

The Relationship between Political Corruption and Human Rights Violations in Zambia: A Diachronic Analysis

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Abstract: This paper examines the intricate interplay between political corruption and human rights violations, anchored in a diachronic approach, within the context of Zambia. The paper employs a qualitative research design, examining the nuanced dynamics that link corruption in the political sphere to the infringement of human rights. The investigation relies on a comprehensive analysis of secondary data, encompassing scholarly articles, reports, and governmental documents to provide a holistic understanding of the subject of corruption.

The paper begins by employing a Pierre Bourdieu-inspired social capital framework, embedded in a diachronic analytical theoretical framework that elucidates the potential causal links and mechanisms connecting political corruption and human rights violations, as mirrored in semiotics and police detentions. Through a nuanced qualitative approach, the article analyzes specific instances and patterns of language habitus and corruption practices within Zambia's political landscape, examining the reasons why and how they have contributed to or directly resulted in human rights violations. Special attention is given to identifying key actors, systemic vulnerabilities, and institutional failures that facilitate this relationship.

The findings of the paper contribute to the existing body of knowledge on linguistic corruption and human rights violations, offering insights into the specific manifestations of this relationship in the Zambian context. The qualitative diachronic analysis sheds light on the lived experiences of individuals affected by the intersection of corruption and human rights abuses, highlighting the need for targeted interventions and policy reforms.

The article's implications extend to both academic discourse and policymaking, providing a foundation for future research on corruption and human rights in Zambia and potentially informing strategies to mitigate these issues. This research paper underscores the importance of addressing diachronic corruption within the political sphere as a means to safeguard and promote human rights, fostering a more just and equitable society in Zambia

Keywords: Corruption, Diachronic, Human rights, Social Capital, Political science

1. INTRODUCTION

Corruption (in the local Nyanja language) is commonly known as *Nichekeleko*¹ and human rights abuse are two critical social vices that have profound implications for the well-being of society in Zambia and around the world. Understanding the dynamics between these two phenomena is crucial for developing effective strategies to promote good governance, safeguard human rights, and foster sustainable development worldwide.

Zambia, a landlocked nation in Southern Africa, has undergone significant political, social, and economic transformations since gaining independence from the British in 1964. The country's rich cultural diversity and abundant natural resources set the stage for potential prosperity, which, unfortunately, has been abused through corruption. Surely, alongside these opportunities, Zambia has grappled with challenges such as the political Corruption phenomenon, translated as *Mingalato* (in Bemba) and *Nichekeleko* (in Nyanja), which have shaped its space and landscape, negatively affecting the protection of human rights.

The early post-independence period was marked by optimism and aspirations for democratic governance, economic development, and social progress. However, over the years, Zambia has

¹See Chidongo Phiri (2017) who defines *Nichekeleko* literary, as give or “cut as slice for me or what is in it for me?” Simply, the social act of exchange in power relations.

undergone shifts in leadership, political ideologies, and economic policies, partly due to corruption embedded in local languages. Despite efforts to establish a stable and democratic political system, the nation has faced allegations of corruption within its political institutions, which are often blatantly visible in everyday language use and occasionally in symbols.

Political corruption in Zambia has manifested in various forms, including embezzlement, bribery, nepotism, and the misuse of public resources, commonly referred to in political diachronic cycles as *mingalato*. These allegations have not only strained the public's trust in governmental structures but have also raised concerns about the potential impact on human rights. Political Corruption, commonly known as *mingalato* in Zambia's political space, can undermine the effectiveness of institutions responsible for safeguarding human rights, creating a challenging environment for the realization of basic freedoms and equitable opportunities for all citizens (TIZ, 2021).

Understanding the historical trajectory of political corruption in Zambia is essential for contextualizing the current state of affairs. The country's political evolution has been influenced by internal and external factors, including economic fluctuations, global market dynamics, and regional geopolitical considerations. Additionally, the legacy of colonization and the struggle for independence have left indelible marks on Zambia's political landscape (TIZ, 2021).

The global community acknowledges the inherent connection between political corruption and human rights violations. The erosion of transparency, accountability, and rule of law, often associated with corruption, can create an environment conducive to human rights abuses. As such, the examination of the relationship between political corruption and human rights violations in Zambia is not only pertinent to the nation's internal dynamics but also contributes to the broader discourse on governance and human rights on the African continent (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

The study examined the historical context of political corruption in Zambia, illuminating key events, policies, and socioeconomic factors that have shaped the prevalence of corruption within the political sphere. By revealing the historical tapestry, the article aimed to provide a foundation for comprehending the contemporary dynamics between political corruption and human rights violations in Zambia. Such an understanding is crucial for devising effective strategies that promote good governance, accountability, and the protection of human rights in the nation (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Political *mingalato* (corruption) and human rights violations represent two deeply intertwined and persistent issues that have the potential to undermine the social fabric, stability, and well-being of any nation. In Zambia, these issues have not only been persistent but also have the potential to have far-reaching consequences for the country's development, governance, and human rights landscape. For example, Zambia has not only failed to meet the 50-50 AU/SADC target by 2015 but also missed the earlier SADC target of 30% representation of women in politics and decision-making positions by 2005 (Daka, 2023). Logically, this highlights the exclusion of women's voices in politics, as outlined in the SADC protocol agreement for 2023 (Daka, 2023). This suggests a connection between human rights violations and corrupt practices in Zambia. Political corruption in Zambia encompasses a range of practices, including the embezzlement of public funds, bribery, the exclusion of women's voices in parliament, nepotism in public appointments, and the abuse of power for personal gain. These corrupt activities can occur at various levels of government and across different sectors of society. The consequences of political corruption are widespread and can lead to a decline in public trust in government institutions, a misallocation of resources, and a distortion of national priorities. Furthermore, in agreement with the US Department of States (2022), political corruption can create an environment in which those responsible for upholding the rule of law and safeguarding human rights may become complicit or actively participate in violations.

The human rights situation in Zambia is also a topic of concern. Allegations of extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, restrictions on freedom of expression, censorship, and discrimination are reported. These violations have far-reaching implications, affecting the dignity, safety, and freedom of Zambian citizens. The prevalence of such violations raises significant concerns.

While political corruption and human rights violations are often studied as distinct issues, they are seldom analyzed in conjunction with local language, which this paper has corrected. There is a growing suspicion that these issues are interrelated. It is possible that political corruption contributes to human

rights violations by undermining the rule of law, eroding checks and balances, and fostering impunity. Conversely, a weak human rights protection framework can provide a fertile ground for corrupt practices to flourish, as those who expose corruption may face harassment or intimidation, locally known in *Nyanja* as *Kufyantha*². Understanding the potential links between political corruption and human rights violations in Zambia is crucial for addressing both issues holistically (Transparency International Zambia, 2021).

To date, Zambia lacks a comprehensive study that examines the intricate relationship between political corruption and human rights violations using local language within its borders. This gap hinders efforts to develop effective strategies to combat these issues. This paper aims to address this knowledge gap by investigating the multifaceted relationship between political corruption and human rights violations in Zambia using diachronic analysis. By doing so, it seeks to provide language-based insights that are evidence-informed, informing policy and advocacy efforts aimed at improving governance and safeguarding human rights in the country.

This paper is timely and pertinent, given the increasing global focus on good governance, transparency, and human rights. It is hoped that the findings will contribute not only to the academic discourse but also to the practical efforts aimed at addressing these critical issues in Zambia.

1.2. Research Objectives

- To examine the diachronic extent and nature of political corruption in Zambia.
- To assess the prevalence of linguistic in human rights violations acts in Zambia.
- To analyze the potential links between political corruption and human rights violations in Zambia.

1.3. Justification of the Paper

Rights are typically viewed as embodying interests that are natural, universal, or inherent to humanity. However, these rights are often violated due to political corruption in Zambia. The advent of political corruption in Zambia fundamentally disrupts this universalizing and objectifying tendency of rights. For example, the selective enforcement of the *Nolle prosequi* law has proven to be disruptive to certain people's rights in many African states. This author assessed and provided solutions to mitigate the effects of the *Nolle prosequi* law. Simply, the overriding justification for this paper stems from the continued persistence of human rights abuses by the state, as mirrored in the *Nolle prosequi* law in Zambia. The study is particularly relevant in the face of wide abuse of human rights using the law on *Nolle prosequi*. Given its focus on human rights, as reflected in the *Nolle prosequi*, the paper addressed the good, the bad, and the rhetoric, filling a gap in knowledge about the socio-legal process in Zambia.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review provides a critical foundation for understanding the complexities of the relationship between political corruption and human rights violations in Zambia. The paper examined existing scholarly work, theoretical frameworks, and empirical studies relevant to the topic, offering a comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge on political corruption in a diachronic perspective. Two linguistic concepts were reviewed to analyze political corruption in Zambia, namely *Nichekeleko* and *mingalato* that provide a direct link to human rights violation. To gain insight into the nuanced dynamics of political corruption within Zambia, an examination of empirical studies was necessary. Research efforts by Chanda *et al.* (2018) and Phiri (2017) explored the patterns and prevalence of corruption within key government sectors, including the Zambia Police and the Anti-Corruption Commission, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of corruption in practice and its underlying habits. Their findings not only highlight specific instances but also contribute to the broader understanding of the contextual factors that foster corruption within the Zambian political landscape.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Mbewe and Tembo (2016) adds depth to the exploration of political corruption by analysing its impact on economic development. Their empirical investigation provides valuable insights into the economic consequences of corruption, offering a comprehensive perspective on the far-reaching implications of corrupt practices within the Zambian context. These empirical studies collectively contribute to the growing body of knowledge surrounding political corruption in Zambia, supplying valuable data and insights that inform the subsequent analysis of its relationship

²A *ChiNyanja* word meaning torture, harassment including intimidation.

with human rights violations. However, what is grossly overlooked is how political corruption is carried out, which has become the most common and concerning issue to citizens. In this paper, two types of political corruption are used to demonstrate how they are perpetuated and linked to human rights violations. Bribery and favouritism are used synonymously with *Mingalato* and *Nichekeleko*. Therefore, wherever *Mingalato* appears, *Nichekeleko* is mentioned in this paper, and it simply refers to political corruption. The paper pays particular attention to collocations and syntax in *chiNyanja* to demonstrate the links between corruption and human rights violations in Zambia.

2.1. Historical Empirical Studies on Human Rights Violations in Zambia

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the historical landscape of human rights violations in Zambia, it is essential to examine empirical studies that have scrutinized these occurrences. This research paper, conducted by the Zambia Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) in its annual reports, provides a systematic analysis of documented human rights violations (ZHRC, 2019). These studies offer valuable insights into the nature, frequency, and context of human rights abuses in various sectors, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by the Zambian population. Nevertheless, what is also missing in these annual reports is the diachronic analysis of how human rights are linked to corrupt practices and habits. The collected data has shown a distinctive use of the Chi Nyanja words, reflecting the connection between corruption and human rights in Zambia. For example, the use of the word *Kufyantha* embedded in *Mingalato* reflects how corruption is perpetuated and linked to human rights violations.

Additionally, the work by Ngulube et al. (2017) examines specific cases of human rights violations, investigating the socio-political factors that contribute to such incidents. Their empirical findings provide a qualitative dimension to the analysis, unravelling the complexities surrounding the violation of human rights in Zambia. These empirical studies serve as crucial building blocks for unraveling the interconnections between political corruption and human rights violations in Zambia, providing a factual basis for the subsequent examination of their intricate relationship.

2.2. Interconnections between Political Corruption and Human Rights Violations

This section critically synthesizes existing literature to unravel the intricate interconnections between political corruption and human rights violations in Zambia. Studies such as those by Nkonde et al. (2015) and Kambole (2020) scrutinize specific instances where corruption has had direct consequences on human rights. By establishing correlations and causal relationships, these empirical investigations significantly contribute to understanding the mechanisms by which political corruption exacerbates human rights abuses. For example, Phiri (2024) highlights the significant gaps in the socio-legal framework, which perpetuates inequalities, despite the human rights principles enshrined in Zambia's post-independence constitutions.

Furthermore, the work of Mwewa and Banda (2018) examines the systemic impact of corruption on institutions responsible for upholding human rights. Their findings highlight the ways in which corruption undermines these institutions, fostering an environment that is conducive to human rights violations. These empirical studies collectively provide a comprehensive overview, guiding the exploration of the complex interplay between political corruption and human rights violations in Zambia.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In terms of theoretical framing, this article draws on Bourdieu's (1986) concept of social capital, which serves as the guiding framework for examining the links between corruption and human rights in Zambia. Theoretical frameworks assist in understanding, describing and explaining behaviour (Phiri, Musi, Munkoyo *et al.*, 2023). Bourdieu's theoretical underpinnings of social capital are necessary for this article because they help in understanding the relations between corruption and human rights violations. For Bourdieu, social capital refers to social obligations or connections that reflect the interpersonal relations within specific groups (Phiri, Sompa, Musonda *et al.*, 2022). For this article, social capital facilitated the functional display of certain norms within the social structure of political parties. Social capital enables individual politicians and police officers inside the political social structure to promote their actions and activities that encourage corruption to flourish in Zambia. For example, the eligibility case of former Republican President of Zambia, Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, case number CCZ 0021, confirms that the United Party for National Development (UPND) legal actions are

abused through political power. This observation is in agreement with Putnam (1993), who referred to social capital as the characteristics of social organization, including trust, norms, networks, and practices. The structural aspect comprises connections and networks, while the cultural aspect encompasses trust, values, and obligations or social norms embedded in laws.

4. METHODOLOGY

This investigation adopted a qualitative research design to explore the intricate relationship between political corruption and human rights violations in Zambia. Qualitative research was chosen for its ability to delve into the complexities of social phenomena, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the subject matter (Creswell, 2013). In agreement with Daka (2023), it is important to note that qualitative methods were found to be appropriate because they enabled the collection of rich and detailed data, providing insights into individual actions within the context of social life (Giddens & Sutton, 2013).

Political corruption and human rights violations are deeply rooted in societal structures and historical contexts. A qualitative approach, rooted in interpretative understanding, is best suited to capture the depth and subtleties of these phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The reliance on secondary data ensures a holistic examination of existing narratives and reports. This is a retrospective case paper chosen to analyse historical data pertaining to political corruption and human rights violations in Zambia. This approach enables an in-depth examination of past events, thereby contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the relationship (Yin, 2014). The retrospective case paper design is apt as it permits a thorough investigation of the historical evolution of political corruption and human rights violations. By analyzing past incidents, patterns, and trends, the paper aimed to establish a robust foundation for understanding the present scenario (Flyvbjerg, 2011).

The study population comprises a diverse array of secondary sources, including government reports, academic publications, international organization documents, and NGO reports. These documents offer varied perspectives and comprehensive coverage of the issues under investigation. A purposive and systematic sampling procedure was employed to select a representative sample of documents spanning various time periods and sources. This approach ensures a comprehensive examination of relevant information. Given the vast pool of secondary data available, a purposive and systematic sampling approach allows for a focused selection of documents. This method ensures that the sample is diverse enough to capture the complexity of the relationship between political corruption and human rights violations in Zambia (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Thematic analysis was employed for data analysis, focusing on identifying recurring themes and patterns within the secondary data.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1. Forms of Political Corruption in Zambia

The study uncovered various forms of political corruption prevalent in Zambia. For example, according to Transparency International's 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), Zambia scored 33 out of 100, indicating a high level of perceived corruption in the country (Transparency International, 2021). Participants in the study identified bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, and cronyism as common practices among political elites (Chileshe & Sichone, 2020). These formed the basis of the diachronic discourse in this article. For example, the misappropriation of public funds and the preferential treatment of individuals based on personal connections were cited as instances of corruption undermining transparency and accountability in government institutions, as observed by Phiri et al. (2021). They argued, nonetheless, that there is no clear-cut global definition of the term corruption. Nevertheless, instead of examining political corruption globally, this article aimed to understand corruption by analyzing it through the local linguistic lens in business language, known as the *bineyi* phenomenon, which is a significant part of Zambian tradition and culture. The argument is that *bineyi* reflects political corruption when examined through the lens of actor-network theory. Simply, corruption in politics is *bineyi*, which entails a system of business social networking in which influential businesspeople seek to gain favour. This implies that Phiri et al. (2021) established correlations and causal relationships between *bineyi* and political corruption. These empirical investigations make a significant contribution to understanding the mechanisms by which political corruption exacerbates human rights abuses in Zambia.

Further, political corruption has a significant impact on the enjoyment of human rights by Zambian citizens. For example, the misallocation of resources and diversion of public funds through corrupt

practices hinder access to essential services, including healthcare, education, and justice (International IDEA, 2018). Political corruption exacerbates inequalities and perpetuates cycles of poverty and marginalization, limiting opportunities for socio-economic development and human rights advancement (Zambia Human Rights Commission, 2020). In agreement with Phiri et al., (2024), political corruption keeps webs of social obligations concurrently, which also provides the foundation of social reciprocity. In this case, political corruption is a significant determinant for securing a job, as well as a safety net against arbitrary arrest by the state, depending on one's connections and relationships with political players in government. For example, according to Phiri et al. (2024), beneficiaries of the *Nolle prosequi* noted that there are cases where authorities have been accused of human rights abuses due to the selective enforcement of the *Nolle prosequi* law. This ignites corruption in public service delivery, such as criminal justice, healthcare, and education, resulting in the misuse of resources and undermining the quality and accessibility of essential social services (Transparency International, 2021). This deprives citizens, particularly the marginalized and vulnerable, of their rights to health, education, adjudication and an adequate standard of living. Further, political corruption does not guarantee the protection of human rights. Human rights in this category are generally referred to as fundamental freedoms (Phiri, Kalimaposo, Kamanga et al., 2024). Therefore, one wonders how human rights, which have typically been viewed under international law as embodying interests that are natural, universal, or inherent to humanity, can be upheld in the midst of political corruption in Zambia. Simply, the advent of political corruption in Zambia fundamentally disrupts this universalizing and objectifying tendency of rights in Zambia.

5.2. Linguistic examples of Corruption Cases and Human Rights Abuses in Zambia.

Torture and abuse of authority, commonly known in the Nyanja language as *Kufyantha*, is another political word to signify human rights abuse due to political corruption in Zambia. Additionally, *Mingalato*³ is related to what is referred to as electoral fraud and political repression that have been documented in various reports by international human rights organizations (Amnesty International, 2021). High-profile cases such as the arrest and detention of opposition leader Hakainde Hichilema and Mumbi Phiri on politically motivated charges highlight the *mingalato* phenomenon that has eroded democratic norms and the rule of law in Zambia (Human Rights Watch, 2021). Additionally, marginalized communities, including rural farmers and indigenous peoples, continue to face land grabs and environmental degradation driven by corrupt business interests (Oxfam, 2020).

The mismanagement of public funds has been a recurring issue in Zambia, with several high-profile corruption scandals involving government officials and public institutions (Transparency International, 2021). For example, the procurement of fire trucks at inflated prices in 2017 sparked public outrage and allegations of corruption. For Phiri (2017), these allegations are linguistically referred to as the phenomenon of *Nichekeleko*, which has widely been considered a problem by Zambians. The commonly held understanding of *Nichekeleko* by the Zambian people is that it is corruption, ranging from bribery, theft, embezzlement, and gratification to favouritism (Phiri, 2017). This phenomenon is conceived as a social act of exchange within the context of power relations by the actors who engage in political corruption. Concerns about *Nichekeleko* include its hostility to democratic views, particularly those essential for upholding human rights. Political players that are against *Nichekeleko* are excluded from political participation at both the local and central government levels.

There is also a potential link between the lack of media freedoms and political corruption in Zambia. The media, including social media, plays a crucial role in the fight against corruption, as it can demand accountability and transparency from both the public and private sectors. Several studies have demonstrated a correlation between press freedom and corruption (Bolsius, 2012; Brunetti & Weder, 2003; Chowdhury, 2004; Fardig, Andersson, & Oscarsson, 2011). The media provides information on public sector corruption, where governmental activity is often opaque by design or default. The media, and in particular investigative journalism, plays a crucial role in exposing corruption to public scrutiny and fighting against impunity.

Unfortunately, in the Zambian scenario, the roots of corruption are deeply rooted in the country's social and cultural history, as well as its political and economic development, and bureaucratic traditions and

³ Meaning Treacherous in the *Bemba* language.

policies, which have been largely overlooked in local languages. The argument is that if local languages are used to trace political corruption by the media, it would be easier to reduce it in Zambia. Therefore, quoting Joseph Nye (1967), the media often fails to detect corruption as it seeps into political realms due to the weaker sense of media ethics and conduct in Zambia. Furthermore, in agreement with Wuthnow (1992), who observed that cultural analysis lies at the center of human sciences.

Nevertheless, one analysis conspicuously absent from explaining the causes and links between corruption and human rights abuse is the lack of linguistic semantics and diachronic analysis in Zambia, which this paper addresses. For example, human rights organizations have documented cases of arbitrary arrests and detentions by Zambian authorities, often targeting political activists, journalists, and opposition figures (Amnesty International, 2021). These arrests are frequently carried out without due process or legal justification, violating individuals' rights to liberty and fair trial. For instance, the arrest of Mumbi Phiri, the former Deputy Secretary-General of the Patriotic Front (PF), on charges of aggravated robbery reignited heated debates about the independence of Zambia's judiciary and police. Public reactions to her predicament ranged from outrage to skepticism, with many expressing views on the apparent erosion of justice in favor of political expediency and corruption. This confirms the network theory arguments that human rights abuses are better explained in networks. This argument is also supported by Phiri (2022) who observes that there are many activities anchored on social networking. Nevertheless, in political cycles, police brutality and extrajudicial killing experienced by the media personnel are mirrored in the local word *Boma ni Boma* (Meaning the government is superior and can do whatever is required with impunity). The *Boma ni Boma* word is encapsulated in political corruption, an affirmation for torture and arbitrary arrest for journalists in Zambia. When the state covers up its brutal actions against journalists, this lenient action is called *mwapusuken* in *Bemba*. The word is only used to refer to journalists who succumb to political maneuvering, embedded in the word *mingalato*.

Equally, there have been instances of censorship, harassment, and intimidation of journalists, civil society organizations, and peaceful protesters in Zambia (Human Rights Watch, 2021). Government crackdowns on dissenting voices and independent media outlets limit freedom of expression and assembly, undermining democratic principles and stifling public discourse. Linguistically, the government crackdowns on dissenting voices in the *Nyanja* language is known as *Kufyanta*. *Kufyanta* as a clear expression in *Nyanja* to mean torture.

6. SUGGESTED INTERVENTIONS

The suggestion is that strengthening these institutions promotes transparency, accountability, and checks and balances on governmental power, thereby reducing opportunities for corruption and human rights abuses in Zambia. Of concern is the misunderstanding of the concept of *Human rights in local language translations*, which the police take advantage of. In agreement with Harris, Gibbons, Kaaba, *et al.* (2022), who contend that, for the most part, the languages used in focus group discussion methods in Zambia do not have a direct translation for "human rights." When the local phrase 'human rights' is used, it misses the meaning of what human rights abuses in Zambia are. For example, where this was recognized, explanations were necessary using words such as *ufulu* (meaning 'freedom/power' in the *Nyanja* language; *ibid.* 2022), which is not a direct translation or definition of the concept of *human rights*. Therefore, to link corruption to human rights, we propose a broad definition of human rights that encompasses local languages. Descriptions of local practices should, as Bohannan (1977) and Phiri (2020) argued, be sensitive to indigenous concepts that can, 'without distortion after careful and perhaps lengthy descriptions and discussions, be given English equivalents. According to Phiri (2020), it is important to fit these practices and concepts 'into the larger conceptual system of the people who use [them]' (p. 406). These concepts would help us to find strategies that can reduce corruption in the political sphere and permanently impact human rights violations in Zambia.

There should be transparency and access to information, which are vital for holding government officials accountable and preventing corruption (Transparency International, 2021). It is evident that there are connections between corruption and human rights, which necessitate the implementation and enforcement of freedom of information laws, the disclosure of public expenditures, and the promotion of open government initiatives to enhance transparency and enable citizens to monitor government actions, expenditures, and decision-making processes. This can be achieved only when sponsors or financial support from political parties (Phiri, Daka, Kanyamuna, *et al.*, 2023) are innovative and vigilant in analyzing corrupt local languages that contribute to human rights violations in Zambia.

Supporting the work of civil society organizations, protecting freedom of expression and assembly, and ensuring media pluralism are essential for fostering an informed and engaged citizenry capable of holding government officials accountable. Civil society organizations and independent media play a crucial role in promoting accountability, exposing corruption, and advocating for human rights (Amnesty International, 2021). The 2016 constitutional amendment introduced a new electoral system for presidential elections (Phiri, Daka, Kanyamuna et al., 2023). However, the constitution is unclear about the protection of human rights that civil society organizations would champion.

Equally, the promotion of Judicial independence is essential for ensuring impartial adjudication of disputes, upholding the rule of law, and protecting human rights (Human Rights Watch, 2021). Strengthening judicial independence, providing adequate resources and training for judges and prosecutors, and ensuring access to justice for all citizens are critical for promoting accountability and combating corruption in the political arena. This can only be realized when a semiological approach determines the impact of cultural words on corruption (Phiri, Milupi, Kaumba *et al.*, 2024). Therefore, the presence of linguistic capital is what has been missing in most government policies and laws that would have reduced human rights violations in Zambia. This argument is also supported by Phiri (2022), who notes that numerous activities are anchored in social networking, which, unfortunately, are often overlooked by academics in Zambia.

7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the complex relationship between political corruption and human rights violations in Zambia highlights the pressing need for comprehensive reforms and a commitment to good governance. The implications of this relationship extend across various dimensions, affecting democratic governance, social equality, freedom of expression, and economic development. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that addresses both the root causes and the systemic consequences of corruption. The erosion of democratic governance in Zambia, fueled by political corruption, poses a significant threat to the rule of law and citizens' trust in institutions. The cycle of corruption perpetuates social inequalities, leading to the marginalization of vulnerable populations and hindering inclusive development. The stifling of freedom of expression and media freedom further exacerbates the challenges, limiting the public's ability to hold those in power accountable. Economic consequences stemming from corruption-induced resource mismanagement affect the realization of economic and social rights. The culture of impunity that often accompanies unchecked corruption allows human rights violations to persist, creating a cycle that undermines the foundations of good governance.

The recommendations outlined in this analysis emphasize the importance of strengthening anti-corruption mechanisms, promoting transparency, protecting human rights, and fostering civic education. It is crucial for Zambia to address systemic issues, including the independence of institutions, the rule of law, and the protection of vulnerable populations, to break the cycle of corruption and human rights abuses. International collaboration and support can play a pivotal role in supporting Zambia's efforts to combat corruption and protect human rights. By engaging with the global community, Zambia can benefit from additional resources, expertise, and diplomatic pressure to drive meaningful reforms.

In moving forward, Zambia must commit to a path of transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights. The challenges are substantial, but with concerted efforts and a commitment to change, Zambia can build a more just and equitable society that upholds the principles of democracy and human rights. The journey towards a corruption-free and rights-respecting Zambia requires the collective dedication of government, civil society, and the international community. As Zambia navigates this path, it is essential to learn from successful anti-corruption and human rights protection initiatives globally, adapt them to the local context, and continuously strive for improvements. The future of Zambia's governance and human rights landscape rests on the commitment to address the root causes of corruption and create an environment where the rights and dignity of every citizen are safeguarded.

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