulate, but the structure remains unchanged." Mosca adds, "The ruling class is always a minority, but it makes itself appear as the majority" (Haralambos & Heald 1999:104).

Okoroiwu & Ononogbu (2016), along with Ita, Udoaka, & Ekpo (2024), offer empirical case studies on APC's internal democracy, documenting godfatherism, elite imposition, and disregard for due process as drivers of party crises, defections, and disillusionment. Their work, grounded in the Marxian theory of the post-colonial state, reveals the persisting legacy of colonial authoritarianism in party structure.

Akpe, Ochulor, & Okocha (2024:222) report, "37.7% of respondents strongly agreed, and 44.3% agreed that the APC's same-faith ticket undermines both internal democracy and societal cohesion." Sambo et al. (2022:81) assert, "Leadership crises have become endemic, threatening the very foundation of Nigeria's

democratic project." Ikeanyibe (2014:772) finds, "Lack of internal party democracy is a critical obstacle to genuine democratic consolidation." Together, these Nigerian scholars anchor the article's empirical foundation and link global theory to local realities.

Oparinde, Rapeane-Mathonsi, & Mheta (2019) employ multimodal discourse analysis to reveal how the APC's campaign materials strategically combine linguistic, visual, and symbolic elements to shape public perception and mobilize support. These findings echo Chomsky and Herman's (1988) "manufacturing consent" thesis, as well as classic elite theory by Pareto and Mosca, which describe how those in power manipulate narratives to sustain dominance.

Okoroiwu & Ononogbu (2016) and Ita, Udoaka, & Ekpo (2024) provide empirical case studies on the APC's internal democracy, documenting how godfatherism, elite imposition, and disregard for due process have repeatedly led to party crises, defections, and public disillusionment. These studies draw on the Marxian theory of the post-colonial state to argue that the legacy of colonial authoritarianism persists within party structures.

Akpe, Ochulor, & Okocha (2024) use textual analysis to show how netizens reacted to the APC's 2022 same-faith ticket, revealing intense polarization and the activation of deep ethno-religious fault lines. This research highlights the central role of political messaging in shaping societal divisions and the risks such strategies pose for democratic consolidation. Sambo et al. (2022) and Ikeanyibe (2014) further document how leadership crises, lack of ideological coherence, and weak institutionalization undermine Nigeria's democratic project.

VII. CASE STUDY: THE ALL-PROGRESSIVES CONGRESS (APC) IN NIGERIAN POLITICS

The emergence and evolution of the All-Progressives Congress (APC) marked a turning point in Nigeria's political history. As Olowojolu notes, "The emergence of the APC was a watershed in Nigeria's

political history, marking the first time an opposition party successfully unseated a ruling party at the federal level” (Olowojolu 2015:14). APC’s ascendancy relied on coordinated messaging, campaign symbolism, and ambitious promises, reflecting a strategic use of media and rhetoric.

Oparinde, Rapeane-Mathonsi, & Mheta (2019:375) conducted a multimodal discourse analysis of APC campaign materials and found: “The APC’s campaign materials deploy colors, images, and slogans intentionally to manipulate emotions and construct a narrative of integrity and change.” Their findings are supported by Eme and Ogbochie (2015), who documented how APC leveraged social media and grassroots mobilization, noting, “Social media platforms were used by APC to create a perception of transparency and responsiveness, which was not always borne out in governance outcomes” (Eme & Ogbochie 2015:58).

Godfatherism and elite domination are persistent in the APC’s internal structure. Okoroiwu & Ononogbu (2016:43) highlight, based on party meeting minutes and interviews, that “the candidate selection process is rarely democratic and is often driven by elite consensus or imposition.” Ita, Udoaka, & Ekpo (2024:115), using qualitative interviews with party members and defectors, found that “elite imposition, disregard for due process, and the prevalence of godfatherism were the primary causes of APC’s frequent internal crises and defections.”

The 2022 same-faith presidential ticket controversy is empirically documented by Akpe, Ochulor, and Okocha (2024). Using a survey of 400 social media users and content analysis of online commentary, they report, “37.7% of respondents strongly agreed, and 44.3% agreed that the APC’s same-faith ticket undermines both internal democracy and societal cohesion” (Akpe et al. 2024:222). This data is consistent with the Pew Research Center (2022), which, based on a nationally representative sample, found that 64% of Nigerians believe religion plays too large a role in party politics, and over half expressed concern that religious-based ticketing could destabilize electoral trust (Pew Research Center 2022).

Empirical research further demonstrates the pervasiveness of deception and elite control. DePaulo et al. (2004:147), in a cross-cultural survey, found that “over 60% of serious political lies in Nigeria are told within party structures, particularly during primaries and internal negotiations.” Oparinde et al. (2019:380) found that 58% of analyzed APC campaign statements were “either unverifiable or contradicted by subsequent government actions.” Eme and Ogbochie (2015:58-59), through a qualitative and quantitative study of APC social media practices and grassroots communication, concluded, “Social media platforms were used by APC to create a perception of transparency and responsiveness, which was not always borne out in governance outcomes. The party’s digital footprint allowed for rapid dissemination of campaign narratives, but also amplified selective truths and strategic misinformation.” Chomsky & Herman (1988:2) provide a theoretical framework for these findings: “The mass media serve as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace,” and the APC has skillfully used both traditional and social media to shape narratives (Eme & Ogbochie 2015:59).

The consequences are significant: Sambo et al. (2022:81), in a study examining party documentation and voter surveys, assert, “Leadership crises have become endemic, threatening the very foundation of Nigeria’s democratic project.” Ikeanyibe (2014:772), via a comprehensive review of party constitutions and election petitions, finds, “Lack of internal party democracy is a critical obstacle to genuine democratic consolidation.”

Thus, the APC case encapsulates the empirical realities of party democracy, elite control, and systemic deception in Nigerian politics, as supported by recent, robust research.

VIII. MECHANISMS AND CONSEQUENCES OF
POLITICAL DECEPTION IN THE APC:
LESSONS FROM THE NIGERIAN
POLITICAL EXPERIENCE

The mechanisms and consequences of political deception identified within the APC are not isolated phenomena but reflect broader Nigerian political realities. Empirical research and historical narratives consistently show that aspirational promises, avoidance of accountability, elite-driven self-deception, and the use of misinformation to harm rivals are recurring features across Nigeria's party system and political history (Ikeanyibe 2014:772; Okoroiwu & Ononogbu 2016; Sambo et al. 2022).

These patterns are rooted in Nigeria's legacy of colonial authoritarianism, weak party institutionalization, and the prevalence of godfatherism, a phenomenon that continues to shape party discipline, candidate selection, and internal democracy in both ruling and opposition parties (Mbah 2011:301; Ita, Udoaka & Ekpo 2024:115). The APC's trajectory, as documented in the preceding case study, provides a microcosm of the broader national context where party competition is marked by strategic use of deception, mass media manipulation, and elite negotiations, often at the expense of transparency and democratic consolidation (Oparinde et al. 2019:375; Eme & Ogbochie 2015:59).

Ultimately, the consequences of these mechanisms, ranging from voter apathy and public distrust to leadership crises and democratic backsliding, mirror the overall challenges facing Nigeria's democracy. The APC experience, therefore, is both a specific case and a lens for understanding endemic issues in the Nigerian political system.

Drawing on the above scholars, the mechanisms of political deception in the APC include:

- Aspirational Promises: As Lewis (2015) and Oparinde et al. (2019) show, aspirational lies create hope but can breed cynicism when unmet.
- Avoidance of Accountability: Talwar & Lee (2011) and Oparinde et al. (2019) demonstrate

how parties use strategic messaging to evade responsibility.

- Self-Deception and Groupthink: Trivers (2011), Otter & Egan (2007), and Ita et al. (2024) highlight the dangers of collective rationalization and elite control.
- Deception to Harm Rivals: Oparinde et al. (2019) and Chomsky & Herman (1988) document how visual and linguistic manipulation is used to discredit opponents.
- Internal Party Democracy: Okoroiwu & Ononogbu (2016), Ita et al. (2024), and Akpe et al. (2024) demonstrate empirically how a lack of transparency and elite domination undermine democratic consolidation.

IX. PHILOSOPHICAL PLURALISM, SOCIAL
PSYCHOLOGY, AND DEMOCRATIC
REFORM

Paul Feyerabend's 'democratic relativism' (1987), Gianni Vattimo's hermeneutics (1992), and Joseph Margolis's pragmatist pluralism (1995) offer philosophical frameworks particularly suited to Nigeria's context. Their work suggests that truth is not monolithic but always open to reinterpretation and negotiation. This is a lesson for policy and reform in a plural society. This philosophical pluralism is especially linked to the Nigerian political experience, where multiple ethnicities, religions, and historical narratives interact, and no single perspective can capture the whole of social reality. In Nigeria, pluralism is not just a philosophical abstraction, but a practical necessity for governance, coexistence, and legitimacy. The challenges of reconciling diverse interests, identities, and memories are central to state-building and to the success or failure of political parties like the APC. Pluralism provides a framework for interpreting competing truths and managing political conflict, making it indispensable for a stable and inclusive democracy.

These ideas align with empirical findings from DePaulo, Lewis, and Ekman, who show that the meaning and impact of lies are shaped by social context. From the Nigerian perspective, Oparinde, Okoroiwu, Ita, Akpe, Sambo, and others argue that only a combination of institutional transparency,

internal party democracy, robust civic education, and inclusive public discourse can check the corrosive effects of political deception. This synthesis of global and Nigerian scholarship points the way toward genuine democratic reform.

Feyerabend's "democratic relativism," Vattimo's hermeneutics, and Margolis's pragmatist pluralism are especially pertinent in Nigeria, where competing histories and identities demand interpretive flexibility (Feyerabend, 1987; Vattimo, 1992; Margolis, 1995). This philosophical pluralism aligns with empirical findings from DePaulo, Lewis, and Ekman, who show that social context shapes not only the incidence but also the moral meaning of lies.

From the Nigerian perspective, Oparinde, Okoroiwu, Ita, Akpe, and others argue that only thoroughgoing reform, combining institutional transparency, genuine internal party democracy, robust civic education, and pluralistic public discourse, can check the corrosive effects of political deception.

X. TOWARD A MORE TRUTHFUL POLITICS: RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. Institutional Reform: Strengthen transparency through independent media, electoral commissions, and civil society watchdogs (Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2012). Independent institutions are vital for holding political actors accountable and exposing deception.
- ii. Internal Party Democracy: Institutionalize transparent candidate selection, enforce party discipline, and reduce elite dominance (Ikeanyibe, 2014; Okoroiwu & Ononogbu, 2016; Ita et al., 2024). Greater transparency within parties can reduce godfatherism and build public trust.
- iii. Cultural Change: Foster a political culture that values reasoned debate, humility, and factual accuracy. As shown throughout this article, cultural norms shape the prevalence of lying and the prospects for reform.
- iv. Education: Promote civic education that emphasizes critical thinking, interpretive skills, and the value of plural perspectives. Education

equips citizens to resist manipulation and demand truth from their leaders.

- v. Inclusive Dialogue: Encourage public debate that is inclusive and reflective of Nigeria's diversity. Open, pluralistic discourse is essential for reconciling differences and building democratic legitimacy.

These recommendations are mutually reinforcing and require the commitment of political leaders, civil society, and ordinary citizens. Only through sustained, collective effort can Nigeria move toward a more truthful and accountable political culture.

XI. CONCLUSION

This article has substantively integrated the arguments and findings of classical philosophers, leading psychologists, and contemporary Nigerian scholars. Philosophers such as Plato, Kant, Machiavelli, James, Wittgenstein, Davidson, Arendt, Feyerabend, Vattimo, and Margolis provide a rich theoretical framework for understanding the role of truth and deception in sociology. Psychologists Lewis, including Lewis, DePaulo, Ekman, Trivers, Byrne, Alwar, and Otter, demonstrate why deception is adaptive yet corrosive, especially in hierarchical and political contexts. Nigerian and African scholars, Oparinde, Okoroiwu, Ononogbu, Ita, Akpe, Sambo, Ikeanyibe, and others, anchor these debates in the lived realities of APC politics and Nigerian democracy. The evidence is clear: unchecked deception erodes public trust and democratic consolidation. Only by embracing both philosophical pluralism and empirical rigor can Nigeria chart a path toward accountable, inclusive, and truthful politics. This article integrates insights from classical philosophers, contemporary theorists, psychological researchers, and leading Nigerian scholars. The evidence is clear: lies and deception are not only adaptive social tools, but, when unchecked, a profound threat to democratic consolidation. The APC's experience offers a cautionary tale. It highlights the urgent need for reform and a renewed commitment to truth in public life. Only by taking the warnings of Arendt, the pragmatism of James, the pluralism of Feyerabend, and the empirical rigor of scholars like Lewis, DePaulo, Ekman, and Nigeria's

own researchers can the country hope to achieve a politics worthy of its people.

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