



Corruption and its Impact on Socio-Economic Development in Selected Countries of Africa

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Abstract

Africa is indeed a continent blessed with an abundance of natural resources, ranging from valuable minerals like gold, diamonds, copper, and oil. These resources hold immense potential for fostering economic growth and development across the continent. However, Africa continues to grapple with extreme poverty and underdevelopment, with corruption being identified as a major impediment to progress. This paper focuses on the pervasive issue of corruption in Africa, with Nigeria, Uganda, and Zimbabwe as case studies. The research employs a descriptive and analytical method of historical research, grounded in the Prebendal Theory as its theoretical framework. The findings of this study reveal the staggering impact of corruption on Africa's development, with annual losses of approximately \$60 to \$100 billion due to illicit financial flows. These flows divert resources away from political and socio-economic advancement, exacerbating widespread impoverishment. In conclusion, the paper underscores the corrosive effect of corruption on Africa's development and offers several recommendations to address this issue. These include promoting merit-based leadership selection, enforcing stronger legal actions against corruption, empowering anti-corruption agencies, engaging citizens and civil society in the fight against corruption, and strengthening the rule of law and judicial independence. These recommendations aim to pave the way for a more transparent and accountable future in Africa.

Keywords: Corruption, Socio-Economic Development, Government, Infrastructure Africa

Citation of article: Ibrahim, S. M, Sanusi, A. & Muddassir A. G. (2023). Corruption and its Impact on Socio-Economic Development in Selected Countries of Africa, *African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies AJPAS*, 16(2): 23-46

Dated Submitted: 30/08/2023 **Date Accepted:** 18/09/2023 **Date Published:** December, 2023



Introduction

The aftermath of corruption in Africa has claimed more lives than the combined casualties of all African civil conflicts. Within the African context, corruption persists and thrives, fortified by an environment where impunity is firmly entrenched (Lumumba 2021, 20-25)

This sentiment, expressed by Professor Patrick Lumumba, a prominent intellectual and Director of Kenya School of Law, resonates deeply, illustrating the magnitude of corruption's devastating impact on the African continent. This dire situation has elevated to an alarming zenith, plunging the continent into an unending cycle of destitution, which has resulted in the majority of its populace being ensnared in abject poverty. The contemporary global political arena is invariably intertwined with journalistic exposés on corruption, underscoring the profound repercussions it wields on both political and economic progress. The extent to which corruption has festered and distorted societal norms has provoked a series of global protests, mirroring the collective disillusionment.

Notable instances include the resolute walked of over a million Brazilians in March 2015, advocating for an end to grand-scale and political corruption (Bakare, 2018). In May 2015, Moldovans rallied against the disappearance of nearly €1 billion from their Central Bank, a colossal act of embezzlement which they deemed the "robbery of the century" (Calugareanu& Schwartz, 2015, as cited in Oladipo, 2016:6). The embezzlement of \$330 million from Honduras' social security institute prompted mass demonstrations in July, with thousands of Hondurans condemning the President's involvement (Oladipo, 2016:6). Likewise, August 2015 witnessed thousands of Iraqis protesting against entrenched corruption, vehemently demanding the removal of corrupt officials from public office (Oladipo, 2016). The resonance of this global movement echoed on the African continent in September 2016, as thousands of South Africans marched against corruption, imploring public office holders to cease "government theft" (Paul Herman, 2016). In March 2016, the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Kenya issued a call for the Kenyan government to officially classify corruption as a "national disaster" (Clotney, 2016).

Recent years have witnessed a significant upswing in attention directed towards corruption, partly driven by a spate of high-profile corruption cases in developed nations. Simultaneously, a



heightened consciousness of the wide-ranging costs of corruption across the globe, coupled with ongoing political and economic transformations in many nations, has propelled corruption to the forefront of discourse (Gbenga, 2007:1). While corruption is a ubiquitous phenomenon, prevailing in both developed and developing nations, its prominence in Africa is unequivocal, imposing costs too burdensome for African countries to bear. This debilitating reality hampers development efforts and constrains the ruling class's ability to mitigate poverty (Gaston, 2005:23).

Within the African context, corruption has assumed a dominant presence, overshadowing fundamental values such as integrity, accountability, fairness, and morality. Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI, 2020) underscores the persistent failure of numerous African states to effectively combat corruption, thereby exacerbating global challenges to democratic governance. Consequently, corruption emerges not only as a formidable impediment to democratic progress within Africa, but also as a primary catalyst undermining economic advancement and the consolidation of democratic principles. As a result, governmental institutions find themselves eclipsed by the pervasive influence of corruption, which has inflicted substantial harm upon the essence of good governance, public service, and fundamental principles of ethical conduct, each of which are integral elements within the fabric of any state (Gaston, 2005:24). Corruption's prevalence in Africa encompasses a spectrum of practices, ranging from petty corruption necessitating bribes for standard bureaucratic processes to more significant manifestations such as grand and political corruption. The latter involves substantial monetary transactions in exchange for preferential treatment or privileged access (Lawal, 2007:3).

Given the lamentable state of widespread collateral damage inflicted upon African states, their leaders have frequently convened to deliberate on strategies to combat the pernicious influence of corruption. This is palpably evident in the outcomes of the Anti-Corruption Summit held in London, as conveyed through a 34-point communique. Within this document, world leaders unanimously acknowledged the imperative of addressing corruption to uphold economic stability and growth, safeguard societal security, preserve human rights, mitigate poverty, ensure



environmental protection for future generations, and combat organized crime (Anti-Corruption Summit, 2006)

Against this backdrop, the paper delves into the intricate tapestry of corruption and its far-reaching implications on Africa's development trajectory. The paper's structure is designed in five interconnected segments, beginning with the introduction. The second part offers a contextual discourse on the intertwined concepts of corruption and development. A cross-comparative analysis of corruption trends in some selected Africa constitutes the third part, underscoring the gravity of corrupt scenarios through a methodical examination of gathered data. The fourth segment stands as the crux of the study, delving deeply into the ramifications of corruption on Africa's developmental prospects. The final section, the fifth, encompasses the conclusion and closing remarks, culminating the paper's investigation with a synthesized reflection on its insights and implication

Conceptual Elucidation

Corruption

The concept of corruption exists in a state of perpetual evolution, characterized by its broad scope and the challenge of ascribing a precise definition. Consequently, as there are multiple authors addressing corruption, there also arise diverse definitions. Evans (2002) aptly encapsulates this complexity, asserting that encapsulating a corrupt transaction in a few words is challenging due to its multifaceted nature. Within the realm of definitions, a succinct yet comprehensive perspective is presented by Ojo (2018), who posits that corruption embodies any form of deceitful, unethical, or fraudulent conduct exhibited by individuals in positions of authority or participants in transactions. This definition extends to encompass situations where 'insiders' capitalize at the expense of 'outsiders'

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) Act, Session 2 (2000), further delineates corruption, encompassing bribery, fraud, and related offenses. At its core, corruption signifies the misuse or abuse of power or entrusted positions for personal or collective gains, whether monetary or otherwise. Philip (2013) aligns with this perspective, characterizing corruption as a clandestine practice involving both givers and takers



engaged in bribery and extortion, both parties inclined to maintain the secrecy of their actions. Philip (2013) posits that corruption, from an African standpoint, encompasses practices such as outright theft, misappropriation of state assets, nepotism, preferential treatment for personal connections, and the manipulation of public authority for personal gain.

Uzodiukwu (2015) delineates corruption as a form of dishonest or fraudulent behavior exhibited by individuals in positions of power, often involving bribery. This malevolent use of authority serves to advance personal interests, as articulated by Morris (1991). Akin to this, Section 98 of the criminal code defines corruption as the giving or receiving of benefits, rewards, or inducements to manipulate or divert a public service employee from their honest and impartial duties (Lawal, 2016). Moreover, Ottong's examination, cited in Ering, Lazarus, and Frances (2015), reveals that corruption typically entails the involvement of two parties—the "corrupt" and the "corruptor"—engaging in illicit or immoral transactions characterized by a pervasive element of dishonesty.

In a similar vein, Corruption WATCH (2015) contends that corruption involves the misuse of public resources to unfairly enrich individuals, their families, or associates. Mafunisa (2007), cited by Kudizai (2014), asserts that corruption encompasses all unlawful or unethical utilization of governmental authority for personal or political gain. Heidenheimer (2001), cited in Kudizai (2014), draws inspiration from the Oxford English Dictionary, characterizing political corruption as the distortion or degradation of integrity during the execution of public duties through bribery or favoritism, encompassing the prevalence of corrupt practices, including bribery or fraud, within a state or public institution. It is acknowledged that the prevailing method of defining corruption often aligns with Western perspectives, while the African viewpoint, rooted in historical patron-client relationships, may harbor distinct interpretations of the term. In this regard, Ojo (2018) advocates for a broader understanding of corruption, encompassing nepotism, abuse of power, embezzlement, misappropriation, influence peddling, prevarication, insider trading, and the misuse of public office.

It's on this base Transparency International categorizes corruption into three domains: grand, petty, and political, contingent on the pecuniary value and sector in which it occurs (CPI, 2015).



Grand corruption is situated at the upper echelons of state or government, often involving complicity from political leaders. Petty corruption manifests through the abuse of authority by low to mid-level public officials, affecting interactions with ordinary citizens seeking access to essential goods and services in settings like hospitals, schools, and police departments. Political corruption centers on manipulating policies, institutions, and procedural rules to foster self-gain or collective advancement (Lindsey, 2015). It is notable that grand and political corruption bear more far-reaching implications and consequences compared to petty corruption.

In light of these perspectives, it is imperative to unequivocally state that corruption in Africa is glaring and palpable, exerting a more pronounced and adverse impact than it does in other regions.

Development as a Concept

The term "development" resides within the realms of social science discourse, engendering ongoing debates among scholars. It embodies a multidimensional process of change, encompassing growth, empowerment, advancement, and the orchestration of transformations at various levels. In the context of human society, development is a multifaceted endeavor, characterized by its intricate facets rather than a one-dimensional trajectory.

Rodney (1972) presents a tripartite perspective on development, spanning individual, social group (community), and economic dimensions. On an individual level, Walter conceptualizes development as an augmentation of skills, capacity, freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility, and material well-being. In the realm of social groups, development denotes an ongoing enhancement in the ability to adapt and coordinate both internal and external relationships. Within economic development, Walter delves into the notion of societies' collective economic advancement, leading to an augmented capacity to engage with their environment. Rodney underscores the importance of comprehending natural laws (science), their assimilation, and practical application, along with the evolution of tools (technology) and the organization of labor, which collectively influence the society's environmental interaction.

Dudley Seer (1969) extends the definition of development to encompass not only capital accumulation and economic growth, but also equitable access to sufficient nourishment,



employment, and the mitigation of income disparities. It entails a process of instigating fundamental and desirable changes that are sustainable in the long run within the society. As Routledge (1995) highlighted, the term development conveys a feeling that something has changed and that this change implies betterment, advance, optimism, progress and a general improvement of the human condition. In a broader sense, some have understood development as a social change (Apter, 1987; Kulkarni, Ranjan, 1992, Semasinghe, 2016) .The UNDP (2010) clearly emphasized that “people are the real wealth of a nation” and “the objective of development should be to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives”, and also that “development is primarily and fundamentally about people” (UNDP, 2010). Development signifies more than mere expansion; it signifies the empowerment of individuals and communities, the equipping of societies to navigate their surroundings, and the cultivation of a sustainable and thriving environment. This entails harnessing the capacity to influence and harness the forces of nature for personal and collective advancement (Nnavozie, 1990, cited in Oladipo, 2006). Essential to note is that development emerges as a multifaceted concept, traversing various conceptions, yet fundamentally revolving around the transformative processes shaping societal life.

From these perspectives, the intricate connection between corruption and development becomes evident. In essence, there exists a direct impact of corrupt practices on development outcomes. For instance, if development is perceived as the government or system's capacity to judiciously manage resources for enhancing citizen welfare, then corruption can be seen as a pivotal hindrance to effective governance and development. In the African context, the deficiency in resource management capabilities arises due to the overwhelming presence of corruption, thus posing a significant impediment to desired progress in both governance and development

Theoretical Framework

The challenges confronting Africa, particularly the issue of underdevelopment, have been subject to thorough scrutiny by scholars, resulting in a continuous flux of theoretical explanations. One prevailing school of thought is the liberal perspective, advocating that for Africa to achieve development comparable to the West, it must assimilate and embrace the growth trajectory



witnessed in Western nations. This school places paramount importance on the five developmental stages delineated by Todaro: the traditional stage, pre-takeoff stage, takeoff stage, consumption stage, and industrialized stage. However, this viewpoint has encountered criticism from the Marxist school of thought, compelling it to present an alternative explanation for Africa's underdevelopment. The Marxist perspective posits that the stagnation and limited progress experienced in Africa stem from the exploitative relationships between the developed and developing worlds. This view emphasizes the existence of asymmetric ties that have perpetuated stagnation and backwardness within Africa.

It's imperative to note that the ever-evolving literature has unveiled novel dimensions to the causes of Africa's underdevelopment. Among these theoretical expositions are the statist theory and the prebendal proposition. The statist theory, for instance, interprets development or underdevelopment through the lens of leadership style. The theory's core propositions revolve around corruption, poor governance, mismanagement, flawed administrative policies, patron-client relationships, and other factors that undermine the principles of effective governance. Converging on a similar notion, the prebendal theory posits that Africa remains underdeveloped due to pervasive corruption which has become a serious issue across the continent. This confluence of perspectives highlights the multidimensional nature of Africa's underdevelopment and underscores the necessity for comprehensive theoretical insights to inform potential solutions.

This study is anchored on Prebendal Theory, which is closely associated with the American scholar Richard Joseph. In 1987, Joseph conducted a seminal study employing this theory to dissect the Patron-Client relationships that have come to define African politics. The term "prebend" finds its origins in ecclesiastical contexts, particularly the church. It denotes the entitlement of a cathedral member to a portion of the institution's revenues (Abada and Oyia, 2020). At its core, Prebendal Theory posits that state offices are treated as prebends, open to appropriation by officeholders who leverage them to generate personal benefits for themselves, their constituents, and kin groups. Joseph employed this concept to capture the sentiment of entitlement that pervades the utilization of African state resources. Elected officials, government employees, and members of ethnic and religious groups to which they belong often perceive



themselves as entitled to a share of government revenues. A pivotal element of Prebendalism, as outlined by Joseph, is the transformation of the office into the personal possession of the officeholder.

When applying the Prebendal Theory, it becomes evident that corruption in Africa has not only become a commonplace practice but also a deeply ingrained way of life. Corruption has permeated every corner and aspect of African societies, evolving into a cultural norm. This phenomenon has been nurtured, sustained, and normalized over time. Leaders across Africa have gained notoriety for their involvement in stealing, embezzlement, and the misappropriation of resources intended for development (Bakare, 2016). Regrettably, Africa stands as the most corrupt region globally, hosting some of the world's most corrupt leaders (CPI 2020). This environment of corruption renders the region vulnerable to terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, religious conflicts, and other factors that exacerbate misery.

A staggering amount of money, as will be illustrated in forthcoming tables, has been siphoned by selected or elected elites since independence. This has further worsened the plight of the majority, plunging them into poverty and perpetuating a state of stagnation. If reversed, one can extrapolate that Africa could have transcended its current state of underdevelopment. The scale of theft perpetrated by African elites on the continent is beyond the survivability of any nation; the illicit outflows of funds cripple the continent's prospects. According to the Human and Environmental Development Agenda (HEDA) Resource Center, Africa's annual loss due to Illicit Financial Flows (IFF) ranges from \$60 to \$100 billion (Sunday Vanguard, 2021). This staggering amount reflects an inhumane and devilish reality, contributing to primitive accumulation of wealth that extends beyond generations. The consequences are dire: extreme impoverishment, heightened insecurity, kidnappings, and various inhumane outcomes.

In Africa, holding state power translates into access to state resources. Intense competition for political positions often disregards the intended statutory purposes of such offices. Public servants occupying influential government positions see this as an opportunity to secure state resources, primarily for themselves and secondarily for their kin groups. Notable cases, such as that of Diezani, the former Nigerian Petroleum Minister, and James Ibori, former governor of



Delta State, exemplify the perspective of African elites toward government resources. The assets seized from these individuals underscore the colossal scale of their actions. This prevailing mindset encourages cronyism, nepotism, and other self-serving tendencies, pressuring public officers to utilize their positions for the exclusive benefit of their own groups, often at the expense of others. Abada and Oyia (2020) aptly assert that "the rule of law is the shield that protects the individual from government corruption." This manipulation of power for personal gain echoes the core tenets of the Prebendal Theory, wherein state offices are converted into avenues for personal enrichment, perpetuating corruption as an embedded practice in Africa's socio-political landscape

Historical Research Design

This study adopted the historical research design. The design focuses on the systematic examination and analysis of historical data and events to gain insights into the research topic, which, in this case, is corruption and its impact on Africa's development. In this design, the primary focus is on examining past events and data to analyze patterns, causes, and effects related to the topic under investigation.

Method of Data Collection

The study, being qualitative in nature, exclusively relied on secondary data sources for data collection. Qualitative data, as defined by John and Creswell (2020), is non-numerical and focuses on the characteristics, qualities, and attributes of phenomena. It involves descriptive elements such as words, text, images, and observations, making it suitable for understanding the deeper meanings, patterns, and nuances of human behavior and social phenomena.

Sources of Data Gathering

To gather data, the research made use of various documentary sources, including academic journals, newspaper articles, and government statistics from sources like the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics, corruption indices from international organizations like Transparency International, opinion polls conducted by Afrobarometer, historical records like government reports and official documents as well as internet sources.



Corruption and Development in Africa: Comparative Analysis

This paper adopts a cross-comparative methodology to investigate the intricate relationship between corruption and development in Africa. Recognizing the vastness of the African continent with its 54 states, the analysis focuses on a selected group of countries including Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and Uganda. While these specific countries serve as primary case studies, it is important to note that the analysis's insights can extend to other African nations as well, albeit with varying degrees of emphasis. Decades after gaining independence from colonial powers, Africa's high hopes for rapid development, fueled by its abundant natural resources, were gradually eclipsed by the pervasive emergence of corruption (Bakare, 2018). This phenomenon quickly evolved into a corrosive force, obstructing and undermining policies intended for Africa's advancement. The consequence of this systemic corruption was the diversion of limited funds earmarked for developmental projects (Nkwede & Emordi, 2018). Regrettably, Africa's landscape became a stark illustration of a system strangled by the grip of rampant corruption. While several reform efforts have been initiated by leaders across the political spectrum and from various countries, the enormity of corruption has consistently thwarted the anticipated outcomes of these reforms (Oladipo, 2006).

Corruption's pervasiveness is vividly illustrated by the necessity for patients seeking essential services in public hospitals across countries such as Cameroon, Zimbabwe, Somalia, and Liberia to provide unofficial payments before receiving treatment. Corruption has infiltrated significant sectors of African states, with a troubling trend of widespread corruption being propagated by a substantial number of its leaders. This unfortunate reality has contributed to Africa's dubious distinction as a region characterized by heightened corruption, with many of its leaders being implicated as active participants (CPI, 2020). A retrospective examination of African history highlights the extent of financial theft and embezzlement perpetrated by numerous leaders who assumed the roles of heads of states or held other prominent positions. Table 1, displayed below, presents a snapshot of the financial misdeeds and embezzlement committed by select African leaders following their countries' attainment of independence. These alarming figures are sourced from an exposé published by a French weekly magazine in May 1997.



In summary, this cross-comparative analysis delves into the intricate relationship between corruption and development in Africa, offering insights drawn from a focused study of specific countries while acknowledging the potential applicability of its findings to a broader range of African states.

Table: 1 Breakdown of Fortunes of Some Selected African Head of States

General Sani Abacha	Nigeria	\$20billion
President H.Boigny	Ivory coast	\$6 billion
General Ibrahim Babangida	Nigeria	\$5billion
President Mobutu	Zaire	\$4billion
President MouzaTraore	Mali	\$2billion
President Henri Bedie	Ivory Coast -	\$300million
President Denis N'gnesso	Congo	\$200million
President Omar Bongo	Gabon	\$80million
President Paul Biya	Cameroon	\$70million
President Haite Mariam	Ethiopia	\$30million
President HisseneHabre	Chad	\$3million

Source: Ayittey 2020, cited in Lawal, 2017)

The gravity of the financial misappropriation carried out by leaders in various African countries becomes all the more apparent when one considers the transformative potential these vast sums could have had on these nations. The substantial amounts siphoned from these countries' treasuries, especially when contextualized within the value of the funds at the time of their theft, could have catalyzed significant positive change in both the social and economic spheres. This stark reality serves to underline why Africa, as a continent, has consistently held a notorious reputation for ranking prominently among the world's most corrupt nations. It is noteworthy that African leaders, throughout history, have persistently featured at the forefront of the list of the most corrupt individuals on a global scale.

Table II, presented below, offers further substantiation of this claim by highlighting the current ten most corrupt countries. This list is compiled from Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for the year 2020, utilizing the Global Barometer. This index serves as a reliable barometer of global corruption trends and underscores the persistent challenges that many African nations face in combatting corruption effectively.



In essence, the financial hemorrhaging caused by corrupt practices has played a significant role in stymying Africa's progress and development. The alarming prevalence of corruption across the continent, coupled with the complicity of many leaders, has led to Africa's unfavorable standing in global corruption rankings. The subsequent sections of this paper aim to delve deeper into this complex issue, analyzing its implications on development and suggesting potential avenues for change.

Table II: The 10 Most Corrupt Countries in the World

Rank	Scored	
1.	South Sudan	(19/100)
2.	Somalia (17/100)	
3.	Libya (16/100)	
4.	Guinea (15/100)	Bissau
5.	Sudan (14/100)	
6.	Equatorial (13/100)	Guinea
7.	Chad (12/100)	
8.	Central (11/100)	African Republic
9.	Eritrea	(9/100)
10.	Zimbabwe (8/100)	

Source: Transparency International CPI (2023)

It is important to categorically state it here that it is often not possible to state the real percentages of corruption for each country, as there is no such data available. However, the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) scores are based on a variety of factors, including surveys of



business people and experts on corruption, as well as analysis of publicly available data. The scores are on a scale of 0 to 100, with 0 being highly corrupt and 100 being very clean (CPI, 2023).

Nigeria's Corruption Landscape

The case of Nigeria stands as a compendium of examples, illustrating its unfortunate status as one of the most corrupt nations globally. Remarkably, Nigeria boasts an elaborate framework of anti-corruption legislation, agencies, and institutions within the African context. However, the crux of the issue lies not in the absence of anti-corruption measures, but in the challenge of enforcement. Despite the intricacy of these anti-corruption legislations and constitutional provisions, corruption continues to surge unabated, serving as a formidable impediment to the nation's political, social, and economic advancement (CPI, 2020). Notably, Nigeria persistently occupies a prominent position on the roster of the world's most corrupt countries. Notably, in the latest ranking, Nigeria's standing has deteriorated from 2018, with a score of 27 points placing it 144th out of 180 nations (CPI, 2020).

Within West Africa, Nigeria has regrettably garnered the position of the second most corrupt country, with Guinea-Bissau being the sole nation surpassing it in corruption within the region (CPI, 2020). A broader continental perspective reveals that merely 12 African countries fare worse in corruption perception, as compared to Nigeria. These nations include the Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, Equatorial Guinea, Sudan, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Chad, Eritrea, Burundi, Congo, Guinea-Bissau, and South Sudan (CPI, 2020). It is pertinent to note that Somalia and South Sudan maintain their unenviable distinction as the most corrupt countries globally, as per the CPI (2020) rankings. In the backdrop of incessant reports concerning corruption in Nigeria, these statistics hardly raise eyebrows. Indeed, some arguments posit that Nigeria could arguably be ranked as the world's most corrupt nation, given the entrenched nature of corruption permeating every facet of its society (Bakare, 2016; Ojo 2016).

Over the years, myriad agencies both governmental and non-governmental have consistently reported instances of significant financial malfeasance within Nigeria. Startling figures, often in the billions, have been cited as being siphoned from Nigeria's public funds. An illustrative

example lies in the period between 1960 and 1999, during which an astounding sum exceeding \$400 billion is believed to have been embezzled from Nigeria's coffers (Akinyemi, 2010:4, cited in Ojo, 2018:48). This statistic is but one among a deluge of similar figures. A case in point is the Global Financial Integrity report published in 2010, indicating that Nigeria suffered a staggering loss of \$217.8 billion between 1970 and 2008 due to illegal financial flows (Akinyemi, 2010:4, cited in Ojo, 2018:48).

Former Speaker of Nigeria's House of Representatives, Honourable Bankole Dimeji, voiced an equally alarming perspective, estimating a mind-boggling sum of three trillion naira missing between 2005 and 2010, equivalent to \$20 billion over five years (The Guardian, April 5, 2010:1, cited in Ojo, 2018:48). In 2016 alone, illicit financial flows through Nigeria's banking system amounted to over \$15.7 billion (approximately N6 trillion naira), according to a revelation by the Global Financial Integrity Group in Washington D.C., USA (Daily Sun, September 7, 2016:15, cited in Ojo, 2018:48). The period spanning 2002 to 2011 witnessed a total loss of \$140 billion to illicit flows, solidifying Nigeria's standing among the world's top ten contributors to illicit financial flows. Given these disconcerting facts, one may question the efficacy of Nigeria's anti-corruption agencies. The characterization by former British Prime Minister David Cameron, who quipped that Nigeria is a "fantastically corrupt country on earth," might indeed hold more truth than jest (Ojo, 2018:48).

More recent data have come to light, unveiling the disconcerting reality of Nigeria's staggering losses due to Illegal Financial Flows (IFF). A revelation made by the Human Environmental Development Agenda (HEDA) Resource Center has sent shockwaves through the nation. According to their findings, Nigeria has suffered a loss ranging between \$15 billion to \$18 billion due to illegal financial flows (Dunn 2016). Notably, Nigeria's individual loss accounts for a significant 30% of Africa's cumulative loss to IFF, amounting to approximately \$50 billion over the past decade (Dunn 2016). The Thabo Mbeki report of 2018 echoes a similar sentiment, estimating Africa's annual losses to IFF at a range of \$50 billion to \$60 billion (Dunn 2016). While various opinion polls speculate that Nigeria alone may be losing up to \$50 billion annually, other sources suggest that the collective losses of African states linked to IFF could range from \$60 billion to \$100 billion each year (Dunn 2016).



These stark revelations provide insight into the reason behind Nigeria's underdevelopment. The sheer magnitude of these illicit financial outflows would undoubtedly hinder any nation's progress. The diverted funds have the potential to transform the country's fortunes by generating employment opportunities, driving infrastructure development, and establishing top-tier healthcare facilities for its citizens, ultimately combating poverty. The unprecedented scale of these illegal financial outflows poses a challenge that no country, even in the West, could endure unscathed.

Zimbabwe: A Landscape of Corruption

Zimbabwe, officially known as the Republic of Zimbabwe, and formerly Southern Rhodesia (1911–1964), Rhodesia (1964–1979), and Zimbabwe Rhodesia (1979–1980), is a landlocked country situated in southern Africa (Ingham, 2021:1). Its southern border stretches for 125 miles (200 kilometers) adjacent to the Republic of South Africa. The country is bordered by Botswana to the southwest and west, Zambia to the north, and Mozambique to the northeast and east (Ingham, 2012:1). The capital city is Harare, formerly known as Salisbury. Zimbabwe achieved majority rule and international recognition of its independence in April 1980, marking the end of an era of colonial rule followed by a 15-year period of white-dominated minority rule that was established after the regime's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965 (Ingham, 2012:1).

Regrettably, Zimbabwe stands as one of the most corrupt nations in Africa, with its late President being among the most corrupt leaders globally (Ladipo, 2006:7). President Robert Mugabe's tenure was marked by numerous instances of corruption within the nation (Bakare,2016). A notable incident was the 'Willow gate scandal,' wherein senior government officials were accused of exploiting government resources to acquire vehicles from Willow Vale Motor Industries, subsequently reselling them for personal gain (Daily Nation, Kenya, 2015). The country has been embroiled in various other scandals, including the War Victims' Compensation Fund scandal, the Indigenisation Funds scandal, and the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe's Agricultural Programme Funds scandal (Oladipo, 2016:6).



Estimates suggest that Zimbabwe loses over \$5 million annually due to corruption. However, the true extent of corruption's financial toll remains largely unquantified. A pertinent example is the Marange diamond field in the eastern region of the country, which is renowned for its substantial diamond resources. The field's annual production capacity is valued at more than \$2 billion (Kwenda, 2021: May 4th). Astonishingly, the funds generated from this lucrative resource have mysteriously disappeared without a trace. Tender Ebeti, Zimbabwe's Minister of Finance, even acknowledged his inability to account for any of the proceeds, despite holding the position responsible for financial oversight. He lamented that transactions involving the late President Robert Mugabe and the leadership of the Movement for Democratic Change coalition party remain shrouded in secrecy (Kwenda, 2021: May 4th). Zimbabwe has earned a reputation as a nation where corruption is deeply ingrained. This systemic issue has infiltrated all sectors of society. As evidenced by the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) survey of 2020, citizens report instances where law enforcement accepts bribes to either falsely arrest innocent individuals or release criminals. The prevailing sentiment is that even simple inquiries require offering bribes before receiving any form of assistance.

Uganda's Struggle with Corruption: A Systemic Malaise

Uganda operates as a presidential republic, where the President holds the role of head of state and a prime minister oversees government affairs. The country follows a multi-party system, rooted in a democratic parliamentary structure that extends equal rights to citizens aged 18 and above. Regrettably, Uganda is marked not only by stark poverty, but also by a pervasive and deeply entrenched issue that stifles growth and development. Corruption has permeated Uganda to such an extent that it has infiltrated every facet of society. The nation's contemporary history is laden with grand corruption scandals that have cast a shadow over its progress.

A glaring example is the misappropriation of donor funds amounting to \$12.7 million from the Office of the Prime Minister in 2012. These funds were allocated for the reconstruction of northern Uganda, a region devastated by a two-decade-long conflict, as well as Karamoja, Uganda's most impoverished area. Health programs have also been compromised, with instances such as the diversion of \$4.5 million from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and



Malaria in 2005, and the theft of \$800,000 from the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations in 2006 (Human Rights Watch, 2013).

While President Yoweri Museveni's rhetoric emphasizes his commitment to combating corruption, many Ugandans perceive his actions as offering implicit support to corrupt practices. Museveni has been accused of shielding his aides and associates when they face corruption allegations (Oladipo, 2016). For instance, when Mike Mukula, a former State Minister for Health and current Member of Parliament, appealed his conviction for embezzling 210 million Ugandan shillings (\$80,000) from the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations in 2013, Museveni personally financed Mukula's legal defense with 100 million Ugandan shillings (Oladipo, 2016). Uganda's corruption woes are reflected in international rankings. In Transparency International's 2017 Corruption Perceptions Index, Uganda is ranked 151 out of 180 countries, scoring 26 out of 100. The 2016 Ibrahim Index of African Governance places Uganda at 19 out of 54 countries, with a score of 57, surpassing both the African and East African regional averages (Transparency International, Afrobarometer, 2015). Corruption has so deeply penetrated society that even state-run health centers require bribes for medication distribution (Bertelsmann Foundation, 2018). The police are perceived as the most corrupt institution, with 63% of Ugandans believing that most or all members are corrupt. Similarly, government officials, tax authorities, judges, magistrates, and business executives are all viewed as corrupt by over 52% of the population (Transparency International, 2015, *Globe and Mail*, June 2017), *Daily Monitor*, June 2017, *The Independent*, July 2017; *Global Witness*, July 2017).

Corruption and Its Impact on Development in Africa: A Costly Reality

Development, in its essence, involves a government's ability to efficiently manage resources to enhance the well-being of its citizens. On the flip side, corruption acts as a significant hindrance to good governance and sustainable development. The African continent has notably struggled to effectively manage its resources due to the rampant issue of corruption, which poses a grave threat to both development and good governance (Oladipo, 2006). Scholars have extensively explored the intricate relationship between corruption, development, and good governance (Oladipo, 2006; Lawal, 2007; Oluwale, 2017; Ojo, 2018). High levels of corruption are



correlated with diminished investment and economic growth, as highlighted by Roce-Ackerman, cited in Ojo (2018). Corruption's adverse effects encompass reduced industrial policy effectiveness, encouragement of operating businesses in unofficial sectors to evade tax and regulatory laws, and a discouragement of foreign direct investment due to the unattractive environment.

Corruption is symptomatic of governance mismanagement, as suggested by Ojo (2018), signaling an underlying issue in state management. Its impact on Africa's development is profound. This is especially evident in Nigeria, where corruption has crippled the economy. Poverty is one of the outcomes, with a significant portion of Sub-Saharan populations living in dire conditions. For instance, 71% of Nigerians live on less than \$1 (US) a day, mirroring similar figures in other African countries (Akinyemi, 2010, cited in Ojo, 2018). Unemployment is another repercussion of rampant corruption, particularly affecting the youth. In Nigeria, more than 40% of the youth are unemployed (Ojo, 2018). Infrastructure is deteriorating, and access to basic necessities like clean water is lacking for many. The effects of corruption span multiple dimensions, as highlighted by Umana (2018), including political, social, and economic spheres.

Economic Impact: Corruption diverts limited funds, hampering economic progress and obstructing policy changes necessary for development. Although direct financial losses from corruption are substantial, the indirect costs, such as economic distortions, inefficiencies, and waste, are more detrimental over the long term. Corruption raises business costs, erodes revenue, and leads to subpar service delivery. This perpetuates poverty and hinders upward mobility, disproportionately affecting the poor.

Political Implications: Corruption sows seeds of political instability and lawlessness. It tarnishes the international image of the continent, discouraging foreign investment and hurting trade. Inefficiencies in public services arise, and crucial infrastructural facilities are misused or vandalized. This can lead to inflation, unemployment, declining output, and a deteriorating standard of living.

Socio-Cultural Transformation: Corruption alters societal values, shifting the focus from moral virtues to the relentless pursuit of wealth and power. Good conduct takes a back seat,

fostering a culture of wealth accumulation. Corruption also contributes to security challenges, as seen in Nigeria's case, where despite substantial security funding, peace remains elusive. Corruption's toll is undeniable, as revealed by Bawa, EFCC Chairman, in the recovery of vast sums from corrupt officials (Tuesday Live, May 11). Nigeria's security spending, amounting to over N12 trillion from 2015 to 2021, raises concerns given the prevailing insecurity (Okechukwu, 2021, Punch, May 5).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper underscores the critical issue of corruption in Africa, using Nigeria, Uganda, and Zimbabwe as case studies. The abundance of natural resources in Africa offers the promise of economic growth and development, yet the continent continues to struggle with extreme poverty and underdevelopment. Corruption emerges as a major barrier to realizing this potential. Our research, grounded in the Prebendal Theory, illuminates the pervasive nature of corruption and its debilitating effects on the African continent. The findings of this study indicate that Africa suffers annual losses ranging from approximately \$60 to \$100 billion due to illicit financial flows, diverting crucial resources away from political and socio-economic advancement. Corruption, with its various forms and manifestations, undermines institutions, erodes public trust, and hampers effective governance. It perpetuates inequality, deepens poverty, and obstructs development efforts. The impacts of corruption are felt at every level of society, from the individual struggling for basic necessities to the nation seeking progress on the global stage. Ultimately, the eradication of corruption is not only a moral imperative but a crucial step toward unlocking Africa's full potential and achieving sustainable development. By confronting this challenge head-on, Africa can pave the way for a future characterized by prosperity, social justice, and inclusive growth for all its people

Recommendations

To effectively combat corruption and promote development in Africa, a multi-faceted approach is essential. The following recommendations offer strategies to address the root causes of corruption and uplift societies for a brighter future:



1. Merit-Based Leadership Selection: African citizens should prioritize meritocracy over patronage when electing leaders. This shift in mindset would emphasize qualifications, competence, and commitment to national interest. By electing leaders based on their ability to serve the people rather than personal affiliations, African nations can foster effective governance and development.

2. Stronger Legal Action: Leaders across Africa must uphold their duty to combat corruption by adhering to the legal framework and ensuring that offenders face stringent consequences. Strict implementation of anti-corruption laws, regardless of political or social status, is paramount to creating a deterrent against corrupt practices.

3. Empowerment of Anti-Corruption Agencies: Anti-graft agencies should be equipped with resources, independence, and modern technologies to effectively detect, investigate, and prosecute corruption cases. Removing political interference and ensuring these agencies operate efficiently is crucial.

4. Citizen Engagement and Civil Society Empowerment: Citizens' involvement is pivotal in combating corruption. Empowered civil society organizations can mobilize communities to demand transparency, accountability, and ethical governance.

5. Strengthening Rule of Law and Judicial Independence: Ensuring an independent and competent judiciary is essential for combating corruption. Strengthening the rule of law, protecting judges from external influence, and providing them with the necessary resources and training can help facilitate fair trials and expedite corruption cases.

In conclusion, eradicating corruption and promoting development in Africa requires a comprehensive approach that involves citizens, leaders, institutions, and international partners. By embracing meritocracy, enforcing laws, empowering anti-corruption agencies, educating the youth, promoting transparency, fostering international collaboration, and engaging civil society, Africa can pave the way for a more prosperous and ethical future



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