

## Triumph in Corruption Irradiation Combat for a Dawn of Liberia



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**ABSTRACT:** The problem of the increase of corruption is alarming in Liberia. Corruption has no small way contributed to increasingly levels of poverty and socio-economic inactivity in the country. This study aims to explore the causes of corruption and its effects on economic development in the country. The research contends that the causes of corruption are multi-dimensional fluctuating from poor leadership ability, lack of ethical standards, weak institutions, greed for wealth and position, greed for power, among others. The study pursues to discuss the efficiency of combating corruption by utilizing the ethical values of the societies such as; integrity, fairness, patriotism, and justice for all. Participants of this study were 250 from local organizations/intellectual forums with massive experience and understanding on the topic who purposely volunteered to get involved in questionnaires data collection, and out of them 15 were selected for interviews. The finding shows an inextricable issue of corruption with all relevant stakeholders playing their roles in order to achieve new Liberia. Stakeholders including government, family, religious bodies, international communities such as; African Union and Ecowas, and banks among others. The study recommend that corruption should be made a high risk and low benefit in order to discourage the act and free the collective resources for national transformation and development.

**KEYWORDS:** Winning, War, Corruption, New Liberia.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Corruption which has become part of Liberian culture; is one of the major social immoralities that have been devastating the country since her independence in 1847 (Ige, 2016). One of the most destructive acts by man which dominates and affects all aspects of the human community, is corruption Kromah, A. M. (2019). Liberia is a nation located in the west coast of Africa. It surrounded by three countries; Ivory coast, Guinea, Sierra Leone and the Atlantic Ocean. Liberia is said to be one of the poorest countries in the world rank 175 out of 187 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI) UNDP, (2014). Liberia is the oldest nation in Africa that fail to provide open consideration, social equality, political security, quality education, monetary changes and social welfare to her citizen (Gros, 1996; Liebenow, 1987; Sawyer, 1992). Even though corruption is not a new phenomenon, yet there is no unique definition on corruption Aidt, (2003).

It is critical to note that corruption is not exclusive to Liberia. It can be found on every continent, location, and ethnic group. In reality, corruption pervades all known faiths, religious groups and government entities. In other words, corruption is not a new phenomenon in human history of Liberia. It predates human history. Lipset and Lenz, (2000) contended that corruption existed in ancient cultures such as Egypt, Israel, Rome, and Greece. Corruption is one the major problems in modern society including Liberia, Africa's oldest republic.

In Liberia, corruption is not a new phenomenon, government officials and the citizen believed that corruption is normal in the Liberia society. An attempt to fight corruption ended up in failure over the years in Liberia. The two major reasons for such failed attempts are the attitude of the society towards impunity and the weak institutions that are responsible to reduce corruption. Consequently, the dream to have a new Liberia cannot be accomplished except the high rate of corruption in both the public and private sectors is systematically addressed which will free the joint resources for national growth and development in the country.

### Causes of Corruption in Liberia.

In Liberia, there are several causes of corruption that affect the national growth and development in the country. Corruption will not be eradicated in the Liberia society if one doesn't understand or diagnose the phenomenon that cause it. Subsequently, this section will examine the causes of corruption in Liberia and undeveloped countries. The researchers hope that these understanding and diagnoses will provide great opportunity to address the problem of corruption in Liberia. Some common causes of corruption include; greed for wealth and position, lack of transparency, low wages in public and private services, bureaucratic control, culture

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of impunity, nepotism, embezzlement, fraud, lack of patriotism, lack of discipline among government officials, lack of faith and moral values, weakness of social and government enforcement mechanism, bad leadership, personalization of public office, poverty, political parties' interest, and many more.

### **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Effect of Corruption on the Liberia State**

Corruption is defined as the destruction of anything from the original form of purity through bribery or favour for one's private benefit (Nyoni, 2017). Nye (1967) argued that corruption has negative impact that undermined the development system in the society. It is note with pain that corrupt personalities in Liberia are celebrated by the community as a result of their contributions from such illegal wealth to their various communities. Liberia is in the business of canonizing thieves and sanctifying or celebrating the wrong people while they verify her good men and women. In the Liberian society, when the thief is from your own ethnical group, he or she is celebrated. For example, they are given academic and chieftaincy titles such as honourable, academic giant, our own(son) and so on. The Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission need to be more concerned on the negative effects or evils of corruption on the Liberia society. Corruption could be compared to HIV/AIDS that feeds on human immune system which consume the nervous system. Such is corruption to our national life Aliagba (2007).

In specific terms, corruption is antithetical to development. Corruption stunts national growth and development in Liberia. Liberia which is said to be the oldest nation in Africa and acclaimed to be the giant of the continent is sleeping because of corruption. The rate of poverty and unemployment among the people is best traced to corruption which is eating our collective wealth. Also, there is an image problem both within and outside the country. Because of corruption, Liberia is now stigmatized by other countries in the international scene. In the international arena, Liberia is treated as pariah state. Because of this problem of Liberia through corruption, international aids and assistance are denied. notwithstanding, many foreign investments as foreign agencies and investors are interested in doing business with countries that are committed to transparency and accountability. In a related term, corruption brings about capital flight thereby putting the country in financial straits or crises. Most of the monies stolen by public officers is diverted to other countries like united states, Dubai, Belgium, China and Switzerland. The implication is that those nations playing host to stolen money from Liberia and other African countries are developing with our resources at our own expense.

This dangerous virus called corruption affects public trust and confidence on the leadership. It is important to state here that daily interpersonal relationship in social, economic and political lives are carried on upon the foundation of trust and confidence reposed on one another. Though, corruption eat away these values. Inadequate infrastructure, huge unemployment, mass poverty, high cost of living, youth restiveness (turning zogos), false social values, general thread to national security and societal integration and low level of industrial capacity are some forms of corruption that suffer the Liberia economy and its people. Corruption is also have been affected by investment, economic growth and government expenditure.

The Liberian society is socializing the youth into the culture of stealing and corruption. This study aims to overcome the consequence of corruption on the future generation. Nowadays, the youth minds are daily programmed to get richer quickly so that the community can celebrate them as (PROF) in our Liberian English. This study will be cherished African values of honesty, sincerity, accountability, and hard work for a new Liberia.

### **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The objective of this study is to investigate corruption and its effects on development growth in the Liberia context and to find a suitable solution for a new Liberia through previous studies and interview from participants by answering five fundamental questions. The study will also look into the phenomenon and provide historical facts and empirical evidences to maintain the objective of this study. This study is guided by the following research questions. The results were then coded by using a thematic analysis.

**Research question 1:** What are the causes of corruption in the Liberia society?

**Research question 2:** What is political corruption in the Liberia society?

**Research question 3:** What is electoral corruption in Liberia?

**Research question 4:** What are the effects of corruption on the growth and development?

**Research question 5:** What are the policy options to tackle corruption for a new Liberia?

These questions are important to understand the historical background of corruption in Liberia, it will also provide profound understanding on the effect of corruption on economic growth in the country, moreover, the analysis and findings of these questions will provide empirical evidence from participants and past researches on corruption and its effect.

### **IV. RESULTS**

This section reports the findings and results on corruption and it effect on economic growth and development on the other hand, find suitable solutions for a new Liberia. This study looks into pass and recent studies for analysis. The findings and the results are coded in a thematic analysis below.

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### The causes of corruption in the Liberia society

**Table 1. The Causes of Corruption in the Liberian Society (N=250)**

Perception towards the causes of corruption	Mean (X)	Standard Deviation SD
1- Lack of faith and moral values	3.13	.727
2- Culture of impunity in the country	4.06	.575
3- Lack of transparency	4.38	.918
4- Greed for wealth and position	4.23	.559
5- Huge poverty rates in the country	3.98	.651
6- Political interest	2.60	.801
Total	64.12	.769

**Source:** Field Study

There are numerous causes of corruption in the Liberian society. It is possible to identify some of the major common factors that give rise to corruption in Liberia. The participants in this study outlines a few and important causes of corruption in Liberia as it is mentioned in table 1 above. The table shows that lacks of transparency is one of the main causes of corruption in Liberia ( $\bar{x}=4.38$ ), lack of transparency is the tragedy of corruption in the country and ( $\bar{x}=4.23$ ) greed for wealth and position among government officials and in the private sectors. Furthermore, the participants outline that ( $\bar{x}=4.06$ ) another possible causes of corruption are the culture of impunity in the country and ( $\bar{x}=3.98$ ) huge poverty rate in the country lead to corruption, moreover, Liberia had lost the culture of value and integrity ( $\bar{x}=3.13$ ) that lack of faith and value could be one of the causes of corruption in Liberia and finally, ( $\bar{x}=2.60$ ) the participant underline political interest as one of the causes of corruption in Liberia. the in-depth interview results can be found in excerpt 1 to 3 below.

#### Excerpt 1.

There are numerous causes of corruption that undermine the economic development in the country. In this country, we know the causes of corruption but we ignore it. For example, lack of transparency deadly to democracy government in any nation. One of the main causes of corruption is 'Greed' it is clear that every government official is greed in anyways; either greed to be rich, greed for power or position. As for me, these are the major causes of corruption that is killing our country.

#### Excerpt 2.

Hmmm! In my opinion, I can prescribe five possible causes of corruption in this country. One of them is poverty; if the common people need are not met, they will definitely involve in corruption. Weak government institution, greed, nepotism, and finally, poor education and high illiterate rate in the country.

Studies has shown that corruption can be divided into four main categories; political, economic, social and environmental. Corruption is a serious impediment to democracy and the rule of law on the political front. When positions and institutions are utilized for private gain in a democratic democracy like Liberia, they lose their credibility (Lederman et al., 2005). As mentioned in excerpt 1 and 2, participants outline causes of corruption in Liberia and it need to be addressed in order to obtain the objective of this study. (Azfar and Gurgur, 2008) corruption negatively affects Human development and health levels in any nation. From the participant point of views, it is now known that there are many factors that causes corruption in the country that need redress in order to integrate or establish a new Liberia for the future leaders.

### Political corruption in the Liberia society

**Table 2. Political corruption in the Liberia society (N=250)**

Perception towards Political corruption	Mean (X)	Standard Deviation SD
Nepotism	4.53	.570
Lack of transparency	4.23	.559
Greed for power and position	4.75	.581
Political interest	2.03	.544
False promise	3.96	.605
Undermining power	4.50	.718
Unqualified employees been employed	4.46	.651

**Source:** Field Study

Table 2 indicates the views of the participants relate to political corruption in Liberia. it is well known that political corruption is one of the phenomena that effecting the economic development growth in the country. According to the participants, that we experience political corruption because ( $\bar{x}=4.75$ ) greed for power and position ( $\bar{x}=4.53$ ), nepotism is one the tragedies of political corruption ( $\bar{x}=4.50$ ), participants believe that political corruption goes with undermining power which is very bad in our political

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arena ( $\bar{x}=4.46$ ), that political corruption is the result of unqualified employees been employed and depraving the qualified one ( $\bar{x}=4.23$ ), again lack of transparency is one of the key causes of political corruption in Liberia ( $\bar{x}=3.96$ ), participants point out that politician give false promises upon election and do not fulfil the promised made ( $\bar{x}=2.03$ ), participants indicates that government officials put political interest first over patriotic.

In general, the participants review that political corruption is a trend that undermined the economic development growth of the country (see excerpt 3 and 4). The interview gives similar respond in table 2 above.

### Excerpt 3

Hmm! Political corruption is killing the habitat of good government in Liberia as a result Liberia is or one of the poorest countries in the world..... for example; the ruling party will appoint ministers or other government officials from its party even if the person is not qualified for the job offered. This is normal in the Liberia society

### Excerpt 4

Political corruption is when government officials used public funds for private benefit..... In Liberia, we experience numerous types of corruption such as; bribery, graft, networking, embezzlement, theft and fraud, abuse of discretion, favouritism, nepotism and clientelism, and influence peddling. These types of political corruption have been implemented by pass and present government in Liberia.

Political corruption is a form of corruption in which political decision-makers are involved. It occurs when politicians and public officials with the authority to enact and enforce laws use their political power to maintain their positions of power and riches and/or make decisions that favour private interests. As a result, political corruption frequently entails the misuse of authority, which not only results in resource misallocation but also has an impact on how decisions are made. Political corruption had been defined by numerous researchers as “any operational transaction between private and public sector actors through which communal goods are illegally converted into private benefit (Heidenheimer et. al. 1993:6). Political corruption is the most dangerous corruption in Liberia.

## Electoral corruption in Liberia

**Table 3. What is electoral corruption in Liberia? (N=250)**

Perception towards electoral corruption	Mean (X)	Standard Deviation SD
Buying votes	4.59	.781
False promises ahead of election	4.72	.568
Choosing the wrong person	4.32	.482
Expecting the wrong men to serve you well	3.78	.691
Huge poverty rate in the country	3.71	.621
Ethnic or tribal affiliation	2.03	.605

**Source:** Field Study

Table 3 discussed participant’s view on electoral corruption in Liberia. It is now known that electoral corruption is a trend that disturb the peace and stability in the country by ( $\bar{x}=4.72$ ) given false promises to the electoral (citizen). The participants emphasized that the politician buy votes from the people ( $\bar{x}=4.59$ ) and it is obvious that the people choose the wrong person to lead them ( $\bar{x}=4.32$ ) and the voter ( $\bar{x}=3.72$ ) expecting the wrong person to serve them well which is Impossible. Moreover, one of the main factors of electoral corruption is the ( $\bar{x}=2.03$ ) ethnic or tribal affiliation in the country. Lastly, ( $\bar{x}=3.71$ ) huge poverty rate in the country is also lead to electoral corruption in Liberia. Similar views were mentioned during the interviews (see excerpt 5 and 6).

### Excerpt 5

Electoral corruption is one of the things that suffering us in this country. The first thing is that we choose goat to look after our cassava leave, when the cassava leave is gone, we ask why. In order word; we elect thieves to govern us and our resources; when our resources are missing, we blame them. The most important aspect that killing us in Liberia by receiving money from politician for them to be elected in office. Another factor is our own selfish attitude by choosing people base on religious, ethnic or tribal affiliation.

### Excerpt 6

Electoral corruption is referred to as selling votes to politician. Most Liberian actually want to vote the right person but due to the huge poverty rate in the country, they prefer receiving the little or no from the politician and vote for them.

Electoral corruption can be defined in this study as “political and electoral behaviour that goes against the spirit and text of the electoral integrity principles. From the participant perspective, electoral voters are the main cause of corruption in the country. Electoral corruption is rampant in the liberia society and it is seeing as a direct subversion of the electoral process by politicians, who are greedy for political power (Dike, 2002 & Ikubaje, 2014). This segment of the study shown that politicians only care about

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their political career not the interest of the masses. This study suggests that electoral voters can lay this trend to rest once they elect men and women base on their credibility rather than political affiliation, religion or ethnic background. Other studies such as (Ackerman, 2000) discovered that Liberia is a democratic country yet its electoral system is faulty and need redressed.

### The effect of corruption on the growth and development

**Table 4. The effects of corruption on the growth and development (N=250)**

Perception towards the effect of corruption	Mean (X)	Standard Deviation SD
Huge poverty rate	4.45	.728
Underdeveloped country	4.23	.559
Illiteracy, teenage pregnancy, & suffering of the masses	2.11	.527

**Source:** Field Study

The above table discussed the effect of corruption on the growth and development in the country. The participants views are highlighted in table 4. Considering the effect of corruption on the growth and development in the country, the participants indicated that ( $\bar{x}=4.45$ ) huge poverty rate in the country is one the effect of corruption in Liberia. ( $\bar{x}=4.23$ ) Liberia is the oldest country in Africa yet, it's one of the poorest underdeveloped countries in the world. Lastly, participants review that the effect of corruption in the country are (1) high illiteracy rate in the country, the rise of teenage pregnancy, and the suffering of the original Liberians; most of which cannot afford their daily needs ( $\bar{x}=2.11$ ). similar views were uttered by the participants during qualitative interview (see excerpt 7 and 8).

#### Excerpt 7

Speaking as final year student, studying Political Sciences at the African Methodist Episcopal University.... Speaking from experience, corruption has huge effect on the growth and development in Liberia. Many youths on the street hijacking people properties because they have no future..... Most of these guys are high school dropout because of corruption in the country. Corruption had made many family members poor... some can't even afford to eat good meal a day.... All these things taking place now because of corruption.

#### Excerpt 8

There's no doubt that corruption is our main enemy in Liberia. It has crippled every aspect of the Liberian society as result, the justice system is inaccurate, teenage pregnancy is rampant, rape, impunity, high illiteracy rate, weak governing system, and many more.....

Several researchers also discovered that corruption has huge effect on the economic development of any country (Dreher and Gassebner 2011). Liberia is a country full of rich resources and beautiful land scale yet her citizens live in poverty. (Andreev 2008) suggested that corruption undermined social trust and the legitimacy of government entity and, in the end, wreak havoc on the rule of law and democratic processes. This study aims to look into the phenomenon and find possible solution for a corruption free in Liberia.

### Policy options to tackle corruption for a new Liberia

**Table 5. Policy options to tackle corruption for a new Liberia (N=250)**

Perception of participants	Mean (X)	Standard Deviation SD
Legislating and empowering the LACC to eliminate corruption	2.03	.559
Prevention, detection and prosecution of corruption by the LACC	2.11	.605

**Source:** Field Study

To prevent corruption in Africa most especially in Liberia is a huge task for these institutions that involve in prosecuting the doers because they were appointed by the same individual in the government that involve in the act. Table 5 outline the possible policy options to tackle corruption for a new Liberia. According to the participants, in order to tackle corruption in Liberia, the LACC needs to prevent, detect and prosecute any individual who are involve in corrupt act ( $\bar{x}=2.11$ ) and another possible options to tackle corruption is that, the government needs to legislate and empower the LACC to eradicate corruption in Liberia ( $\bar{x}=2.03$ ). see excerpt 9.

This section suggests few policy options to tackle corruption for a new Liberia. Research conducted by Samuel Mondays Ayuobi title; Corruption and State Instability in West Africa: An Examination of Policy Options, he outlines few policy options in order to tackle corruption in Africa. See below.

#### Excerpt 9

Effort at tackling corruption in West Africa has largely been at the state level. Each country has its own anti-corruption legislations and institutions. Most of these institutions can best be described as ineffective, juxtaposed with the rising level of corruption in the



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region. Country level anti-corruption measures are not enough. In today's global village, states are increasingly interconnected through trade, investment, financial transactions and communications. This means that corruption in one country is a matter of concern in other countries because: (a) the harm and injustice of corruption become better known elsewhere, (b) it interferes with trade and investment opportunities in the country affected by corruption, (c) it may lead to misuse of international development assistance, and (d) corrupt networks based in one country may operate abroad, bringing corruption to other countries. The potential risk is greater where a state, weakened by corruption, becomes a haven for organized crime.

Samuel Momdays Ayuobi

Corruption is one of the world's most serious problems today. It stifles good governance, fundamentally distorts public policy, leads to resource misallocation, hinders the private sector and private sector development, and disproportionately affects the poor.

The analysis of Samuel Momday Ayuobi in the context of the Liberia society is that, corruption must be addressed among government officials, stakeholders and the citizen through the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC). It is not that government official corrupt but corruption is official in the government system (Adeina, 2011).

The Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission was formed purposely to prosecute any government official or civil servant who involve in a corrupt behaviour. The LACC is essential for the prevention, detection and prosecution of corruption. Prosecuting those who are suspected in the act. The international community such as United Nation, Ecowas, African Union have focus on the improvement of the Anti-Corruption in every African country yet corruption is enigma that continue to compromise the sustainability of economic growth and development in our society. To tackle corruption in Liberia, the study underlines the following measure to cure this disease.

It is basic to state here that there's require for attitudinal alter on the portion of the individuals on the off chance that the war against corruption is to be won. The individuals ought to alter the propensity of celebrating speedy riches and energize genuineness, straightforwardness, responsibility, difficult work, among other positive excellencies. In case the society learns to socialize cherished African values to the young era, there's trust for the war against the beast called corruption in Liberia.

## V. CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, RECOMMENDATION.

This research elaborates on corruption and its effect on economic development in the country by looking at it causes from governmental institutions, civil servant agency and the electoral, then find suitable solutions so that Liberia can regain her values and integrity. The results of this research are very essential for the government through the Liberia Anti-Corruption Committee (LACC) and National Security Agency (NSA) to immediately take drastic action in order to minimize or eliminate corruption in the country for a new Liberia. Corruption has implication on the poor lifestyle of the citizen, injustice, rampant rape, impunity, school dropout among others.

The following recommendations are also made in order to limit or eliminate corruption among government officials and civil servants.

1. The government needs to establish anti-corruption awareness program to acknowledge everyone about the danger of corruption and its effect.
2. The LACC and the NSA need to be empowered and given higher authority to prosecute any government entity or civil servant that act in a corrupt way.
3. The citizen/electoral should vote men and women base on their credential not ethnical or religious affiliation.
4. To regain Liberia values and ethics left by the founding fathers, men and women should have self-esteem.

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