

Developmental Benefits of Corruptible Governance where Transparency and Accountability are Held in Dissimulation: The Case of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the developmental implications of corruptible governance, where transparency and accountability are exercised through dissimulation, using Nigeria as a case study. It explored why communities celebrate and welcome public officials involved in corruption upon their return from office or prison. The analysis was framed using neopatrimonialism theory. A mixed-method approach was employed, including questionnaires, interviews, document analysis, and newspaper reviews, to ensure a comprehensive investigation. Data were analyzed using weighted means to aid interpretation. The findings revealed that communities often rejoice due to tangible benefits received from perceived corrupt individuals, such as the construction of universities, the recruitment of local youth into security forces, improved infrastructure, world-class hospitals, and uninterrupted electricity supply. The study recommended revitalizing Nigerian welfare systems based on Ubuntu values, emphasizing honesty, integrity, and fairness as a means to counteract corruption.

Keywords:

Accountability, corruption, development, governance, transparency

Manfaat Pembangunan dari Tata Kelola Koruptif dengan Transparansi dan Akuntabilitas yang Disampaikan: Studi Kasus Nigeria

ABSTRAK

Penelitian bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi mengapa masyarakat merayakan dan menyambut kembali pejabat publik yang terlibat dalam korupsi setelah mereka dipecat atau keluar dari penjara. Analisis dilakukan dengan menggunakan kerangka teori neopatrimonialisme. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode campuran dengan menggunakan kuesioner, wawancara, analisis dokumen, dan review surat kabar, untuk mendapatkan data yang lengkap. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa masyarakat sering bersukacita karena menerima manfaat nyata dari individu yang dianggap korup, seperti pembangunan universitas, perekrutan pemuda lokal ke dalam pasukan keamanan, perbaikan infrastruktur, rumah sakit bertaraf internasional, dan pasokan listrik tanpa gangguan. Studi ini merekomendasikan revitalisasi sistem kesejahteraan Nigeria berdasarkan nilai-nilai Ubuntu, dengan menekankan kejujuran, integritas, dan keadilan sebagai cara untuk melawan korupsi.

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1. Introduction

The burden and responsibilities of African extended family system without scholarship and welfare system with meagre pay system make corruption to be ignored and thrived (Wanyama et al., 2009). People that are known to be rich and corrupt are usually welcomed when they are returning home (Sowunmi et al., 2010).

Corruption is a world-wide issue and described as evil (Dike, 2005). Corruption was heavily practised in ancient Israel, Egypt, Rome, Britain and Greece (Dike, 2005). The solution to the problem of corruption, according to the former Nigerian president Muhammadu Buhari in his maiden address to Nigerians on 29th May 2015 is, “We must kill corruption before corruption will kill us” (Anokwute, 2018). But the former President Goodluck Jonathan argued that the solution to the problem of corruption is not committing men and women involved in corruption into prison but by the use of modern technologies (Tijani, 2015). Ikeke (2024) argued that:

tackling the problem of corruption, or the abuse of public trust for private gain, is not possible by simply jailing corrupt individuals without changing the incentives for corruption (p.36).

Since the history of corruption shows that it cannot be stopped (Mkhize, Moyo, and Mahoa, 2024), we can benefit from it by monitoring and directing the corrupt people to use the looted gains to develop their communities instead of using them to develop other countries or depositing the money with foreign banks. This is because communities in Nigeria always court those confirmed to be corruptible kingpins into their communities. Corruption is said to be evil and natural rearing its ugly head since man’s creation both in developed and developing world (Mkhize, Moyo, and Mahoa, 2024).

In the developed world, Enron in US collapsed in 2002, WorldCom, Parmalat, Maxwell Communication Corporation and Mirror Group Newspapers, The British Gas in 1995, Barings Bank in 1995, and others collapsed (Solomon, 2010; Brooks and Dunn, 2012). The call for Corporate Governance made the Stock Exchange Market (SEM), Government and other regulators to enact laws and establish codes to protect the Business World from corruption. These laws and codes include Cadbury code of 1992, OECD principles of corporate governance of 1999 (revised in 2004) and Sarbanes-Oxley Act in 2002. Despite these laws, corruption is being reported every day. This is because corruption is natural and cannot be tamed or stopped (Mkhize, Moyo, and Mahoa, 2024). Meanwhile, in the developing world, Nigerian Banks like Intercontinental Bank, Bank PHB, Afribank, Oceanic Bank and others collapsed. Lever PLC, African Petroleum, Kaduna Textiles Limited (KTL), Arewa Textiles Limited (ATL), and United Nigeria Textiles Limited (UNTL) suddenly folded up, reflects ongoing governance failures (Oyinlola, 2010).

The researcher was motivated by some disturbing headlines in the national and international dailies, such as: “Yahaya Bello Receives Rousing Welcome From Kinsmen, Calls For Unity, Support For Tinubu” (Ajiboye, 2025), “Yahaya Bello released from prison after meeting bail conditions” (Ogunjuyigbe, 2024), “Yahaya Bello’s homecoming in the eyes of his people”

(Efanga, 2025), “Ibora receives rousing welcome in Oghara” (Ayodele, 2017), “Ibora Returns to Rousing Welcome by Kinsmen” (Onabu, Ogbodo, Emenyonu and Idowu, 2017), “Olukoyede: Nigerians defend corrupt leaders yet complain about corruption” (Abdullah, 2025), Scandal rocks EFCC as officers disappear with seized gold, \$30,000 (Onuh, 2025), EFCC sacks 27 corrupt officers, probes \$400,000 fraud complaint (Odeniyi, 2025), EFCC detains 10 officers for stealing cash, gold exhibits (Odeniyi and Oloniran, 2025), Scandal rocks EFCC as officers disappear with seized gold, \$30,000 (Onuh, 2025) and “Biden pardons his siblings and their spouses on his way out of the White House” (Madhani, Miller and Long, 2025).

The researcher was also motivated by the statement credited to the former president of South Africa, Pieter Willen Botha who said in 1988 that “Black people cannot rule themselves because they don’t have the brain and mental capacity to govern a society. Give them power they will steal all the government money. Give them independence and democracy, they will use it to promote tribalism, ethnicity, bigotry, hatred, killings and wars” (Ezukanma, 2022). Africa has not been able to change that stand since independence thus making the Transparency International (TI) through their 2024 Corruption Perception Index (CPI) to score most African countries below 49.

The objective of this paper is to examine the developmental benefits of corruption to African communities. The question is, what are the developmental benefits of corruption to African communities? Specifically, why do the corruptible people’s community rejoicing and jubilating when their corruptible sons/daughters are returning home after their tenure of office or imprisonment?

The remainder of this study is organised into sections as follows: literature review, research method, results and discussion, conclusions and references.

2. Theoretical Review

Corruption

Corruption is a vice in an individual in position of trust who displays favouritism, nepotism, tribalism, undue enrichment, abuse of public office and position, and amassing wealth for personal gains (Lawal, 2007).

According to Obera (2015), corruption can manifest itself in various ways as follows:

bribery, extortion, fraud, embezzlement, nepotism, cronyism, fund misappropriation, procurement kickbacks, money laundering, illegal arms deals, smuggling, human trafficking, child labour, illegal oil bunkering, illegal payments, narcotics, illegal mining, tax evasion, foreign exchange malpractice including currency counterfeiting, intellectual property theft and piracy, dumping toxic wastes and prohibited goods, deception, rigged elections, fraudulent business deals, medical quackery, cheating in school and deceit in love.

Perspectives of corruption

Corruption can be Universalism or Particularism. Universalism of corruption is described by Mkhize, Moyo, and Mahoa (2024) as illegal and unethical practices that destroy the economy,

weaken public interest and disregard the rule of law. Corruption becomes universalism when there are strong laws and enforcement to stop it.

On the other hand, according to Mkhize, Moyo, and Mahoa (2024), particularistic corruption is when corruption is necessary and acceptable, being looked at as natural and being part of human life and therefore good for stable and efficient governance. In particularism, there are different laws for different groups and people. And so there will be different enforcement laws which are inconsistent and arbitrary. The characteristics of particularistic corruption are: acceptability, selectivity, informality, reciprocity, lack of transparency, and resistance to reform Mkhize, Moyo, and Mahoa (2024).

Drivers and determinants of corruption

Causes of corruption are as follows: poverty; resource curse, pressures from families, extended families and friends, fraudsters going unpunished, politics of the belly, weaknesses of anti-corruption agencies, a man in position of powers without checks and balances and accountability, low salaries, low average incomes and low levels of literacy (Mkhize, Moyo, and Mahoa, 2024), wide inequality in wealth distribution, displaying of wealth by the wealthy individuals, nepotism, lack of understanding of the ethical demands of public office holders' positions, patronage, non-payment of civil servants salaries for months, disappearance of good morals, weaknesses in judicial system, lack of media freedom, political competition, greediness, covetousness, clientelism, lack of welfare services, lack of scholarship, pride and acceptance of cosmetic praises (Agbiboa, 2012; Obera, 2015).

Perceived benefits and social rationalisations of corruption

Corruption has a lot of benefits to some people in the society. Corruption adds to one's legitimate income as salary cannot be enough for everyone and his family. Obera (2015) put forward some benefits of corruption as follows:

First, a civil servant will be willing to help clients when he is directly benefiting. He will jettison the bureaucratic procedures and regulations involved in rendering service to the public or businessmen. Furthermore, expectations from extended families, kinsmen, godfather, and friends are high from a relation holding a position in government to provide them jobs, provision of basic infrastructures and contracts even if they are not qualified to be given. If they fail to do these, they will be treated as outcasts, ostracised, will be called a fool, selfish, and nicknamed wasted years in government service person (Fagbadebo, 2007). To avoid these name callings, this person in government service will try to meet up with these expectations and thereby involve himself in corruption.

Again, appointments into positions by these persons will be to benefit people from their ethnic origin as a way of sharing the public resources. Moreover, people in public service positions ensure their children, kinsmen and other community members have access to quality education and get recruited into the army, police and other security agencies to take over from them when

they are no longer relevant. Finally, corruption makes people who are excluded in the society to be brought into the limelight.

From the above, it can be concluded that it is through corruption people can get better positions, appointments, opportunities or get things done quickly.

Consequences and public perceptions of corruption

Effects of corruption on Africans are enormous. Corruption has put African richness in human and natural resources into a resource curse thus throwing the entire continent into darkness, nakedness and complete abject poverty (Agbiboa, 2012). Corruption pulls down the confidence in the financial system of a country, threatens the honesty of a government, undermines national security, law and order, leads to a nation's poor economic performance, leads to abuse of human rights and leads to under-development of a country - sincere, hardworking and honest people will not be employed into positions, and also corruption leads to capital flights (Lumumba, 2014).

On the whole, the presence of corruption in a country makes a country to be improperly governed and unattractive to investors (Agbiboa, 2012). Corruption has dangerously destroyed the socio-political and economic development of Africa.

Governance

Governance is defined by Sheng (nd) of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) as “the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented).”

Sheng (nd) put forward eight (8) characteristics of good governance as follows: *Participation*- men and women should fully participate in decision making; *Rule of Law*- the law should be fair and enforced impartially; *Transparency* - information should be freely available and understandable; *Responsiveness* - all stakeholders should be served within a reasonable time frame; *Consensus oriented* - all decisions should be widely accepted and to the best interest of the whole community; *Equity and inclusiveness* - all stakeholders should be included in decision making that affects them and should not feel excluded including the vulnerable ones; *Effectiveness and efficiency* - for good governance to be in existence, all processes and institutions should produce results that will meet the societal needs; *Good governance* should also be sustainable and protective; *Accountability* - all the actors in governance must be accountable to the general public. Kimenyi and Mbaku (2011) say that poor governance includes where there are: Corruption, rent seeking, public financial malfeasance, and the arbitrary and capricious allocation of public goods.

Transparency

Transparency scientifically, as put forward by Sturges (2007) in Obera (2021) means “the transmission of electromagnetic rays without distortion.” Sturges in Obera (2021) further describes transparency as the “condition in which knowledge of activities that are of public interest is revealed so as to provide the potential for accountability.” Jeremy Bentham in Etzioni (2010) said

that “the more strictly we are watched, the better we behave” (Obera, 2021). Information that is publicly displayed will discourage corruption, poor performance, secrecy, immoral act, unethical and illegal conducts.

Accountability

Accountability, according to Sinclair (1995) in Obera (2021) is a “relationship in which people are required to explain and take responsibility for their actions: the giving and demanding of reasons for conduct.” Accountability relates to book-keeping, accounting and a symbol of good governance (Obera, 2021). The separation of ownership from management laws make it compulsory for the management to give account of their stewardship to the owners who conferred on them with their resources. Accountability is very important because it encourages honesty and fortify the rule of law in governance but discourages abuse of power, corruption, nepotism, fraud and slothfulness.

African Ubuntu philosophy

Africa has great cultural values which were used in the past to stop corruption. The cultural values are, according to Ikeke (2024), Ubuntu, Ujamaa, humanism, and hospitality. Ubuntu means *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu – I am because you are; you are because we are*. Ubuntu simply means Humanness – It covers supportiveness, co-operation, and solidarity (Khoza and Adam, 2007). Ikeke (2024) describes Ubuntu as:

a moral and ethical force that guides against selfishness, greed, individualism, injustice, and corrupt practices and promotes human dignity, hospitality, duty, concern for others, and social order.

Ubuntu promotes interdependence. Ubuntu meaning Humanness (compassion, magnanimity, unselfishness, kindness, sympathy etc.) has the virtues of sharing, unity, communalism, empowerment, common purpose, inclusivity, humility, respect, responsibility, concern for others, generational responsibilities and the spirit of participation (Khoza and Adam, 2007, Wanyama, et al., 2009). Ubuntu involves good moral values that advance transparency, accountability, and social harmony that focus on the welfare of the people (Mkhize, Moyo, and Mahoa, 2024). Ubuntu opposes independence as practised in the western world where you are on your own. Ighodalo (2012), in his study states that:

African cultural values are the communalization of being as opposed to Western Cultural values of privatization. In the Western tradition, being is seen in terms of separation, independence, and conflict. African cultures regard being as communal. Persons have identity only because they belong to a community (p.53) (See also Obera, 2020).

The acceptance and combination of these two value systems (interdependence and independence) by Africans lead to cultural value system clash. Developed countries are not

combining the two. The serving of these two masters by Africans is leading to sparks. Africans, according to Ekeh (2008), are living in two worlds - African traditional kinship values and colonial inspired modernity values thus leading to clashing of the two cultures. These clashes manifest themselves in corruption, nepotism, tribalism and social maladies (Obera, 2020).

Ubuntu discourages corruption as per Mkhize, Moyo, and Mahoa (2024) in four ways, namely:

1. Ubuntu gives greater importance to the well-being of people and oppose to individual self-interest.
2. Ubuntu brings to the fore honesty, integrity and fairness in dealing with others.
3. Africans have a strong conflict resolution mechanism as a means of resolving African conflicts - these resolution mechanisms reduce corruption.
4. Ubuntu engenders a stronger responsibility to one's community thereby promoting identity and accountability.

Theory of neopatrimonialism

Neopatrimonialism is a theory often used to illustrate why there is under-development, socio-economic and political issues facing a people (Obera, 2015). Neopatrimonialism, according to Nawaz (2008) in Obera (2015) is "a system of governance where the formal rational-legal state apparatus co-exists and is supplanted by an informal patrimonial system of governance." Nawaz further states that under neopatrimonialism, public resources are shared by politicians, their friends, and others who are not part of state structure.

Neopatrimonialism has the following characteristics as put forward by Obera (2015): Clientelism - this is where there is a give and take of public resources by big man and small man for personal gain. Patronage - politically motivated favours to ethnic groups. Presidentialism - this is where a leader delegates a trivial decision making. Nepotism - giving appointments, contracts, jobs, promotions, and excluding kinsmen from laws in order to enable them have access to state resources. Prebendalism - this involves politicians taking their political offices as their personal properties (inheritances) and give whatever therein to those who support them. Bribery - perverting judgement in exchange for a reward by those occupying positions of trust. Corruption: this involves diverting public resources to oneself, friends, families, ethnic origin and supporters. Favouritism - this involves giving state resources to relations, families and friends who do not merit them. Ethnicism - these are gifts of jobs, money, infrastructures, loyalties and other amenities to one's community than one's country.

In general, a neopatrimonialistic state lacks transparency and accountability and thus lead to bad governance and under-development (Erdmann and Engel, 2007).

The theory of neopatrimonialism was used in this study to answer the single research question, why do the corruptible people's community rejoicing and jubilating when their corruptible sons/daughters are returning home after their tenure of office or imprisonment?

Development

Development is knowing the laws of nature, putting efforts by people the laws into practice and using tools (technology) to achieve their goals (Obera, 2020). Development is when there is improvement in people's standard of living culturally, politically, economically, psychologically, and socially. Obera (2020) further states that where there are poverty, unemployment and inequality, there will be underdevelopment but where they are reduced to the barest minimum, there will be development. Development can only be attained through great human efforts and it is not a free gift. Where there is development people can make choices, participate in decisions that affect them and will be able to act as an agent of change (Ijere, 2014).

Development will be difficult to achieve where there are: wars, slavery, when people are forced to engage in agriculture instead of technology, tribalism, nepotism, corruption and disasters (Obera (2020)). But where basic needs like food, clothing and housing are met, increase in employment, increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), non-dependence on other nations, increase in education and quality of life are, there is socio-economic development (Obera (2020)). For there to be development, there must be good governance, transparency and accountability.

From the above, it can be concluded that good governance, transparency, accountability and Ubuntu (comprising selflessness, good governance, transparency and accountability) are the giants that can demolish corruption and reduce it to debris and ashes.

Accountant's role in corruption

Accounting information quickens accountability, transparency, and it is used to fight corruption (Everett et al., 2007). To fight corruption, accountants and auditors should always attend seminars, conferences, and continuous training (Obera, 2021). The fundamental accounting principles are ethical codes which are used by a professional accountant to assess whether his/her conducts are right or wrong. For this reason, all professional accountants' conducts must comply with the following IFAC (2007) fundamental principles as presented in Obera (2021):

1. Integrity: A professional accountant must be straightforward, honest, fair, and truthful in all his business and professional dealings. A professional accountant should disassociate himself from any false or misleading statement.
2. Objectivity: A professional accountant should not concede his professional or his business judgement to partiality (bias), conflict of interest, or undue influence from others (superiors, friends, relations, godfather or foes). He should be independent in his assessments/dealings and pay a full attention to his terms of engagement.
3. Professional competence and due care: Professional accountants must be committed to professional skill and knowledge that will make the employer and clients receive the best of their services. Accountants must be up to date in areas of accounting (training and supervision) and act in accordance with relevant technical and professional standards.
4. Confidentiality: Accountant should not disclose information obtained in the course of his work to anybody. He should not disclose information to his friends, family members,

present employer, or for his own personal advantage/third party. However, he can disclose information acquired in the course of his work if he has the permission of the client/employer; as required by the law of the country; or when the accountant has the right and duty to disclose.

5. Professional behaviour: Professional accountants must adhere strictly to relevant laws and regulations to avoid any conduct that may bring the association to shame. In advertising himself and work, he should be truthful, honest, and not rubbish other professional colleagues.

3. Research method

Research design

The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative research methods (mixed method) for this study in order to obtain first hand and complete information. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, internet, books, newspapers and Journals for the study. The interviewer used mixed method in order to gain the advantages of quantitative and qualitative methods of research to reach triangulation (Yin, 2009). This makes this study robust, credible, reliable and to make acceptable generalisation about the population.

Research area

The study was carried out in Delta and Kogi states, Nigeria. Nigeria is a country in West Africa bounded in the North by the Sahara Desert and in the South by the Gulf of Guinea and has an area of about 923768 square kilometres (Obera, 2015). Nigeria shares borders with Niger in the Northwest, Benin Republic in the Southwest, Chad in the Northeast and Cameroon in the Southeast. Nigeria, according to Obera (2015) and Agbiboa (2012), is referred to as the giant of Africa because of her population, resources, socio-economic and political might in Africa. Obera further argued that Nigeria has about 250 - 300 ethnic groups with diverse customs, traditions and languages. Nigerians practise three main religion, namely: traditional religion which is being practised across the country, Christian religion is commonly practised in the Southern part of the country and Muslim religion is heavily practised in the Northern part of Nigeria.

Semi-structured interview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with politicians, lawyers, traders, civil servants, and youths from two communities in Nigeria, using a predefined interview guide to ensure consistency across participants (see Appendix 1). The communities are: Oghara in Ethiope local government area of Delta State and Okene, Okene local government area of Kogi State. Interviews took place on the days His Excellencies Chief James Ibori and Alhaji Yahaya Adoza Bello were returning home to their communities.

Interviews took place on Saturday 4th February, 2017 when His Excellency Chief James Ibori arrived in Oghara his home village based on the reports by Ayodele (2017). Face-to-face interviews by interviewer about Ibori of Oghara were done with Delta state people in Nigeria

Capital city, Abuja in February, 2025. Again, the second interviews about His Excellency Alhaji Yahaya Bello took place on Tuesday 31st December, 2024 when he was returning home from the Capital City (Abuja) to his home town (Okene). He was released from detention (Kuje Prison) on Thursday 19th December, 2024. The interviewer was actively involved in interviewing people in Lokoja (the state capital of Kogi State) as the road from Koton-karfe through Lokoja (the state capital where he was a Governor) was temporarily closed for heavy traffic as he journeyed to Okene (his home town). This is a period of Christmas and New year celebrations where there were public holidays in Nigeria.

Interviews were recorded after permissions were granted by the interviewees. Interviews were conducted in a quiet place to avoid distractions and took the average of 20 minutes. Politicians, civil servants, lawyers, human rights activists, traders and youths from these communities were interviewed because of their knowledge, experience and their attachments to these public figures. There were informal discussions which were not recorded.

Table 1. Interviewees from Oghara - Delta State

NO	CODE	INTERVIEWEE	REMARKS
1.	K1	Lawyer	Oghara indigene
2.	K2	Civil servant	Oghara indigene
3.	K3	Youth leader	Oghara indigene

Source: Researcher's Field Survey (2025)

Table 1 shows the Oghara indigenes that were interviewed in Abuja in February, 2025.

Table 2. Interviewees from Okene - Kogi State

NO	CODE	INTERVIEWEE	REMARKS
1.	L1	Politician	Okene indigene
2.	L2	Lawyer	Okene indigene
3.	L3	Trader	Okene indigene

Source: Researcher's Field Survey (2025)

Table 2 shows the Okene indigenes that were interviewed in Lokoja on 31st December, 2024.

Questionnaire Survey

A total number of six hundred (600) questionnaires were used to serve different categories of people. Section A of the questionnaire sought the demographic information of the respondents

while Section B sought information about why people celebrate when a corruptible person is returning home using twelve (12) generated questionnaire items. The questionnaire was built on the Likert five-point scale of Strongly Disagree (SD); Disagree (D); Undecided (U); Agree (D); and Strongly Agree (SD). Numbers were assigned accordingly (1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 respectively).

Distribution of questionnaires started in September, 2024 and the last of them was received in February, 2025. People that were given questionnaires to fill include: academic staff of universities, non-teaching staff of universities, lawyers, accountants, politicians, farmers, civil servants, civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations, students, unemployed and employed youths and human rights activists. They were twelve (12) groups and were given fifty (50) questionnaires each to fill, totaling six hundred (600) respondents. However, only five hundred and seventy (570) questionnaires were returned. Questionnaire was tested for validity and was certified okay. Cronbach's alpha co-efficient of 0.75 was observed for reliability. The questionnaire was piloted on the academic staff of the Faculty of Management Sciences of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) and errors found were corrected before they were administered to the respondents.

4. Results and discussion

Developmental benefits of corruption (questionnaire)

Weighted mean scores were used in the analysis of the research question to reach decision. To take decision, add the response categories weighting and divide by the Likert five-point number. That is - SD (1); D (2); U (3); A (4); SA (5) = $1+2+3+4+5 = 15/5 = 3$. Decision was based on the figure above 3.00 as agreed (strongly agreed and agreed) and the figure below 3.00 as disagreed (strongly disagreed and disagreed) and 3.00 as undecided. Weighted mean score was obtained by dividing the total value by the number of respondents. For example, to obtain the weighted mean score for serial number 1 of Table 3:- $38 + 12 + 57 + 660 + 1,710 = 2,477/570 = 4.35$ (Agree) and so on to serial number 12. This means respondents of serial number 1 agreed that corruption means abuse of entrusted power for private gain. Respondents of serial numbers 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7 disagreed - meaning that even if the money obtained from corruption is used for their good, they will not participate in welcoming corrupt persons into their communities. Again, in serial number 11, respondents agreed that they will not engage in corruption because of the fear of the law enforcement agencies. However, because corruption is natural and cannot be wholly stopped, the law enforcement agents themselves are engaged in corruption

Table 3. Developmental benefits of corruption (Questionnaire analysis)

S/N	DETAILS	SD (1)	D (2)	U (3)	A (4)	SA (5)	Mean	Decision
1.	Corruption means abuse of entrusted power for private gain.	38 38	6 12	19 57	165 660	342 1,710	4.35	Agree
2.	If a person is adjudged to be a fraudster but engaged all the youths from my community in a gainful	247 247	171 342	38 114	82 328	32 160	2.09	Disagree

	employment, I will join in giving him a rousing welcome when he is coming home.							
3.	A corrupt person who develops my community with employment of youths, builds hospitals, establishes schools, builds roads and provides electricity will be heavily welcomed if he is returning home.	146 146	177 354	38 114	139 556	70 350	2.67	Disagree
4.	Bringing development to one's community with public money is a criminal offence.	165 165	177 354	32 96	108 432	88 440	2.61	Disagree
5.	Because of somebody's corrupt attitude, even if he used the money, he looted to lift people up from acute abject poverty, he should not be celebrated.	63 63	146 292	25 75	190 760	146 730	3.37	Agree
6.	Anybody who steals government money to give me food, scholarship, job and other necessities of life should be celebrated.	190 190	235 470	38 114	82 328	25 125	2.15	Disagree
7.	Government money is not anybody's money. Therefore, I am not a thief if I steal it to develop my community and also to build industries to employ those who have no jobs.	247 247	127 254	6 18	127 508	63 315	2.35	Disagree
8.	The welfare system that is in the western world but absent in the developing world makes corruption to thrive in Africa.	70 70	44 88	44 132	177 708	235 1,175	3.81	Agree
9.	If people are their brother's keepers, identify with them when they are in needs, hating covetousness and stealing in their communities, there will be reduction in corruption.	32 32	82 164	38 114	152 608	266 1,330	3.94	Agree
10.	If government can take care of my health issues, give my children scholarships, provide welfare packages for my extended families, I will not engage myself in corruption.	19 19	44 88	25 75	146 584	336 1,680	4.29	Agree
11.	I will not engage in corruption because of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC) and other criminal laws.	70 70	108 216	95 285	133 532	164 820	3.37	Agree
12.	I will not engage in corruption because it is morally wrong.	13 13	32 64	38 114	120 480	367 1,835	4.40	Agree

NOTE: Strongly Disagree (SD); Disagree (D); Undecided (U); Agree (A); and Strongly Agree (SA). **Source:** Researcher's Field Survey (2025)

Developmental Benefits of Corruption to a community

The personal benefits of a godfather, political associates and friends from the corrupt politicians' communities make them to mobilise people to give them a rousing welcome when they are returning home. One of the interviewees, L1, was asked, "What has he done for you and/or your community that makes you to like him and jubilating?" Interviewee L1 said:

This man has written his name in gold. He is a pacesetter, a hero, a strong and courageous man. He has no failure in his dictionary. He unilaterally diverted a world class hospital to this community. He has established a world class university with first class lecturers in this community. He has tarred all the roads leading in and out of this community. He has engaged all the youths with gainful employment and has brought to this community a 24-hour non-stop electricity supply. We have been appealing to the government to do these things for us for years but to no avail. Government turned deaf ears to our crying only for this our illustrious son to do them for us.

Moreover, interviewee L2 argued that corruption is good for the development of people and their countries. He said that if there is no corruption people and their countries will be dull, inactive and politicians will be infamous especially in their communities. Uneke (2010) agreed with this assertion. He said corruption lubricates rigid bureaucracy and helps politicians to give jobs and contracts to people from their ethnic origin.

Communities are interested in what a person can use his office to do for them. They are not interested in whichever way infrastructures come. Interviewees said there is nothing wrong with stealing government money if it is used for the benefit of a community. For instance, Interviewee K1 was asked, "He was accused of stealing and laundering money. Do you still like him?"

Yes, I still like him for his love and what he has done for this community. Nothing is wrong with stealing government money especially if it is used for the benefit of the people. My own stand is that, whether the man stole or not is not my concern. All that I know is that this man has brighten our community with infrastructures and made our youths to be gainfully employed. That is why he has to be celebrated by this community.

These interviewee's views agreed with Agbibo (2012) who said that government's business is not a person's business. Stealing government money and using it for the benefit of communities is not wrong.

What a politician will do for his people will make people of his community to like him and draw him closer to themselves, hail him and protect him from all harms. A petty trader at Okene said "we are celebrating our brother, Alhaji Yahaya Bello, for his sterling achievements, that have made us proud" (Yamput, 2024).

A community that is a minority will rarely be given infrastructures by the government. And if by accident it comes, the community will jubilate. Interviewee K2 was asked, “What has he done for you and/or your community that makes you to like him and jubilating?” Interviewee K2 said:

We are from the minority tribe in Nigeria. If he didn't do what he has done for us, nobody will do it for us. Who or when do you think we will get all these things? We are extremely lucky and happy to have him as our brave son.

Moreover, when His Excellency James Ibori was returning to Oghara in Ethiope local government Area of Delta State on 4th February 2017 after serving jail term in the United Kingdom's prison, according to Punch (Ayodele, 2017), a former senator representing Delta Central, said:

The return of Ibori was a good omen to the people. We are happy that Ibori is back, people are jubilating, the crowd you see here and the enthusiasm that has been displayed today showed that we really missed him. This is the only way for us to appreciate that our leader who left us long ago is back. His coming is a beginning of so many good things to come. By his presence today, I am sure we are gaining back all we have lost.

Also speaking to newsmen, according to Ayodele, (2017), a member representing Ethiope East and Ethiope West Federal Constituency, thanked God for the safe return of Ibori. He said:

We prayed that all our Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) faithfuls should be steadfast now that we have a pure political direction. Their support has not been in vain, I believe now that our leader is out, we will have a sense of direction. We are a sheep with a shepherd right now. In my constituency, we now have somebody to consult without travelling overseas.

One of the Oghara's youth leaders (Ayodele, 2017), said the return of Ibori would turn things around for the good of Oghara. He said, “We are grateful to God for the return of our chief (Ibori), sure things will turn around for better from now on in Oghara. Ibori is our father and we can die because of him.”

Interviews and newspapers report showed that people are confident and preferred to provide for their communities than their country. The newspapers report and interviews agreed with neopatrimonialism theory's characteristics of Nepotism, Patronage, Corruption, Favouritism, Prebendalism and Ethnicism.

Public welfare system

This study was specifically carried out to examine the reasons why the corruptible people's communities rejoice and jubilate when their corruptible sons/daughters are returning home after their tenure of office or out of prison. The corruptible people's communities rejoice and jubilate

because of the personal and communal infrastructures diverted to them by their benefactors. Even though majority of people know that corruption is morally wrong (Table 3, No. 12 - weighted mean 4.40), some people who benefit from corruption in terms of jobs, recruitment into the army and other security agencies, best hospitals, first class higher institution will not fail to invite others to give a tumultuous welcome to their corrupt children's home coming after their jail terms. "There is no reason to abandon a person who has bettered your life by putting food on your table" said Interviewee L1.

Majority of respondents, as noted in Table 3 (10) with weighted mean of 4.29, said if government can take care of their aged parents, take care of their health issues, give their children scholarships, provide welfare packages for their extended families, they will not engage themselves in corruption. These are being practised in the western world where less corruption is being reported.

African government's behaviour of prosecuting and imprisoning people who are corrupt will not stop corruption. Interviewee K2 said, "You can't demand loyalty from a person you have not fed." Africa must provide incentives to her people like that practised in developed world. These are principles of Ubuntu that will help in reducing corruption. This agrees with the former Nigerian president Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's speech that the solution to corruption is not by prosecuting and imprisoning men and women because of corruption. This also agrees with Ikeke (2024) that:

tackling the problem of corruption, or the abuse of public trust for private gain, is not possible by simply jailing corrupt individuals without changing the incentives for corruption (p.36).

The findings showed that the abandoning of Ubuntu by Africans makes the region to be susceptible to corruption. If people are their brother's keepers, identify with them when they are in needs, hating covetousness and stealing in their communities, there will be reduction in corruption (Table 3, No. 9). Ubuntu has the characteristics of good governance, transparency and accountability. In a nutshell, items 8, 9 and 10 of Table 3 provide that if a good welfare system like that obtained in the developed world is in existence in Africa, corruption in Africa will be reduced to the barest minimum.

Fear of the law

Interviewees and Questionnaire revealed that the presence of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offences Commission (ICPC), Code of Conduct Bureau and other criminal laws discourages some people from going into corruption. The shame of going to prison withholds some people from engaging in corruption. There are provisions in Nigerian laws that people who engage in economic and financial crimes when caught, should be prosecuted. See Table 3 (11) with the mean of 3.37 where respondents agreed that they will not engage in corruption because of Economic and Financial

Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC) and other criminal laws.

Moralism

From the moral point of view, some respondents believe and uphold the natural law that you should not steal what does not belong to you. For this reason, they said they will not engage in corruption because it is morally wrong (Table 3 item 12 - mean 4.40).

From Table 3 (items 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7) above, a greater number of people said they will disassociate themselves from corrupt people when they are returning home because it is a wrong way of acquiring and distributing the common wealth.

5. Conclusions

The study dwells on developmental benefits of corruptible governance where transparency and accountability are held in dissimulation: the case of Nigeria. The researcher was attracted to explore this study by the national and international newspapers headlines on corruption and the statements made by the former President of South Africa, Pieter Willen Botha. Neopatrimonialism was used as a torchlight to remove the veil to see how some communities in Nigeria benefit from corruption. The focal question is, why do the corruptible people's community rejoice and jubilate when their corruptible sons/daughters are returning home after their tenure of office or imprisonment?

Findings from interviews, newspaper reports, and questionnaire surveys revealed that the celebratory reception of individuals returning from public office or prison is largely due to the tangible benefits they provided to their communities, such as the establishment of universities, hospitals, youth employment, road construction, electricity, and other infrastructure. These contributions were seen as sufficient grounds for public celebration.

Respondents in this study also noted that corruption often circumvents rigid bureaucratic processes, allowing politicians to distribute jobs and contracts to their ethnic or local networks. Many expressed the belief that misusing public funds is acceptable if it results in employment and development. In this view, corruption is seen not purely as wrongdoing, but as a means to achieve communal progress.

It is also interesting to note from the interviews that politicians and top government officials will ensure their children, kinsmen and other community members have access to quality education in abroad and get them recruited into the army, police and others to take over from them when they retire from service or are dead.

On the final note, corruption, according to interviewees, helps people who are in minority and neglected in the society to be brought into the limelight. That is, an individual will be handpicked and put in a position of authority even if he is not qualified. All these make corruption appealing, attractive, benefiting and thriving.

This study contributes to knowledge in the sense that there are no previous literature on the benefits of corruption to communities. Previous researches have generally focused on bad or evil of corruption without exploring the other side of corruption. However, this research has investigated the of benefits of corruption to communities in Africa. Details of good side of corruption can be found in this paper. This is the first paper that has examined the benefits of corruption to African communities.

This study is limited by time and resources. This is because the study was physically carried out wholly in Nigeria without visiting other African countries. The restriction of the study to Nigeria instead of investigating all African countries is because of the saying that a researcher should go nearer to what he is investigating (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). This is because Nigeria is the giant of Africa (Agbibo, 2012; Obera, 2015) and the day Nigeria wakes up, the rest of the world will be in danger (Sunday, 2003). And using the theory of neopatrimonialism, interviews, newspapers and questionnaire survey, the study is triangulated and can be generalised to other African countries.

Another limitation is that some questions that should have been asked in interview guide and in questionnaire might have been found missing. All these are taken to be the weaknesses of the study. Thus, similar studies should be conducted on the benefits of corruption in the developed world and other African countries like South Africa, Uganda, Zambia, Botswana, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. This aims to provide clearer and deeper the understanding of developmental benefits of corruption to people.

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Appendix 1

Interview guide

1. What is your profession/age?
2. Are you from this community?
3. Who is this person being celebrated to you?
4. How long have you known him?
5. He was accused of stealing and laundering money. Do you still like him?
6. What has he done for you and/or your community that makes you to like him and jubilating?
7. It is reported by Transparency International that corruption is rampant in Africa, how does it affect governance, transparency and accountability in Africa?
8. How have Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Code of Conduct Bureau, Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offences Commission (ICPC) and other criminal laws helped in combating corruption and strengthening governance, transparency and accountability in your country?
9. Do you have anything to add to what we have discussed?