



US Elections and Corporate America

Big businesses rule America, not the demos (people). As the controversial elections continue to attract attention, many have forgotten who really pulls the strings in corporate America. In 2012, *The New York Times* estimated that approximately \$6.3 billion had been pumped into both the presidential and congressional elections. In 2016, *The New York Times* revealed that roughly \$7.5 to \$8 billion would make its way into the current election. Most of these funds come from large multinational corporations, each with a desire to secure their interests by backing a presidential candidate, who will make their future favourable (that is to say profitable).

For instance, in 2012, Charles and David Koch, founders of the multinational corporation Koch Industries, were famously found to run a network of roughly 300 political spenders that were made up primarily of private nonprofit groups - whom collectively contributed \$400 million alone. This year however, *The New York Times* revealed that the same corporation intends to pump in roughly \$900 million!

Big money clearly dominates American politics, but for what reason? By investing millions into an election, elite corporations essentially buy their way into the law. Such corruption has been ignored far too often in Western society, in fact, many have often argued that big money has had a rather small impact on the outcome of an election. Moreover, those who have dissented this consensus, like Noam Chomsky and Thomas Ferguson, have been largely ignored by the wider academic community, despite their commanding respect in the field.

This not only highlights the fallacy of democracy, but it also exposes the failure of the free market. As Joseph Stiglitz once aptly put it, by rearranging the famous line from the Gettysburg Address, capitalism has become a system 'of the 1%, by the 1%, for the 1%'. In order to win votes, one must to pay the right price, something that big businesses are more than capable of. Researchers are only just beginning to investigate this matter; in asking what the relationship is between total campaign expenditure and the outcome of an election, they have found a staggering relationship.

There is a strong, direct link between what the major political parties spend, and what percentage of the votes they win. The results also show that most of the American public have thought very little about their decision and based it purely on the success of a campaign, perhaps due to their growing political indifference. This conclusion, however, has never been mentioned in political textbooks, nor is it published in the media. If anything, it is has become a normal part of elections within the West, if not globally.

Unlike the democratic system that began such corruption, Islam offers a just alternative. The political process under the caliphate is not influenced by how much a candidate has received in funding, nor is it influenced by the blindness of men. Rather, the political system is entirely within the Sharia, it keeps sovereignty with Allah and hands authority to the people, regardless of their wealth bracket. Furthermore, Islam has made it an obligation for people to be concerned about the affairs of the Ummah, so that they may never be indifferent and that they never allow for such corruption (in the form of corporate bribery) within the political process.

In this regard, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said: «لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الرَّاشِيَّ وَالْمُرْتَشِيَّ وَالْمُرْتَشِيَّ» **“Allah cursed the briber (rashi) and bribe-taker (murtashi).”** Ahmad also narrated from Tawban who said: «لَعَنَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الرَّاشِيَّ وَالْمُرْتَشِيَّ وَالرَّائِسَ الَّذِي يَمْشِي بَيْنَهُمَا» **“The Messenger of Allah (SAW) cursed the briber, bribe-taker and the mediator meaning the one who walks between the two.”**

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