



Received: 16-04-2024
Accepted: 26-05-2024

International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies

ISSN: 2583-049X

Exploring and Investigating Corruption in Successive Governments, Lusaka District: A Reflexivity Approach in the United Party for National Development (UPND) New Dawn Government

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore and investigate corruption in successive governments with specific reference on the UPND New Dawn Government in Lusaka District, Zambia, reflexively. To do so, the study explored, investigated and identified various factors that facilitate corruption such as: The power of political beliefs system, poverty, inequality, weak institutions, ineffective anti-corruption measures, cultural and social capital and great latitude of impunity among public officials. Key informants also emphasized the lack of transparency and weak oversight institutions as factors facilitating the contributing to an increase on corruption. These findings resonated with Treisman's (2000) [77] and Phiri's (2017) [62] researches, which identified the role of social and economic heterogeneity, specifically ethnic fractionalization and prestation. Further, the study highlighted the complex dynamics at play in the context of political and cultural corruption, poverty, and the ineffectiveness of anti-corruption measures. The study noted the lack of a clear legal framework to combat corruption, whistleblower protection, enhanced oversight, and independent anti-corruption agencies. Challenges in the fight against corruption included a lack of funding and resources, political interference, whistleblower vulnerability, and limited education and awareness. These challenges were in line with the findings of Maiga (2023) [40], highlighting the negative impact of corruption on human capital development. Culturally, corruption led to the normalization of unethical behavior, erosion of trust, and an impact on social cohesion. These findings underlay the far-reaching effects of corruption on society and underscore the importance of addressing this issue comprehensively.

Methodologically, the study used a mixed research technique, even though the larger part of it was explorative approach thus, involving interviews, focused group discussions, storytelling and observations. The study used a sample of 100 respondents who were selected using purposive sampling technique. Core to the sampling of 100 respondents is the reflexivity approach which is about acknowledging our positionality in the research. This reflexive qualitative research,

meant as researchers, we were part of the study process, and our prior experiences, assumptions and beliefs influenced the research process and findings. Reflexivity in this study meant to establish rigour, similar to the processes of defining measurement tools for validity in quantitative research. Therefore, the reflexivity research design combined both qualitative and quantitative methods, involving content analysis for qualitative data and simple statistical quantification to present quantitative data. Nevertheless, the bulk part of this research method was anchored on qualitative methods. Quantitative technique was used to justify the extent of UPND'S corruption since other methods have proven inconsistent to prove it. The study's findings uncovered an increase in the presence of corruption in the New Dawn Government, despite campaign promises to reduce it in a transparency and accountable manner.

This study was anchored on how Bourdieu views individuals as actors playing a "game of life" that is both structured and unstructured by the exchange of forms of capital (economic and socio-cultural). Of course, the game has rules, but many are unwritten, and can also be a matter of contention amongst players. The game theory was used to determine the level of accomplices for the corruption crime, were there is not enough evidence for a felony conviction. The argument was that perpetrators of corruption take the actions simply as a game and not a felony, hence its increase and persistence by the actors in the UPND government.

In conclusion, the study revealed that while there are measures in place to combat corruption in the UPND New Dawn Government, challenges persist. Addressing these challenges and promoting a culture of transparency and accountability is essential because corruption undermines economic development, erodes cultural values and social cohesion. It is recommended that efforts to combat corruption include strengthening oversight institutions, promoting ethical leadership, and simplifying legal processes. Public awareness campaigns and measures to reduce poverty and inequality should be prioritized.

Keywords: Corruption, Reflexivity, Game Theory, Prestations, Cultural and Social Capital

Introduction

Corruption represents a significant impediment to the development of any society, adversely affecting economic efficiency, business operations, and citizens' access to essential services. There are no universally agreed definitions of corruption

worldwide. According to Phiri (2020)^[61], the universalist defines corruption using certain common properties with the principle that such properties make certain behaviour corrupt in all societies. Further, Phiri (2020:104)^[61] states; "a relativist definition of corruption, is that it is caused by cultural and moral attitudes". Of concern is that it perpetuates poverty and undermines overall development efforts everywhere in society. Nevertheless, in Zambia, despite the presence of anti-corruption watchdogs and legislative measures aimed at curbing corruption, the problem persists, with the public sector bearing the brunt of its impact (Noyoo, 2008). The term "corruption" encompasses a range of illicit activities, including bribery, embezzlement, money laundering, and favoritism, as understood in the local context, termed "*Nichekeleko*" (Phiri, 2017)^[62].

The post-independence era in Zambia, characterized by authoritarian rule and a state-controlled economy, saw widespread corruption, notably during President Chiluba's regime (Bertelsmann Foundation, 2014)^[7]. However, subsequent administrations have made efforts to address corruption. President Levy Mwanawasa, in particular, prioritized anti-corruption initiatives during his tenure, which included the establishment of a Task Force on Corruption and the implementation of a corruption prevention strategy (Ryder, 2011)^[64].

Following Mwanawasa's presidency, subsequent administrations have had mixed records in combating corruption. President Rupiah Banda's tenure saw challenges, including the acquittal of former President Chiluba for embezzlement charges and the disbandment of anti-corruption task forces (Freedom House, 2013; NORAD, 2011)^[28, 51]. The acquittal of President Chiluba is reflexive of corruption as an act of prestation¹ by the Rupiah government. Simply the acquittal was based on the understanding of political support that compelled the Rupiah government to acquit former president Chiluba from prosecution in exchange for political hand favouring him.

The 2011 election marked a significant turning point in Zambian politics with the ascending of Michael Sata to power, who campaigned on a platform of promising sweeping reforms to tackle corruption and bolster transparency in governance. In agreement with Phiri, despite these promises, President Sata's presidency was marred by persistent corruption scandals that eroded public trust and confidence in the government's ability to effectively address graft (Phiri, 2017)^[62]. One notable example of corruption during Sata's administration was the highly controversial purchase of firetrucks at exorbitant prices, which drew widespread public outrage and scrutiny. The procurement process for these firetrucks raised serious questions about transparency, accountability, and the prudent use of public funds (Freedom House, 2013)^[28]. Reports revealed that the government had purchased firetrucks at a significantly inflated price, far exceeding their market value. This scandal not only highlighted the systemic flaws within the public procurement system but also underscored the extent to which corruption had permeated key sectors of governance under Sata's leadership (NORAD, 2011)^[51].

Despite calls for accountability and investigations into the matter, the lack of transparency and accountability surrounding the firetruck procurement scandal epitomized the challenges facing Zambia in its fight against corruption. It served as a stark reminder of the need for robust anti-corruption measures and institutional reforms to address the root causes of corruption and restore public confidence in the integrity of government institutions. The persistence of corruption scandals during Sata's presidency, despite his promises of reform, underscored the entrenched nature of corruption within Zambia's political landscape and the formidable challenges ahead in combating this pervasive problem (Phiri, 2017)^[62].

The recent transition of power to the (UPND) government in 2021 was met with expectations of renewed efforts to combat corruption. However, reports of corruption have emerged within the UPND government, including allegations of irregularities in procurement processes (The Mast, 2022)^[73]. Against this backdrop, this research aimed to explore and investigate corruption within the UPND government in the Lusaka District, providing insights into the nature and extent of corrupt practices and their implications for governance and public trust, reflexively. Here, reflexivity means an act of self-reference, by which the researchers "bends back onwards" in order to identify the factors that facilitated corruption in the New dawn government in Zambia.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the initial optimism surrounding the (UPND) government's assumption of power in August 2021, pledging a departure from the corruption-associated practices of the previous regime, the reality has presented a different picture. Within 15 months of the new administration, numerous corruption scandals have emerged, casting doubt on the government's commitment to transparency and accountability. For instance, the single-sourcing of Maurice Jangulo's Alpha Commodities to supply 37,000 tons of fertilizers at \$1,407 per ton, compared to the prevailing market price of \$1,000 per ton, serves as a poignant illustration of corruption increase in the UPND government. Such instances raise concerns about potential mismanagement of public resources, skyrocketing commodity prices for staple food such as meal mill and sugar, that has undermined public trust in the government's integrity and capacity to combat corruption effectively. This reflexivity approach to corruption refers to the self-reinforcing effect of market sentiment, whereby rising prices attract buyers whose actions drive prices higher still until the process becomes unsustainable.

Nevertheless, there have been notable advancements in addressing corruption over the past decade, but Zambia continues to grapple with significant challenges in this regard, as evidenced by empirical measures of governance and corruption in the eyes of the UPND government. According to the World Bank Governance Indicators spanning from 2012 to 2021, Zambia has demonstrated progress across all six areas of governance assessed, particularly in political stability, rule of law, government effectiveness, and control of corruption. In the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index of 2020, Zambia received a score of 38 on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean), positioning it 83rd among the 177 countries evaluated. Nevertheless, this study has reviewed that this

¹ See Marcel Mauss (1967), who defines it as a performance of something due upon an obligation, and a gift generously offered and a social deception.

ranking underscored persisting concerns regarding corruption within the country's institutions and governance structures as its focus.

Research Objectives

Generally, the objective was to explore and investigate corruption in the UPND New Dawn Government in Lusaka District, Zambia.

Specifically, the objectives were as follows:

1. To examine the facilitating factors that increases corruption in the UPND new dawn government.
2. To explore the levels of corruption in the UPND government.
3. To review the current strategies in the fight against corruption under the UPND government.

Theoretical framework

This study was based on Bourdieu's concept of "feel for the game" referring to an individual's ability to intuitively understand the rules and expectations of a particular social or cultural context, based on their habitus or embodied cultural dispositions (Wacquant, 2005)^[82]. In other words, it refers to the way in which individuals are able to navigate social situations in the UPND and participate in the social practice of corruption by drawing on their accumulated cultural-capital² and social experiences. Therefore, corruption takes place in the field of politics, inscribed in people's mind through cultural products. These include language, judgement, values and activities of everyday life. A field is a network of relationships. In agreement with Hedin (2001)^[31], informality and the network forms within UPND facilitates corruption to persist. The power of cultural belief systems known as: "*it is our time to rule*" is the "feel game" within UPND that is so unshakeable and provides powerful motivation to the agents of corruption to flourish. Therefore, from the perspectives of the game theory anchored on reflexivity analysis, the study explored and investigated the downsize of corruption and its facilitating factors towards its persistence in the UPND government.

Methodology

A mixed-method approach was chosen to provide a comprehensive understanding of corruption dynamics and anti-corruption efforts made under the UPND government. The quantitative component allows for the measurement of corruption levels and the assessment of the effectiveness of existing anti-corruption measures, drawing on data that can be quantified and analyzed statistically. Meanwhile, the qualitative component facilitates the exploration of contextual factors, stakeholders' perspectives, and the intricacies of corruption phenomena, offering insights that quantitative data alone cannot capture. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative methods aligns with the study's objectives by enabling a multi-dimensional analysis of corruption issues, enhancing the depth and richness of findings. Additionally, the use of mixed methods resonates with the complexity of corruption as a social phenomenon, acknowledging the need for a nuanced approach to research and policy formulation in addressing such multifaceted

challenges (Cooper and Schindler, 2006)^[21]. Basically, primary data came from the respondents in this case Lusaka residents. The study employed the use of a semi structured questionnaire which had both closed and open-ended questions (Bryman and Bell, 2007)^[15]. The questionnaire was divided into pieces, with the first section containing biographical information about the respondents and the other sections containing questions for each of the study's three research questions. Interviews were also conducted using the interview guide to gather in-depth information from key informants on the subject matter. Secondary data of this study included annual reports published articles by anti-corruption watchdogs, Auditor general reports, Newspapers, and newsletters. Further, the data that was collected was scrutinized for authenticity, reliability, adequacy, suitability, and validity in the research questions answering.

The population for this study comprised Lusaka residents with a total population of 3,042,000 of the year 2022. From the sample, from the population, we picked 10 % of the population and found 300,000 and we kept applying 10 to each sample size to reduce even further as our sample. We further broke it down, to another 10 % of the 300,000 which was 3000, eventually we also targeted purposively those in senior positions in UPND until our sample was 100 people. Briefly, this study had a sample of 100 people comprising of senior UPND officials namely, from the party secretary, Lusaka residents from Kabulonga, Kalingalinga, Kamwala, Kabwata and George compound. These are the areas with the highest numbers of UPND members and party officials. We selected 5 people from the registered UPND members from an area. Those from the mentioned residential areas, a simple random sampling based on purposive sampling was used to select the required number. Purposive sampling involves purposefully selecting individuals based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. In this case, UPND registered members and Lusaka residents were selected to participate in the study because they were likely to be updated with current affairs of Zambia. Methodological techniques, this research study used questionnaires, face to face interviews (people's narratives), newsletters, and published articles for data collection purposes as well as people's experiences in the corruption fight and perception.

For this study, data was analyzed using simple statistical quantification presented in bar charts, percentages, pie charts while qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis. By utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods, the research aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of corruption dynamics and anti-corruption strategies under the UPND government in Zambia. This approach allowed for triangulation of findings, enhancing the credibility and validity of the study results. Furthermore, citing Cooper and Schindler (2006)^[21] in their book "Business Research Methods," highlights the rationale behind using mixed methods, emphasizing the advantages of integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a more complete understanding of the research phenomena. This citation strengthens the methodological justification for the chosen approach and demonstrates critical reflection on the part of the researcher. The analysis yielded a set of codes at thematic, sub thematic, category and sub category levels (Phiri *et al*, 2024)^[56].

² To Bourdieu cultural capital is the processes through which dominant classes effectively appropriate and monopolize these resources and use them to their own exclusive benefit.

Discussion of findings

Reflexively, data revealed that corruption in the UPND government is facilitated by several factors. For example, on the questionnaire was the background information. The selected variables, such as: Gender, age, marital status, level of education, and income per month, offered valuable insights into corruption persistence within the UPND government in Lusaka. Age, influences attitudes towards corruption, with younger individuals potentially more susceptible to it due to inexperience and financial pressures, while older individuals may have greater ethical considerations and wider latitude to financial capabilities.

Gender and marital status reflect socio-economic status and social networks, increasing susceptibility to corruption. Phiri (2023) [60] citing Smart (1976), Carlen, (1983) and Heidenson, (1985) classed women as “doubly deviant” when they engage in corruption. This is because they do not only break the law, they also go against the accepted Zambian feminine behaviour locally known as *Mkazi, wazii*, (meaning a woman of virtue).

Further, education correlates with awareness and access to opportunities, with higher education potentially reducing propensity for corruption., or simply *prestation*³. Income directly influences financial incentives and motivations for corrupt behavior, with higher incomes potentially mitigating the need for corruption. Conversely, lower incomes may incentivize corruption such as bribery to supplement earnings. Analyzing these variables provides a nuanced understanding of corruption dynamics and vulnerabilities within the UPND government. Below is an ease corruption illustration based on age on Fig 1.

Age

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by age

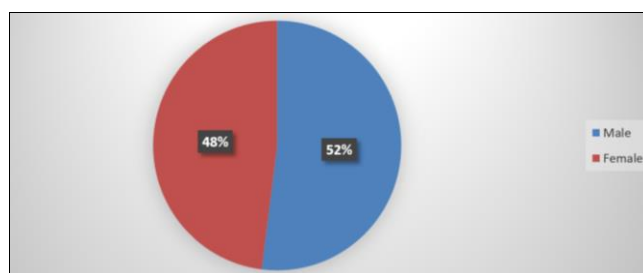
Age	Frequency	Percent %
Below 20	15	15
21-30	21	21
31-40	52	52
41-50	12	12
Total	100	100

Table 1 above shows that majority of the respondents 52% were between 31-40 years of age, 15% were below 20 years, 21% were in the 21-30 age group, and only 12% were in the age group of 41-50 years. The statistical significance of these figures during the interview with the respondents shows that 31-40 years of age representing 52% agree that there are high levels of corruption in the UPND government in Lusaka District. Unfortunately, this data fails to explain the concomitant of corruption phenomena. It did not expose the deeper underlying cultural beliefs that facilitates it to those who engage in it. This reflexivity approach confirms the authors validity towards its use. Corruption is a form of dishonesty or a criminal offense which is undertaken by a person or an organization that is entrusted in a position of authority, in order to acquire illicit benefits or abuse power for one's personal gain (Ogunrinade, 2019) [52]. Corruption may involve many activities which include bribery, influence peddling and the embezzlement. It may also

³ See Mauss Marcel (2005) on Prestations as a performance of something due upon an obligation. Formal pretense and social deception

involve practices which are legal in many countries (Maiga, 2003). Political corruption occurs when an office-holder or other governmental employee acts with an official capacity for personal gain. Corruption is most common in Kleptocracies, oligarchies and mafia states (Transparency International, 2015) [75]. Sadly, descriptions of local corrupt practices according to, Bohannan’s (1977:406) arguments have not been used to explain indigenous concepts. According to him, what is missing is to fit these practices and concepts into the larger conceptual system of the people who use [them]. For example, the data fails to explain the spirituality of the given. One of the respondents during interviews confirms that corruption such as *Nepotism* is seen as a great honour in the UPND government.

Sex distribution



Pie chart

Fig 1: Sex of Respondents

A significant majority of the respondents 52% were males while 48% were females as indicated in Fig 1 above. This proves that more males than females engaged in corruption in the new dawn government. The 52 % of respondents on corruption traced it from accumulated social capital, such as social positions within the UPND party and government. The 52 % respondent confirmed that corruption is triggered and bound by relations of homology to a set of activities or cultural belief systems anchored tribal identities for the people of Southern province in Zambia saying: “*it is our time to rule*”. Therefore, one can link the 52% respondents on corruption to cultural identity embedded in the utterance “*it is our time to rule*” that describes traits of the public concern on corruption, which confirms its persistence in the UPND government. Sex in the study was the position occupied by the respondent in the social space of the UPND government. It is in the social space where different kinds of capital are distributed by the UPND government. This is because, most respondents within the 52 % respondents have been rewarded with different kinds of party positions as ardent supporters of the cultural goods inscribed in the utterance: *It is our time to rule*.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by marital status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent %
Single	40	40
Married	58	58
Divorced	2	2
Widowed	0	0
Total	100	100

On marital status, the majority of respondents 58% on corruption were married while those who were single were 40% and only a small proportion 2% were divorced as

shown in Table 2 above. None of the respondents were widowed. Nevertheless, to attain marriage status of 52%, respondents argued that it arose the innumerable forms of social life within the UPND government. Out of this develops a discriminatory social structure against women who are not “properly married” or widowed. The labels *properly married* corresponds to the art and play that triggers the corruption of *Nepotism* in the UPND government. This infers that every kind of interaction between and among genders is an exchange for party position in the UPND government.

Education Level

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by education level

Level	Frequency	Percent %
Primary	25	25
Secondary	44	44
Tertiary	31	31
Total	100	100

As shown in Table 3 above, a significant majority 44% of the respondents had attained secondary education, 31% had tertiary education while only 25% had primary education. The 25% respondents confirm the limitation of education levels linked to high corrupt activities that can be known as *prestation* activities in the UPND government. In principle, the 25% respondents are bound together by the lower levels of education. Reflectively, those with lower education levels in UPND do not always exchange goods and wealthy or anything of economic value, but exchange courtesies, entertainments, rituals and dances, the bedrock and the soul of the party. For example, the *prestations* and counter-*prestations* take place under a voluntary guise, such as playing the *Namalwa*⁴. In essence, playing the *Namalwa* drum has strict obligations and their sanction is private and an open ware fare to those who are not knowledge with its rhythm. Playing the *Namalwa* drum is a system of total *prestation* which confirms the nature of corrupt activities in the UPND government. The power that reinforces *prestation* in the UPND government apart from lower level of education is the power of the *Namalwa* rhythm. This performance is an interesting drum beating called the “lion drum” (*Namalwa in Tonga*) used at traditional funerals and weddings. This drum which is not struck at all but which has a stick inserted through the drum head that is rubbed constantly producing a rambling sound that echoes 5 kilometres away. In agreement with Finnegan (1970) [25], who considers circumstances surrounding the drum beating, we took on board the potentials of tonal languages and the *Namalwa* drumming that it triggers corruption and stereotypes.



Available on: Open Entry International

Fig 2: The Namalwa drum

Fig 2 above is one of the most interesting drums known as the “lion drum” (*Namalwa in Tonga*) used at traditional funerals and wedding ceremonies. This is a friction drum which is not struck at all but which has a stick inserted through the drum head that is rubbed. The *Namalwa* helps to determine cultural corruption in the UPND government. The corrupt act is acted during drum beating and relations of the drummers to the UPND structures in the hierarchy. The drummers of *Namalwa* are also linked to the broader network of the UPND government. Qualification to be a drum beater of *Namalwa* depends on someone’s link to the UPND social network and party hierarchy.

Income per month

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by income

Income	Frequency	Percent %
Below K1000	27	27
Between K1000 and K2000	39	39
Between K2000 and K4000	22	22
Above K4000	12	12
Total	100	100

As shown in Table 4 above, a significant majority of the respondents 39% had a monthly income of between K1000 and K2000, 27% were below K1000, and 22% were between K2000 and K4000. A minority of the respondents 12% had a monthly income of above K4000. This means that the unequal distribution of income between respondents create incentives embodied in UPND which encourages public officials to exploit their unlimited power for private benefits extraction or creation. In other words, the unequal distribution of income is enough point to explain the reasons why corruption in the UPND government is hard to avoid.

Facilitating factors that increase corruption in the UPND new dawn government

The study sought to establish facilitating factors that increases corruption in the new dawn government. The categories of the responses were arrived at based on the common responses provided by the respondents through use of themes. Below were the responses from the respondent as shown in Fig 3 below:

⁴ Namalwa, also known as the lion drum is a friction drum which is not struck at all but has a stick inserted through the drum head that is rubbed.

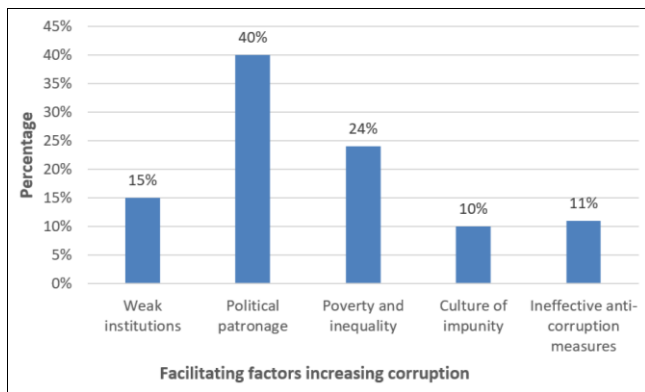


Fig 3: Facilitating factor that increase corruption

Findings in Fig 3 above indicate the majority of the respondents said that political patronage was the major factor contributing to the increase in corruption in the UPND new dawn government, 24% said poverty and inequality, 15% said weak institutions, and 11% said ineffective anti-corruption measures. A minority 10% of the respondents indicated a culture of impunity among public officials as a facilitating factor increasing corruption in the UPND new dawn government. This is because as cited in Phiri (2021) the UPND government has ignored the locally held understanding of the colloquial *Nyanja* word *Bineyi*, which refers to social support to gain business favour among UPND officials. Simply, this confirms arrange of illicit political practices such as patronage and prevarication. Further, key informants comprising top management in the civil service, ACC top management and lecturers, gave following views regarding facilitating factors that increase corruption in the UPND new dawn government.

Political Patronage

Political patronage involves politicians granting favors, positions, contracts, or resources to their supporters or allies, often in exchange for loyalty or political support. This can lead to corruption in several ways. Unqualified individuals may be appointed to positions, leading to inefficiency and misuse of public resources. Contracts and resources may be awarded based on political connections rather than merit. Public servants may prioritize loyalty over public interest, perpetuating corruption. One key informant noted that:

"Political patronage can create a breeding ground for corruption. When politicians use their influence to reward their allies with government positions or contracts, it can lead to favoritism and unethical practices that breed corruption and rob the nation of resources that truly champion the national development agenda."

Lack of Transparency

Transparency refers to the openness and accessibility of government activities, decisions, and transactions to the public and relevant oversight bodies. When transparency is lacking corrupt practices can occur behind closed doors without public scrutiny. Citizens and watchdog organizations have difficulties in tracking government expenditures and holding officials accountable. Whistleblowers are less likely to come forward due to fear of retaliation. One key informant indicated that:

"Transparency is crucial to combat corruption. In the absence of clear and open government activities, it is much easier for corrupt practices to take root and go unnoticed. This causes the nation to lose colossal sums of money that could be channeled to key development initiatives aimed propelling Zambia's national development"

Compromised weak Institutions.

Strong institutions are vital for maintaining the rule of law and preventing corruption. When institutions are weak or compromised. Oversight bodies, such as anti-corruption agencies and audit offices, may be unable to effectively monitor government activities. Law enforcement agencies may lack the capacity or independence to investigate and prosecute corruption cases. Accountability mechanisms are undermined, allowing corruption to flourish without consequences. One key informant reiterated that:

"When institutions responsible for oversight and accountability are compromised or lack the necessary resources, corruption can thrive. Effective institutions are essential to keep corruption in check."

Inadequate Anti-Corruption Measures

Effective anti-corruption measures, including laws, regulations, and enforcement mechanisms, are essential for deterring corrupt behavior. Inadequate measures on the other hand, create a permissive environment where individuals may engage in corrupt practices with impunity. They fail to provide clear guidelines for ethical behavior and consequences for corrupt acts. They do not encourage reporting or whistleblowing due to lack of protection for informants. A key informant echoed that:

"Anti-corruption measures, such as robust laws, regulations, and enforcement mechanisms, are essential in the fight against corruption. Inadequate measures leave room for corruption to flourish" (informant, 2023)

Poverty and an equality power relations

Poverty and economic inequality can create conditions that push individuals towards corrupt activities. People facing economic hardship may resort to corruption as a means of survival or improving their standard of living. In unequal societies, individuals may perceive corruption as a way to access resources and opportunities that would otherwise be denied to them. Corruption can exacerbate poverty and inequality by diverting resources away from essential services and development projects. One key informant indicated that:

"High levels of poverty and inequality can drive individuals to engage in corrupt practices as a means of meeting their basic needs. Addressing social and economic disparities is a key component of reducing corruption" (Informant, 2024)

Addressing corruption requires comprehensive strategies that target these facilitating factors. These strategies include promoting transparency, strengthening institutions, enacting and enforcing effective anti-corruption laws, addressing

economic disparities, and fostering a culture of accountability.

Magnitude (levels) of corruption in the UPND government

The study sought to explore the levels of corruption in the UPND government. Key informants comprised top management in the civil service, ACC top management and lecturers. Below were the responses.

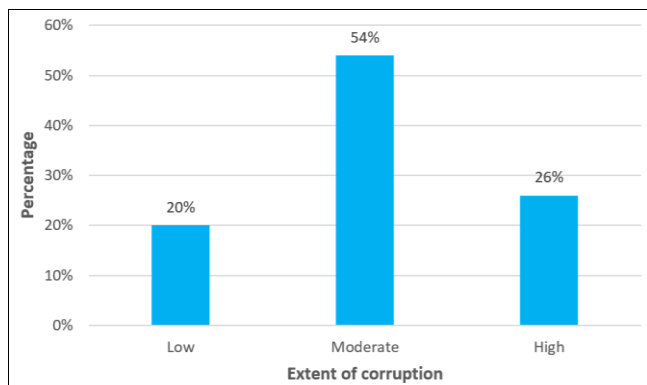


Fig 4: The Corruption Magnitude

Fig 4 above indicates that the majority of the respondents 54% felt that the extent of corruption in the UPND new dawn government was moderate, 20% felt it was low and 26% indicated that it was high.

Views from key informants indicated that corruption was low in the UPND government. Key informants indicated that corruption was low in the UPND government due to stringent anti-corruption measures put in place by the government. Government has taken specific actions to combat corruption effectively. Below are some of the measures the UPND government has taken.

Clear Legal Framework

Stringent anti-corruption measures typically involve the establishment and enforcement of clear and comprehensive legal frameworks. The government has enacted laws that define corrupt practices, specify penalties, and establish mechanisms for reporting and investigating corruption. One respondent indicated:

"A strong legal framework is the backbone of an effective anti-corruption strategy. Laws that clearly define what constitutes corruption and specify the consequences send a powerful deterrent message" (Informant, 2024)

Independent Anti-Corruption Agencies

Effective anti-corruption efforts often include the creation of independent anti-corruption agencies or commissions. These bodies are responsible for investigating and prosecuting corruption cases without political interference. For example, the Financial intelligence unit, the Anti-money laundering squadron and the enactment of the forfeiture of proceeds of crime Act number 19 Of 2010. One respondent reiterated that:

"Having independent anti-corruption agencies is pivotal. They can operate free from political influence, which is essential for holding those involved in

corruption accountable"(Informant, 2024).

Whistleblower Protection

A key component of anti-corruption measures is providing protection and incentives for whistleblowers. When individuals feel safe reporting corruption, it becomes easier to uncover and address corrupt practices. The UPND government has reiterated this to be very important in the fight against corruption. One key informant indicated that:

"Whistleblower protection is a linchpin of anti-corruption efforts. It empowers individuals to step forward and expose corruption, ultimately making it harder for corrupt actors to operate in the shadows."

Transparency and Accountability

The UPND government is promoting initiatives to enhance transparency and accountability in government operations. This can involve publishing government budgets, expenditures, and contracts, making them accessible to the public and oversight bodies. One respondent indicated that:

"Transparency is the enemy of corruption. When government operations are open to scrutiny, it becomes more challenging for corruption to thrive, and the public can hold officials accountable."

Enhanced Oversight

Strengthening oversight mechanisms within government institutions has helped to prevent corruption. This involves reforms in procurement processes, financial management, and public administration to reduce opportunities for corruption. One respondent noted that:

"Enhanced oversight acts as a safeguard. It ensures that government resources are used efficiently and ethically, minimizing the risk of corruption."

Regular Audits and Reviews

Stringent anti-corruption measures involve regular audits and reviews of government activities and finances by independent bodies. These audits help identify irregularities and hold officials accountable. One respondent indicated that:

"Regular audits are a check and balance. They help uncover any hidden corruption, ensuring that government officials remain accountable."

Reflexively, this data from informants misses the inert corrupt behaviour profoundly ingrained in the UPND government, namely; negotiation, solidarity and gift giving. Of concern is that despite the UPND government putting up stringent anti-corruption measures to combat corruption effectively, these incubated behaviours are still flourishing.

Review of the current strategies in the fight against corruption under the UPND government

The study sought to review the current strategies in the fight against corruption under the UPND government. Key informants comprised top management in the civil service, ACC top management and lecturers. When respondents were asked what were the strategies employed by the UPND

government in the fight against corruption the following were the responses

Table 5: Current strategies in the fight against corruption

Current Strategies	Frequency	Percent
Regular audit and reviews	37	37
Ethical leadership	48	48
Asset recovery	2	2
Whistle blower protection	9	9
Education and awareness	4	4
Total	100	100

Study findings as indicated in Table 5 above revealed that the majority of the respondents 48% said that the promotion of ethical leadership was the major strategy being used by the new dawn government to fight corruption in Zambia, 37% said regular audits and reviews, 9% said whistleblower protection and 4% education and awareness. A minority 2% of the respondents said asset recovery was a strategy used by the UPND government to fight corruption. From the statistics above, it shows that despite the promotion of ethical leadership in government under the UPND government had done little to curb the high levels of corruption in government as leaders continued to embezzle funds and engage in various corrupt schemes to enrich themselves. These leaders, continue to engage in corruption embedded in the saying *it is our time to rule*. For example, during an interview with an informant about the theft of billions of dollars, one was asked what *bineyi* means locally in the UPND government. He contended that it is interpreted as an accepted phenomenon involving business favour rather than as corruption (Phiri, 2021).

Views from key informants indicated that the new dawn has restored the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), an independent body responsible for investigating and prosecuting corruption cases to its original mandate operating with a degree of autonomy to reduce political interference.

Whistleblower Protection has been used a means to fight corruption under the new dawn government. Zambia provides legal protection for whistleblowers who report corruption, encouraging individuals to come forward without fear of retaliation. The Protected Disclosures Act offers safeguards to whistleblowers. One key informant noted that:

"Zambia has made commendable progress in protecting whistleblowers under the UPND new dawn government. The Protected Disclosures Act provides legal safeguards for those who come forward with information about corruption. This protection is crucial in creating a safe environment for whistleblowers to expose corrupt practices" (Informant, 2024)

The Zambian government has taken steps to promote transparency in its operations. It publishes budget information, government expenditures, and contracts, making them accessible to the public and oversight bodies in order to end corrupt practices in government. One respondent indicated that:

"The Zambian government's commitment to transparency is evident. Publishing budget details,

government expenditures, and contracts allows citizens and oversight bodies to scrutinize government operations. Transparency is a powerful tool in the fight against corruption"(Informant, 2024).

The government has worked on strengthening oversight mechanisms within government institutions, including reforms in procurement processes, financial management, and public administration to minimize corruption risks. One respondent noted that:

"Enhancing oversight mechanisms is essential for reducing corruption risks. Zambia's efforts to reform procurement, financial management, and public administration are steps in the right direction. These reforms help ensure that public resources are used efficiently and ethically" (Informant, 2024)

Zambia engages in international cooperation and partnerships with organizations such as the United Nations and the African Union to strengthen its anti-corruption efforts and access technical assistance and support. One respondent said that:

"International cooperation is vital in the global fight against corruption. Zambia's partnerships with organizations like the United Nations and the African Union demonstrate a commitment to strengthening anti-corruption efforts. These partnerships provide access to expertise and technical assistance, which is crucial for success" (Informant, 2024).

Story telling, in the saying; it is our time to rule.

The belief by the UPND members that has exacerbated corruption of nepotism is incubated in the sentences, *it is our time to rule* and many others party sayings. For example, the saying; *it is our time to rule* is not immune to misuse and overuse. The saying is a story and a loaded party belief of value. Party members consider the saying as the most important quality of being a *UPNDst* (Party Carder). It this confirms the reasons why the current strategies stated in here have failed to combat corruption of nepotism. In agreement with Chitala (2024)^[17] who confirms that it is unfortunate that all subsequent regimes have practiced nepotism, cronyism and favoritism. The late President Kaunda tried to address it through the doctrine of "*tribal balancing*". President Chiluba's first term followed the United independence party (UNIP) doctrine but reverted to nepotism in his second term. President Mwanawasa and Rupiah Banda perfected the system through the doctrine of the "*family tree*" (Chitala, 2024)^[17].

This means that there is a strong interface between corruption and the UPND saying: *It is our time to rule* which must be understood in the context of reflexivity approach. Therefore, prudence, and not conviction of one's own moral or ideological superiority, should guide political action (Phiri, 2024)^[56], which is missing in the UPND corruption strategy.

Conclusion and recommendations

Reflexively, the study has shown a perpetuation of corruption in the UPND new dawn government in Lusaka District, Zambia. It has also revealed several important findings regarding the state of corruption, contributing

factors and weaknesses in the strategies to combat it. The challenges faced, such as the socio-economic and cultural effects. These findings shed light on the complex dynamics of corruption in the region and have important implications for anti-corruption efforts globally.

First, the study found that political patronage and belief are the major facilitating factors contributing to corruption in the UPND new dawn government. This aligns with the research of Treisman (2000)^[77] and Phiri (2017)^[62], which highlighted the role of social and economic heterogeneity in the probability of corrupt acts being caught. Additionally, the study identified poverty and inequality, weak institutions, ineffective anti-corruption measures, and a culture of impunity as other significant factors contributing to corruption. Addressing these factors is crucial to curbing corruption effectively. In agreement with Phiri and Selestino Kandondo (2021)^[57] corruption, commonly known as the *Bineyi* entails a system of business social networking in which influential business people in political parties seek to gain favour is never recognized as being the key for perpetuating it.

Second, while public perception indicated that there is corruption in the UPND government, key informants suggested that corruption was relatively low due to stringent anti-corruption measures put in place. Unfortunately, this dichotomy fails to highlight the *Bineyi* phenomenon which most respondents complain about. Other respondents explain of the need for comprehensive measures to combat corruption while acknowledging the importance of maintaining public trust, only.

Third, the study revealed that the UPND government has implemented strategies such as promoting ethical leadership, regular audits, whistleblower protection, and transparency initiatives to fight corruption. These strategies align with international best practices and are essential in reducing corrupt practices in government.

Fourth, the study identified challenges in the fight against corruption, including lack of funding and resources, political interference, complex legal processes, and high levels of poverty and inequality. Overcoming these challenges requires increased funding, reduced political interference, and simplification of legal processes.

Lastly, the study highlighted the socio-economic and cultural effects of corruption in Zambia, such as economic drain, income inequality, and the normalization of corruption. These effects have a profound impact on the country's development and cultural values, necessitating efforts to address corruption's negative consequences on society.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed to address corruption in the UPND government in Lusaka District, Zambia:

1. **Strengthen Oversight and Institutions:** To combat corruption effectively, it is crucial to strengthen oversight bodies and institutions responsible for monitoring government activities. This includes ensuring that anti-corruption agencies and audit offices operate independently and have the necessary resources to perform their duties.
2. **Promote Ethical Leadership:** The government should continue to promote ethical leadership and good governance. Encouraging leaders to prioritize

competence and ethical conduct over political loyalty is essential in reducing corrupt practices.

3. **Enhance Public Awareness and Whistleblower Protection:** Efforts to raise public awareness about the detrimental effects of corruption should continue. Additionally, whistleblower protection mechanisms should be reinforced to encourage individuals to come forward without fear of retaliation.
4. **Address Poverty and Inequality:** To reduce the motivation for corrupt practices, measures to alleviate poverty and reduce income inequality should be prioritized. This can help in curbing corruption driven by economic hardship.
5. **Streamline Legal Processes:** Simplify and expedite the legal processes involved in investigating and prosecuting corruption cases. Delays and complex procedures can hinder convictions and should be addressed.
6. **Cultural Transformation:** Promote a cultural shift away from the normalization of corruption. Emphasize traditional values of honesty and integrity to counteract the acceptance of corrupt practices in society.
7. **International Best Practices:** Learn from international best practices in combating corruption. Collaboration with organizations like Transparency International and the United Nations can provide valuable insights and support in the fight against corruption.
8. In agreement with Phiri (2023)^[60] the suggestion is that political parties should ensure they have rules that give equal opportunities to both men and women when selecting candidates, to avoid corruption in lower party structures.

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