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Nozick's Entitlement Thesis, Political Corruption and Distributive Injustice in Post-colonial African States

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Abstract

With corruption and injustice plaguing contemporary societies like incurable diseases, this paper examines the conjoined problems of political corruption and injustice in Post-colonial African States through the philosophical lens of Robert Nozick's entitlement theory of distributive justice. According to Nozick, holdings are just if they arise from just acquisition, just transfer and the rectification of the past injustices. However, in many African States, political corruption which manifests in different ways violates conditions for just acquisition and transfer. Consequently, all forms of unjust acquisitions invalidate the moral legitimacy of the current properties and wealth distributions among politicians and public office holders. This paper argues that applying Nozick's principles to the issue of political corruption in Africa challenges the assumption that current properties and wealth distributions among politicians and political office holders can be defended without addressing the deeply embedded foundational injustices. Furthermore, the paper examines the strengths and the limits of Nozick's entitlement thesis. It argues that African anti-corruption measures and corrective justice are not only compatible with Nozickian framework, but are also necessary to restore legitimate entitlements. Finally, it concludes that Nozick's entitlement theory offers a valuable framework for addressing ongoing social injustices by promoting fair principles that ultimately contribute to a more just and well-ordered society.

Keywords: Distributive (In)justice, Entitlement Thesis, Political Corruption, Rectification, Post-colonial African States.

Introduction

One of the perennial problems undermining good governance, economic development, and social cohesion in post-colonial African states is political corruption. According to Kwame Gyekye, "Political corruption could be defined as illegal, unethical and unauthorized exploitation of one's political or official position for personal gain or advantage." (Gyekye, 1997:193). Also, Inge Amundsen identifies political corruption as an unethical behaviour which violates the norms of the system of political order (Amundsen, 2006:3). Meanwhile, Transparency International (2022) broadly defines corruption as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. While Transparency International defines corruption generally as "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain," this paper focuses explicitly on political corruption, which refers to the unjust acquisition or retention of political power and public resources by state officials through coercion, bribery,

electoral manipulation, embezzlement, or patronage networks. This distinction is thoughtfully important because, within Nozick's entitlement theory, corruption becomes a problem of justice not merely because it is immoral, but because it violates the principles of just acquisition and just transfer. For instance, when political actors buy votes, divert state funds, or manipulate electoral processes to obtain offices they were not freely granted by citizens, they engage in an unjust acquisition of political power. Similarly, embezzlement of public revenue constitutes an unjust transfer of communal resources into private hands. As a result, political corruption is interpreted here not simply as inefficiency or moral decay, but as a systematic violation of entitlement norms, making it subject to Nozick's rectification principle (Nozick, 1974, pp. 152-153).

Just like in different parts of the world, corruption in Africa manifests in forms of embezzlement of public funds, bribery, electoral manipulation, nepotism, and so on. Scholars such as Jean Francois Bayart and Jean

Francois Madard have connected the persistence of corruption to historical legacies of colonial rule, weak institutional frameworks, and the centralization of power within post-independence governments (Bayart, 1993; Médard, 2002). Despite various anti-corruption initiatives, the problem remains deeply entrenched, raising critical questions about justice, legitimacy, and entitlement to political and economic resources.

While many existing literatures examine corruption through economic perspective (Mauro, 1995), institutional perspective (North, 1990), or cultural perspective (Smith, 2007), this paper, on the other hand, examines corruption within the purview of political philosophy. Even though, scholars such as Kwame Gyekye (1997), and Olanipekun Olusola (2021) also examined corruption within the purview of moral and political philosophy, this paper deviated from them by specifically seeking to apply Robert Nozick's Entitlement Theory of distributive Justice to understand corruption as a violation of rightful acquisition and transfer. In *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974), Nozick posits that holdings are just if acquired and transferred according to principles of justice, and all injustices in acquisitions or transfers require rectification. By interpreting political corruption as "unjust acquisition", the paper aims to show how corrupt practices distort legitimate entitlements and thereby perpetuate broader patterns of injustice in African societies. This paper, therefore, critically examines both the strengths and limits of adopting Nozick's framework in explaining African realities.

Focusing on Nozick's entitlement thesis, the paper emphasizes the three main components of the theory, namely, justice in acquisition, justice in transfer, and rectification of injustice. Outlining how corrupt acts violate Nozickian principles, the paper treats political corruption as a form of unjust acquisition. The paper as well draws practical example from Nigeria. This is done with the mind of illustrating the practical dynamics of political corruption and its distributive consequences. It discusses efforts at corrective justice, drawing from Nozick's rectification principle and real-world anti-corruption initiatives. Finally, it concludes by critically reflecting on the main implications of Nozick's theory for governance in Africa.

Nozick's Entitlement Theory of Justice

One of the most prominent scholars who contributed immensely to the issue of distributive justice after John Rawls is Robert Nozick. Nozick's entitlement theory of justice presents a historical rights-based account of distributive justice. A question may be asked that "Why Nozick despite several alternative accounts?". This is

necessary because justification is required for choosing Nozick's entitlement theory rather than more egalitarian models of justice such as global egalitarianism, sufficientarianism, luck egalitarianism, or republican non-domination. Egalitarian model generally begins with the question of how goods should be distributed, whereas the Nozickian approach begins with how goods were acquired and whether those acquisitions respect individual rights or the principles of distribution. (Nozick, 1974, pp.149-182). In many African countries, corruption manifests in different ways such as bribery, fraudulent privatization, embezzlement of public funds, unjust land seizures and so on. These are not failures of the principles of distributive but failures of just acquisition and transfer. Consequently, Nozick's historical and rights-based conceptions of justice is more appropriate for analyzing African corruption than patterned theories. This does not mean egalitarian theories are irrelevant, rather, they address different moral questions. The central claim of this paper is that before asking how resources should be redistributed, we must first ask whether current holders of wealth and power are entitled to them in the first place.

By extension, contrary to John Rawls's theory of justice as fairness, Nozick argues that justice is fundamentally historical and concerns the legitimacy of acquisitions and transfers rather than the final pattern of distribution. This distinction is crucial especially in relation to the African context. Rawls's account defends the existence of well-structured and collectively owned assets within a functioning liberal democratic society. However, these conditions are strange to post-colonial African states that were just emerging from colonial rule, coupled with the problems of new political authority and still in the process of reclaiming land and resources.

Now, contrary to Rawlsian theory which emphasizes a distribution of tangible assets among citizens, Nozick's theory is best suited for historical and socio-political realities of post-colonial African nations. As a matter of fact, while many African countries were in the process of acquiring or reclaiming assets upon gaining independence, Nozick's view on entitlement and the rights of individuals to their holdings provides a more appropriate lens. It is through this lens that one could examine how domestic populations in post-colonial African states began to assert their claims to resources in the face of both internal and external challenges. Meanwhile, Rawls's distributive principle requires already established assets for equitable distribution.

In line with Nozick's entitlement theory, inequality becomes a matter of justice only when it results from violations of the principles of just acquisition, just transfer, or rectification (Nozick, 1974, pp. 150-153). Therefore, this paper is not advocating a patterned or egalitarian view of justice. Instead, it argues that much

of the inequality seen in African societies is the product of historical injustices such as colonial expropriation and contemporary political corruption, where state officials acquire resources through coercion, fraud, or theft. These forms of inequality are unjust not because they deviate from a preferred social pattern, but because they arise from unjust acquisition and non-consensual transfer and these are direct violation of Nozickian principles.

The first component of Nozick's entitlement theory of distributive justice is the principle of 'Justice in Acquisition'. This component addresses the original acquisition of unowned resources. Resting on John Locke's theory of property rights, Nozick proposes that individuals are entitled to holdings if they acquire them without violating the rights of others. Although, Nozick adapts Locke's notion of "mixing labor" with resources, he notably modifies the Lockean proviso—the condition that appropriation must leave "enough and as good" for others. He interprets the proviso in a way that allows significant inequalities, provided that the acquisition does not worsen the position of others relative to a no-ownership baseline (Nozick, 1974:177-178).

The second component of Nozick's theory is 'Justice in Transfer'. This component concerns with the voluntary exchange or transfer of holdings. According to Nozick, as long as transactions are free from force, fraud, or coercion, any transfer of holdings is just. Individuals are entitled to give, sell, or donate property as they wish. There is no need for a central authority to redistribute holdings according to a favored pattern or end-state principle. The emphasis here is on consent and voluntariness. He rejects any form of patterned redistribution because it necessarily involves continuous interference in individuals' lives—violating their rights to liberty and property. For instance, he famously critiques redistribution as requiring "continuous redistribution to maintain a pattern" (Nozick, 1974:163). However, the conditions of voluntariness are often systematically undermined in a corrupt political environment. In other words, when public resources are captured through coercion or bribery, transfers cannot be considered just according to Nozickian standards.

The third component of Nozick's entitlement theory of distributive justice is the 'Rectification of Injustice'. This component focuses on how to respond to past injustices. If holdings have been acquired or transferred unjustly, through theft, fraud, coercion, or other rights violations—justice requires rectification. However, he provides only a broad sketch rather than a comprehensive formula for rectification. This suggests that distributive principles must depend on the historical details of the injustices involved (Nozick, 1974:153). Also, rectification may involve returning holdings to their rightful owners, compensating victims, or otherwise adjusting holdings to approximate what would have occurred under

just conditions. Nozick acknowledges that historical injustices can dramatically distort current holdings, but he also recognizes the practical difficulties of tracing exact injustices and calculating precise remedies. This principle is so significant for African states, where histories of colonization, land dispossession, and systemic corruption have profoundly shaped current distributions of wealth and political power.

Despite Nozick's brilliant philosophical presentation and analysis, his entitlement theory has attracted several criticisms. For instance, Jeremy Waldron challenges his inadequate account of the original acquisition in addressing historical injustices. According to Waldron, societies emerging from conquest, colonization, or systemic theft cannot easily assume that current holdings are legitimate. (Waldron, 1992:4). In Africa, colonial powers often seize lands and resources without consent and any claim to "just acquisition" is always problematic. Also, Nozick's excessive dependence on voluntary transfers suggests relatively equal bargaining conditions and this is rare in non-liberal societies. Critics such as Gerald A. Cohen argues that structural inequalities, including poverty, illiteracy, and lack of political power, can distort so-called "voluntary" agreements, rendering many transfers unjust in practice (Cohen, 1995). Similarly, Nozick's approach could be charged of underestimating the role of social structures and public goods. Nozick's individualistic framework pays little attention to the fact that rights and holdings are sustained within broader structures. But the implication of the above is that, in states where institutions and political structures are weak, there will be no clear distinction between just and unjust transfers.

Admittedly, while several well-known objections have been raised against Nozick's entitlement theory, it is important to know that these criticisms do not entirely invalidate the core Nozickian commitments used in this paper for several reasons. First, Nozick's theory does not deny that inequality can be morally troubling; rather, it holds that inequality is unjust only if it results from violations of just acquisition or transfer. This strength allows the theory to address corruption by enhancing just redistribution. Second, in response to Cohen's criticism that self-ownership leads to exploitation, Nozick argues that voluntary exchanges and respect for bodily autonomy are morally superior to forced redistribution. (Nozick, 1974, p.174). Third, while Rawlsians argue that Nozick lacks a principle for defending the worst-off, Nozick's rectification principle explicitly requires that past injustices be corrected before holdings can be morally legitimate (Nozick, 1974, p.152). What the above view suggests is that Nozick's theory is considered to be philosophically capable of addressing contemporary political corruption and historical injustice in Africa when given proper interpretation through the lens of rectification and entitlement.

Political Corruption as an Unjust Acquisition

Susan Rose-Ackerman conceives political corruption as the violation of the public trust, where officials prioritize personal or group interests over the collective good (Rose-Ackerman, 1999). Given our general understanding of the concept, it is no longer a news that political corruption encompasses a wide range of activities and appears in different forms in different societies. As a matter of fact, political corruption is a universal phenomenon. However, in the African context, J.F. Bayart argues that corruption often assumes systemic dimensions, becoming embedded within political institutions and social networks (Bayart, 1993). In Bayart's view, the implication of corruption is that corrupt practices often form part of a broader "politics of the belly," where informal distribution of the state resources is done within a few sets of people for personal benefits.

For this paper, political corruption could also be interpreted as a violation of property rights and entitlements. The reason is because, public officials who divert state assets for personal benefit are engaging in the illegitimate acquisition or transfer of holdings that rightfully belong to the citizenry (Nozick, 1974). Thus, from a Nozickian perspective, political corruption constitutes a fundamental breach of the principles of justice in acquisition and transfer. For Nozick, individuals are entitled to holdings only if these holdings are acquired justly and transferred voluntarily (Nozick, 1974:150-153).

Arising from Nozickian litmus test, political corruption disrupts distributive justice in two major ways: First, corrupt acquisitions violate the principle of justice in acquisition. State resources- revenues, land, and public contracts, are held on behalf of the citizenry. When officials appropriate such resources for personal gain, they acquire holdings unjustly, without rightful entitlement (Nozick, 1974:171). Second, corruption undermines justice in transfer. In many corrupt transactions, such as bribery or electoral manipulation, consent is compromised. Citizens and firms often feel coerced into participation, distorting the voluntary nature of exchanges (Rose-Ackerman, 1999:7). Transparency International reports about some African states reveals that elections are tainted by fraud or vote-buying, and also violate the principle of voluntary political consent (Transparency International, 2022). This is a clear indication that political corruption in Africa involves both unjust acquisition and unjust transfer. Moreover, corruption initiates a chain of injustice, distorting not only the original transaction but subsequent economic and political interactions, a dynamic Nozick recognizes

as critically undermining just distributions (Nozick, 1974:152).

Furthermore, the moral drawn from the above view is that voluntariness is a key condition for legitimate transfer in Nozick's Entitlement Theory. However, in a corrupt system, voluntariness is systematically undermined due to bribery, unfair competitions and other factors. Also, electoral corruption disrupts the voluntary transfer of political authority. Elections manipulated through fraud, intimidation, or vote-buying negate the idea that governance is based on genuine citizen consent (Bayart, 1993:233). Consequently, in African context, political offices are held unjustly on many occasions just like property is held unjustly in Nozick's approach due to unjust distributions that divorce holdings from rightful entitlement.

Corruption and Distributive Injustice in African States

One of the main claims around the history and development of political corruption and distributive injustice in post-colonial African states is that they are closely tied or linked to colonialism. As a matter of fact, Walter Rodney clearly stated that during the colonial era, European powers seized land, labor, and resources through violent and coercive means, establishing deeply unjust initial holdings (Rodney, 1972). Combining Nozickian perspective with Rodney's claim, this initial acquisition (i.e, European powers seized land, labor, and resources through violent and coercive means) was fundamentally illegitimate. Why? The main reason is because it involved force, fraud, denial of consent and devoid of voluntariness.

For instance, in Nigeria, Toyin Falola reveals how British colonial policies restructured indigenous land tenure systems to enable the extraction of agricultural products like palm oil and cocoa (Falola, 2009). By implication, land became concentrated in the hands of colonial agents and local elites favored by the British, setting the foundation for post-colonial inequalities. Similarly, Caroline Elkins also points out that in Kenya, British settlers seized large tracts of fertile land, particularly in the "White Highlands", displacing indigenous communities through legal and military force (Elkins, 2005). The above view suggests that unjust acquisition renders many African communities landless till today. The same unjust acquisition manifested in South Africa as emphasized by A.J. Christopher. Christopher reveals that the Natives Land Act of 1913 systematically stripped black South Africans of land rights, concentrating ownership among the white minority (Christopher, 1994). The above view is the aftermath of Apartheid experience which further created

a highly unequal distribution of wealth and opportunity among the native South Africans.

Admittedly, by making reference to Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya, we do not claim that these three countries represent all African states uniformly because we do not erase significant differences in historical experience, institutional capacity, and legal frameworks. However, they were chosen due to their political relevance and postcolonial trajectories. They mainly function as illustrative case studies that illuminate how unjust acquisition and political corruption can be interpreted through Nozick's entitlement theory.

Following Nozick's theory, the initial injustices arising from unjust transfer in African societies require rectification. However, post-independence African states largely failed to address these colonial wrongs, and to make the matter worse, political corruption often perpetuated or worsened them due to the failure and insensitivity of some post-independent African leaders.

Shortly after independence, many African states experienced a transformation due to changes of power from the hands of the colonizers to the hands of the colonised. Consequently, many African elites became involved in practices that are clear violation of Nozick's principles of justice in transfer. They frequently engaged in corruption, misallocating resources for personal enrichment, manipulating elections, and engaging in nepotism.

As a matter of fact, Nigeria, Africa's largest economy, has been plagued by systemic corruption, particularly related to its vast oil revenues. Successive governments have diverted oil wealth into private hands through inflated contracts, "ghost workers," and outright embezzlement (Smith, 2007). Institutions like the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) have been at the center of massive scandals involving billions of dollars in missing revenues (Transparency International, 2022).

Furthermore, Hakeem Onapajo, opines that electoral corruption remains rife in Africa. For vote-buying, ballot-box stuffing, and judicial manipulation are recurrent problems (Onapajo, 2014). By implication, political authority is often secured not through voluntary, legitimate consent but through fraud and coercion, undermining justice in transfer in many African countries.

Arising from the above, it is evident that corruption's impact on distribution is so profound. Beyond distorting acquisition and transfer mechanisms, corruption engenders inequality, undermines meritocracy, and erodes trust in institutions. In Nigeria, for instance, despite decades of oil wealth, poverty rates remain alarmingly high in the country. In fact, the World Bank (2020) estimation shows that around 40% of Nigerians live below the poverty line. Whereas, little fraction of the

political officeholders controls vast wealth that is largely acquired through corrupt means. Interestingly, this is a clear violation of the conditions for just acquisition and transfer from Nozickian point of view.

Just like in Nigeria, in Kenya, Roger Southall pointed out that land ownership remains highly unequal such as a direct result of colonial seizures compounded by post-independence corruption. Political elites have used their influence to acquire land, often displacing marginalized communities (Southall, 2005). Similarly, in South Africa, while political liberation was achieved, economic liberation remains elusive. The coefficient- a measure of inequality remains one of the highest in the world (World Bank, 2018).

Relying on Nozick's theory, holdings acquired through unjust means or unjust transfers require rectification. However, in some post-independent African states, corruption has deepened distributive injustices rather than correcting historical injustices. By implication, the persistence of systemic corruption, coupled with the failure to rectify colonial wrongs, breed injustice and leaves African societies far from the Nozick's analysis of a just distribution. By just distribution, Nozick mean all form of distributions that are rooted in legitimate acquisition and voluntary transfer.

Corrective Justice and Anti-Corruption Efforts

Admittedly, Nozick acknowledges that past injustices (such as theft, fraud, or coercion) vitiate the legitimacy of current holdings (Nozick, 1974:152). Now, how do we address this problem historical injustice? Nozick proposes a 'Rectification Principle'. As hinted earlier, this principle states that if past injustices have occurred, steps must be taken to rectify them to restore justice in holdings. However, it is obvious that Nozick was silent about providing a detailed formula for rectification. This is not unconnected to the complexity of historical injustices. Interestingly, despite the omission, Nozick suggests that an appropriate rectification would depend on the specific historical circumstances, including the magnitude of the injustice and the degree to which it has distorted present holdings (Nozick, 1974:231). This could be applied to Postcolonial African states by focusing how anti-corruption efforts must not only punish wrongdoers, but must also restore unjust acquisitions and wrong distributions of public resources. This will not only repair the systemic distortions in political and economic systems, it will also promote fair principles that ultimately contribute to a more just and well-ordered society.

However, we are not ignorant of the fact that the practical implementation of corrective justice is not free

from certain significant challenges. In a society like Africa where corruption is systemic rather than episodic, it should be noted that simply punishing a corrupt public office holder or sentencing them to certain number of years of imprisonment may be insufficient. The reason is because doing so does not amount to rectification. A full Nozickian rectification would require, first, identifying victims and perpetrators, second, restoring stolen or misappropriated assets, and lastly, rebuilding institutions to ensure future voluntary and fair transfers. However, this is not always the case.

Interestingly, some Post-colonial African states have attempted partial rectification through institutional reforms, asset recovery initiatives, and the establishment of anti-corruption commissions. However, the effectiveness of these mechanisms is mixed. For example, Nigeria established the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in 2003 to investigate and prosecute financial crimes, including corruption. The EFCC has been involved in recovering significant sums of stolen public funds. For example, between 2015 and 2020, the EFCC reportedly recovered over \$3 billion in assets (EFCC, 2020). High-profile convictions, such as those of former state governors and politicians, suggest some progress. However, critics argue that the EFCC is vulnerable to political manipulation and selective enforcement, undermining its legitimacy (Amundsen, 2010). From a Nozickian standpoint, the EFCC's efforts represent partial attempts at rectification. Yet the deep structural distortions caused by decades of corruption, such as entrenched inequality and weakened institutions, are far harder to remedy than individual asset recovery.

Despite these efforts, significant obstacles to full corrective justice exist. As Nozick himself notes, rectifying historical injustices is extraordinarily complex (Nozick, 1974:231). In Africa, corruption is layered upon colonial expropriation, making clear identification of victims and rightful owners difficult. Secondly, corruption often becomes embedded within the political economy itself, creating vested interests resistant to reform (Bayart, 1993). To avoid merely asserting that contemporary corruption is "layered upon colonial expropriation," it is important to briefly indicate the mechanism linking past dispossession to present injustice. Colonial administrations in states such as Kenya and Nigeria centralized land and mineral rights under the authority of the state, displacing traditional ownership structures (Mamdani, 1996, pp. 62-67). After independence, many postcolonial governments retained these centralized powers, enabling political elites to appropriate land, oil revenues, and public resources in ways that mirror colonial extractive practices. Thus, present-day corruption does not simply follow colonialism chronologically; it often relies on the same institutional mechanisms of resource control, making

Nozick's rectificatory justice directly relevant. Thirdly, effective rectification requires strong, independent institutions, a condition lacking in many African states (Bratton & van de Walle, 1997). Finally, without sustained political will, anti-corruption bodies often lack the power to pursue elites or implement broader structural reforms (Hope, 2016).

However, this paper does not reduce contemporary corruption to colonialism alone by exonerating present political leaders of responsibility. While colonial structures created initial conditions of unjust acquisition, Nozick's theory insists that moral responsibility lies with current holders of power who continue to violate principles of just transfer and acquisition. Thus, both historical and contemporary agents are accountable: colonialism explains how entitlement was first violated, but current political actors perpetuate injustice through embezzlement, electoral fraud, and resource misappropriation. Nozick's rectification principle allows us to distinguish between inherited injustice and actively committed injustice. Thus, while Nozick's rectification principle offers a moral and philosophical justification for anti-corruption efforts.

Nozick's Entitlement Theory and the Challenge of Ongoing Injustice in Africa

Admittedly, it may be a daunting task to fully rectify historical injustices such as colonization, slavery, and the likes, but this does not imply that all forms of injustice are irreparable. In fact, such injustices that continue to undermine justice and equity across many African nations today still need to be confronted and rectified. For instance, land grabbing remains a major issue in countries like Ethiopia (Human Rights Watch, 2011) and Mozambique (Milgroom & Spoor, 2013), where vast tracts of fertile land have been leased or sold to foreign investors at the expense of local farmers and indigenous communities. The negotiation is often done without the consent of the rightful owners and there may be no provision for compensation. Thus, unjust transfer of this nature undermines Nozick's principle of justice in transfer because they are products of manipulation and rather than voluntary, informed agreement.

Basically, adapting Nozick's entitlement thesis to African context involves considering the historical and cultural factors that shape entitlements and recognizing the need for rectification of past injustices. For instance, policies aimed at redistributing land or resources could be informed by Nozick's principles, ensuring that such redistribution is based on fair and just principles.

Interestingly, adapting Nozick's theory requires balancing individual and communal rights. This can be achieved by recognizing the importance of communal

interests while also protecting individual liberties. For example, community-based natural resource management refers to systems in which local communities participate in the ownership, decision-making, and supervision of resources such as land, forests, minerals, and water. The purpose is to balance individual benefits—such as wages, royalties, small-scale business opportunities, or direct income from resource extraction—with communal interests, which include environmental sustainability, equal access, and the welfare of both current and future members of the community.

While Nozick emphasizes individual rights and self-ownership, many traditional African moral systems—such as *Ubuntu ethics* (Molefe, 2024) in South Africa, as well as *Omoluabi ethics* (Olanipekun, 2017), among the Yorubas in Nigeria—stress communal responsibility and relational personhood. These views are not entirely incompatible. Nozick's entitlement theory can accommodate communal claims if communities, rather than individuals alone, are seen as legitimate holders of property or rights based on historical ownership and collective acquisition. Thus, African communal traditions can complement Nozick's view by expanding the concept of entitlement beyond the solitary individual to include legitimate collective ownership.

Furthermore, there is an additional point that worth considering. While Nozick offers a valuable critique of arbitrary redistribution in African states, his redistribution strategy can be further enriched by incorporating other perspectives that are unique to the African context. For instance, Olusola Olanipekun suggested that... one of the most practical approaches to the question of just distribution and acquisition may involve a return to embracing foundational African values such as honesty, goodwill, good reputation, and contentment. (Olanipekun, 2021, p:15). As Olanipekun suggests, when a society's historical record is marred by deep injustices, the process of restructuring that society may be hindered unless these core values—whose erosion has contributed to the persistence of injustice—are restored.

Conclusion

This paper examined the conjoined problems of political corruption and injustice in Post-colonial African States through the philosophical lens of Robert Nozick's entitlement theory of distributive justice. According to Nozick, holdings are just if they arise from just acquisition, just transfer and the rectification of past injustices. However, in many African states, political corruption which manifests in different ways negates the conditions for just acquisition and transfer. This paper argued that the unjust acquisitions consequently

invalidate the moral legitimacy of the distributions. Thus, applying Nozick's principles to the issue of political corruption in Africa challenges the assumption that current properties and wealth distributions among politicians and political office holders can be defended without addressing the deeply embedded foundational injustices. Furthermore, the paper examined the strengths and the limits of Nozick's entitlement thesis. It suggested that anti-corruption measures and corrective justice are not only compatible with Nozickian framework, but are also necessary to restore legitimate entitlements. Finally, it concluded that Nozick's entitlement theory offers a valuable framework for addressing ongoing social injustices by promoting fair principles that ultimately contribute to a more just and well-ordered society.

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