

## **Corruption in sub-Saharan Africa: Towards a More Holistic Approach**

Munya M. Mulinge and Gwen N. Lesetedi\*

### **Abstract**

The essay attempts to discuss the genesis and entrenchment of corruption in sub-Saharan Africa taking a holistic approach. By integrating the historical and international contexts of the problem, it links the origins and spread of corruption to the colonization of Africa, the lasting legacy of that colonization, and the actions and practices of international actors. A holistic approach, it is argued, is necessary if the vice is to be understood in its historical totality. This will not only offer a more encompassing explanation of corruption but also allow for the development of well rounded strategies for the alleviation of the problem.

The paper concludes that corruption is a multifaceted, complex problem that requires a comprehensive approach that cuts across disciplines. Through such an approach the economic, social, legal, administrative and moral aspects of the problem can be targeted. The approach should also recognize the close linkages among these aspects of the problem and draw in the international dimension of the causes of the problem. While acknowledging that efforts have been expended at the national and international levels to combat corruption, the paper argues that there is still a lot of room for improvement. Much more can be, and needs to be, done. Of particular importance is the need for political goodwill and commitment from governments, bureaucracies and international agencies. This is a necessary condition if the fight against corruption is to be both effective and sustainable.

### **Introduction**

The problem of corruption is both an endemic and a universal one which affects all world nations but in varying degrees and forms. To quote Alatas (1990: 11), the problem is "trans-systematic; that is, it inheres in all social systems – feudalism, capitalism, communism and socialism". In sub-Saharan Africa, the pandemic has reached cancerous proportions and become a matter of global con-

---

\* Department of Sociology, University of Botswana, Botswana.

cern (Hope, 2000). It has permeated virtually all institutions, both public and private, and governmental and non governmental, and become a way of life and a principal method for the accumulation of private property. The practice is not restricted to one particular group. It involves people from all levels of life including professionals for whom the vice has made it impossible for them to regulate themselves through their professional bodies. Despite the endemic and universal nature of corruption, there exists no single commonly accepted definition of the vice. Societies differ in their views as to what constitutes corruption and experts too differ on its meaning, causes and effects. However, defined normatively, corruption refers to the abuse or misuse of public power/position/office/role of trust or resources for private benefit (Girling, 1997; Alatas, 1990; Thompson 1993, 1995; Rose-Ackerman, 1999).

For the purpose of this essay, corruption will be defined after Osoba (1996: 372) as:

... a form of antisocial behaviour by an individual or social group which confers unjust or fraudulent benefits on its perpetrators, is inconsistent with the established legal norms and prevailing moral ethos of the land and is likely to subvert or diminish the capacity of the legitimate authorities to provide fully for the material and spiritual well-being of all members of society in a just and equitable manner.

The behaviour transcends acts such as the use of public authority, office, or official position with the deliberate intent of extracting personal/private monetary rewards or other privileges at the expense of public good and in violation of established rules and ethical considerations (United Nations, 1990). It also includes theft, embezzlement of public funds or other appropriation of state property and nepotism and/or granting of favours to personal acquaintances. The corrupt comprise both petty and major offenders. Petty offenders include individuals who demand bribes before they render services to clients (such as government file or record clerks and police officers) and account clerks who embezzle funds from accounts they are entrusted with by their employers. Major offenders incorporate individuals, such as senior corporate officials and government officers who cut secret deals involving huge sums of money with local and international organisations, companies and individual businesses or who practice massive embezzlement of public or corporate funds.

Corruption is one of the most written about topics (Hope, 1997). Academics have documented different aspects of this social ill, including its nature, extent, causes and consequences. However, most previous efforts to diagnose the factors accounting for its genesis and persistence, and to prescribe solutions to it, have failed to present a holistic approach that integrates its internal and external contexts and focuses on the totality of participants, that is, givers as well as takers. These have tended to emphasize the internal causes of corruption and to treat the receiver as the one who is corrupt. They have detailed the role played by African bureaucracies, private businesses and individuals at the expense of

causes rooted in Africa's colonial past and in external actors, such as international governments, donor and aid organizations and agencies, multinational corporations and private businesses and companies. This paper examines the origins and entrenchment of corruption in sub-Saharan Africa from both the internal and external dimensions. The internal context is rooted in Africa's colonial past and its associated legacy while the external context focuses on international actors. Guided by the factors identified and discussed in the essay, we propose ways for strengthening the war against corruption.

There are four justifications for the adoption of a holistic approach to the origins and subsequent mushrooming of corruption in sub-Saharan Africa. First, it enables us to understand the vice in its historical totality by tracing it from the colonial colouring of the pre-colonial sociocultural practices of gift giving, through the practices of colonial administrators, to the post colonial practices by African political and administrative bureaucrats. With regard to the post colonial period, we will emphasize the legacy of colonialism as having played a major role in aiding the perpetration of corrupt practices. Second, a holistic approach affords a more encompassing explanation of the vice by integrating both its internal and external causes. The third significance of a more holistic approach to the corruption pandemic is that it treats the practice as an exchange relationship characterized by two equally guilty parties, a giver and a taker. Previous discussions about the subject appear to overly treat the receivers of kickbacks as the ones who are corrupt. We consider both the giver and the receiver in a corrupt exchange to be equally corrupt. The taker may be blamed more for initiating the process that leads to the act itself but both the giver and the taker are equally responsible for the completion of the exchange. The final significance of a holistic approach is the implications it has for the alleviation of the problem itself. To be effective, efforts geared toward combating corruption must depart from the previous emphasis on internal causes of the problem to distinguish between, and focus on, the internal and external drivers of the evil. This is particularly so given the growing urgency to stamp out corruption in sub-Saharan Africa.

### **The Internal Bases of Corruption**

An internal approach to the origins and subsequent entrenchment of corruption in sub-Saharan Africa must not only zero in on the historical event of colonialism but also interrogate the legacy of colonialism as experienced during the post colonial period.

#### **Colonialism and the Origins of Corruption**

The industrial revolution of the nineteenth century appears to have been the very initial historical basis for emergence of corruption (Robb, 1992). The financial growth which accompanied this historical event is said to have been directly

responsible for the birth of white collar crime of which corruption is a part. According to Robb (1992), the industrial revolution gave birth to a complex economy characterized by an increasing dependence on finance and investment and, consequently, enormous banking networks, stocks and credit and a complicated legal system. These factors, coupled with the increase in lawyers, financiers and other professionals, greatly aided the expansion and the potential for white collar crime. For sub-Saharan Africa in particular, corruption appears to be a social phenomenon deeply rooted in the historical process of colonialism. Here the practice is viewed as a by product of traits of fraudulent antisocial behaviour derived from British, French and other colonial rulers (Osoba, 1996: 372). Such behaviour infiltrated indigenous African peoples during the colonial period and was nurtured into the post colonial era. The credibility of this position is elevated further by the fact that the colonization of Africa was an extension of the new economic order resulting from the industrial revolution and its concomitant problems. The quest for economic gain, or "free trade imperialism" (Nabudere, 1981: 7), that accompanied the industrial revolution fuelled the scramble for Africa. This culminated in the partitioning of the continent into European spheres of influence and to its eventual colonization.

There are three ways through which colonialism can be linked to the emergence of corruption in sub-Saharan Africa. First, as implicit in Robb's (1992) argument that the new economic order resulting from the industrial revolution was responsible for the initial emergence of white collar crime in general, corruption requires a well developed monetary economy characterized by a clear differentiation of interests to thrive. A closer look at pre-colonial African economies reveals that emerging colonial powers did not find sizeable monetary economies in their newly acquired territories (Mulinge and Lesetedi, 1998, 1999). The existent economies, therefore, lacked the potential necessary for the sustenance of corrupt practices. Thus, the new economies, fronted by the colonial governments, must have laid down the structural groundwork for the origins and sustenance of corrupt practices.

Colonialism can also be linked to the origins of corrupt practices through the introduction of compulsory cash taxation in the forms of hut tax and, later, poll tax. The arriving colonialists found no meaningful monetary economies in the newly acquired territories. Therefore, most colonial governments, and particularly those of British origin, introduced compulsory taxation payable in cash only with the objectives of meeting the cost of administration or acquiring cheap African labour necessary for the establishment of productive economic activities (Collier and Lal, 1986; Tlou and Campbell, 1984; Stichter, 1982). It was the manner in which the tax itself was collected, rather than its introduction *per se*, that constituted the genesis of corrupt practices. The colonial governments mostly relied on local African leaders, and especially chiefs, to collect the taxes. But these had to be motivated by being allowed to pocket a part of the

money collected as inducement. In Bechuanaland (now Botswana), for example, the *dikgosi* (chiefs or kings) were mandated to collect the taxation and retain 10 percent of the total tax collected in their area (Tlou and Campbell, 1984). This practice amounted to the taking of kickbacks by African chiefs. It gave a new meaning to the practices of gift giving which had existed in different parts of Africa long before the coming of colonialism. Pre-colonial gift giving did not constitute corrupt practice, as defined in this paper, because it was not carried out at the expense of public good and it did not constitute a violation of any established rules and ethical considerations (Mulinge and Lesetedi, 1998, 1999). Unlike pre-colonial gift giving, the practice of rewarding tax collectors under colonial rule became a principal method for the accumulation of private property (Leonard, 1991), a way of life that was hard to give up and precipitated the abuse of office just as corruption today appears to have become. And, as Tlou and Campbell (1984) concluded, the financial gains accruing from the amount pocketed from taxes blinded the chiefs to the plight suffered by their people as a consequence of taxation.

The methods employed by the colonial authorities to subdue and control native peoples in sub-Saharan Africa provide the third link between the birth of corrupt practices and colonialism. In particular, it is the technique of divide and rule adopted especially by colonies of British descent that can be associated with corrupt practices. The techniques involved the practice of favouring one tribe over others with the dual objective of securing loyalty of that group to the administration and encouraging rivalry between different tribes to prevent a sense of unity from evolving and threatening colonial rule. It resulted in the creation of paramount (super-ordinate) and subordinate groups. While the former enjoyed considerable privileges from the colonial rulers, the latter did not. In British Uganda and Nigeria, for example, the Baganda and Ibo, respectively, enjoyed supremacy over other tribes (Roberts, 1962; Hunt and Walker, 1974). Elsewhere supremacy was also enjoyed by the Ngonde in North Nyasa District of British Nyasaland or today's Malawi (Kalinga, 1985), the Tutsi in Belgian Rwanda and Burundi (Mazrui and Tidy, 1984), and the Shona in present day Zimbabwe (Day, 1980).

The groups that enjoyed a favourable status from the colonial administration were rewarded through access to western (missionary) education (Kalinga, 1985) and government sponsored economic opportunities. As such, the policy of divide and rule created immense regional variations in the levels of educational attainment and economic opportunities. At independence, those groups favoured by the colonial administration had an edge over those not favoured (Leonard, 1991). They would constitute the beginnings of an African élite class. This so called 'petty bourgeoisie' (Rodney, 1972) was to dominate the political and economic life of most countries. Independence for this group solely meant the breaking of the monopoly of the colonial administrator's political power so that they could further their own advancement and posterity (Leonard, 1991).

Unfortunately for Africa, most of these had been socialized into a corrupt culture that excluded the majority and favoured only a select few. These offered the fertile grounds for the germination of corrupt practices such as tribalism and nepotism which have become deeply entrenched in most African countries.

### Africa's Colonial Legacy and Corrupt Practices

To provide a comprehensive explanation of the rampant corruption found in independent African nations requires a grasp of the integrative socioeconomic and political institutions that the colonisers established just before the granting of self rule to facilitate the tightening of their grip on their former colonies. More specifically, three legacies of colonialism – the administrative technique of divide and rule, the administrative culture inherited from colonialism and the constitutional structures inherited at independence – are considered to have aided the entrenchment of corruption in post colonial Africa.

#### The Administrative Practice of Divide and Rule

As outlined earlier, the administrative technique of divide and rule was utilized by some colonial governments as a tool for subduing and controlling indigenous populations. However, the practice outlasted active colonial rule to permeate the neocolonial state in the form of ethnicity (tribalism) and/or nepotism. Like their colonial counterparts, post colonial African political leaders, upon realizing the political and economic utility inherent in the practice of divide and rule, have acted to create superior and inferior tribes (Mulinge and Lesetedi, 1998, 1999). They have tended to elevate their tribal group of origin to a 'superior' status by treating them as the favourite tribe(s). Such ethnicity or tribalism has brought untold economic decay in some countries due to nepotism and other corrupt practices, such as embezzlement and economic mismanagement.

In Kenya, for example, the effect of tribalism rooted in divide and rule practices is evident through the adoption of what Mulinge and Lesetedi (1998, 1999) refer to as a "pastoral model" of economic management. The Kenya African National Union (KANU) government, under arap Moi, has systematically purged other groups from the most strategic economic positions in Kenya by replacing them with unqualified but politically well connected individuals from Moi's own, predominantly pastoral, Kalenjin tribe. The most common practice has been one in which an individual mismanages a particular organization to its bankruptcy before being transferred to mismanage another one. This is consistent with pastoral practices in which an area is grazed to the bare soil before moving to another area in the hope that the grass in the overgrazed area will regenerate naturally. The pastoral model of economic management in Kenya has catapulted the country into acute poverty, characterized by rampant unemployment, declining education and health care services, and recurring food shortages, among others.

### The Administrative Culture Inherited from Colonialism

Another avenue through which the legacy of colonialism has been responsible for the perpetuation of corrupt practices, particularly among the higher echelons of political and administrative bureaucracies in sub-Saharan Africa, is the administrative culture inherited from colonialism (Mulinge and Lesetedi, 1998, 1999). The continuation of the 'African chief model' of administration, whose origin dates to the colonial period, is of particular significance in this regard. Colonialism, and especially British colonial rule, not only took advantage of the institution of chiefs but also created a particular legacy that was to accompany this institution. Colonial chiefs were expected to be authoritarian figures who could make quick, final decisions and keep order by commanding respect and even fear (Leonard, 1991). As Leonard (1991: 28) points out, they "were not notable for their respect for the niceties of law or due process, they were known instead for their decisiveness, courage, presence, and ability to hold a crowd".

Unfortunately, for most of sub-Saharan Africa, the 'colonial chief' model of administration did not disappear with the attainment of independence. After independence, African political leaders appear to have embraced and perfected this model. As Leonard (1991: 29) indicates, contemporary African politicians and administrators appear to have embraced the power structure associated with the colonial chief, despite its unpopularity during the colonial era, and adhere to "an only slightly softened version" of the colonial chief's role. Not only are these leaders associated with authoritarianism and a near total lack of respect for the law and due process, they also use their positions of power to amass illegal wealth just as the colonial chief did. The persistence of the colonial chief model of administration has facilitated the transfer and entrenchment of the corrupt practices associated with it into the post colonial period.

### The Independence Constitutions

The constitutional structures inherited at independence reinforced the role of the colonial chief model of administration in the perpetuation of corruption in most of sub-Saharan Africa. Upon realizing that it was impossible to maximize economic benefits from colonies while retaining direct administrative control, most colonial powers negotiated a transition to self rule with nationalist leaders during the 1960s. Virtually all newly emerging African nations inherited constitutions drafted under the guidance of former colonial powers. These constitutions have tended to enhance corrupt practices through the centralization of power, impairment of participatory democracy and the facilitation of increased state control of economic activities. Also closely allied to the centralization of power is the persistent lack of political good will and commitment on the part of African leaders to fight corruption. It is to the discussion of these factors that we now turn.

**1. Centralised Power.** The new constitutions vested enormous (absolute) powers in the hands of a single office, institution or individual, usually the presidency. The colonialists may not be blamed for the way these laws have been interpreted and applied but it would be rather naive to overlook their role in the drafting of such laws, some of which became subject to abuse by emerging African leaders and thus created environments conducive for the entrenchment of corruption (Mulinge and Lesetedi, 1998, 1999). As Mulinge and Lesetedi indicate, the outgoing 'strongmen' oversaw the emergence of laws that facilitated a continuation of the repressive practices they had subjected the colonized to only, this time, using a 'son of the soil' as their proxy. This gave birth to autocratic presidents and bureaucracies that are above the law; devoid of accountability, transparency, rule of law (Hope, 1997; Adedeji, 1991) and administrative predictability (Adamolekun and Bryant, 1994); and irresponsible (Adedeji, 1995). The failure by the new constitutions to cap the length of time one individual could be President compounded this situation further by allowing for the existence of 'for life' presidents. Their lengthy and uninterrupted stints in power have been accompanied by increased corruption, often shielded through unconstitutional measures. The trend does not seem to have been reversed by the introduction of two term limits on the presidency that has been born out of the clamouring for multiparty democracy that has swept across the continent since the 1990s. If the lessons from the Kenyan and Zambian experiments are anything to go by, African presidents remain overly powerful despots who still act as though they were accountable only to themselves and their sycophants.

The existence of overly powerful presidents has also been associated with the politicization of bureaucracies and the entrenchment of the use of personalism and patronage. To strengthen their grip on civil society, those occupying the presidency have tended to surround themselves with indispensable power brokers who are also not accountable to anyone. The 'President's men' are spread across the strategic institutions in the land and become trusted aides, wheeler dealers, political schemers and hatchetmen for high level corrupt deals that cost organizations, individuals and would be investors huge sums of money (Hope, 1997). As Hope indicates, these enjoy the same immunity as the President himself and this creates channels for the peddling of influence and authority and the abuse of public office for private and personal gain. Through favouritism and nepotism, they influence the hiring, promotion and firing of employees and determine who is awarded government contracts, who is allocated which piece of land and who is licensed to operate what business, to mention but a few. This generates overall inefficiency in the bureaucracy (Alatas, 1990) and paves the way for negligence protected through favouritism or other influences.

**2. Lack of Participatory Democracy.** The concentration of power has failed to nurture the birth of a popular participatory democracy and to empower the press and civil society. According to Osoba (1996), participatory democracy is a



necessary requirement in combating corruption. It facilitates the monitoring and holding to account of those in charge of the state and treasury. These segments of our society are the ones that have proven to be the trickiest to police in the war against corruption. Almost immediately after independence, most African countries moved to amend their constitutions to either strengthen one party dictatorships or to undermine the processes that are necessary for true democracies to emerge. As Hope (1997) points out, on top of their immense powers, those occupying the presidency hijack most formal bureaucratic organizations, such as the civil service, the legislature and the judiciary, and use or interfere with the powers and functions of government for private gain. While the civil service has become an extension of ruling parties, parliament has been reduced to acting as the head of state's rubberstamp (or handmaid of the executive government). Its core function has become the legitimization of the decisions of the executive branch. Independence for most countries thus meant a movement from an autocratic colonial government to 'presidential authoritarianism', lacking in parliamentary democracy. Thus, despite being a key institution for good governance, the parliamentary system of government based on the theory of the sovereignty of the people has, in practice, been non-existent in most African countries. In some instances, free and open debate in this institution has been equated to dissent and lack of patriotism.

The judiciary, on the other hand, has lost both its independence and ability to prosecute and give deserving sentences to those involved in corrupt practices. According to Rose-Ackerman (1999: 151), a "politically dependent judiciary can facilitate high-level corruption. When the judiciary is part of the corrupt system, the wealthy and the corrupt operate with impunity, confident that a well-placed payoff will deal with any legal problems". The judiciary lacks the capacity for the objective general application of the rule of law in all cases brought before the courts. In a majority of cases it has to await consent from the Attorney General's office to prosecute cases of corruption and this is where most of the cover up takes place. Indeed, in many countries, the Attorney General has the powers to terminate cases without having to give any explanation. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for those under prosecution or convicted of corrupt practices to be accorded presidential pardon (Makumbe, 1994). The impotence of parliament and the judiciary are evident even in cases where humble evidence points to rising corruption and graft.

**3. Expanded Role of the State in the Economy.** The constitutions ushering African countries to independence also enhanced corrupt practices by facilitating the development of an expanded role for the state in economic activities (Hope, 1997). This was particularly so during the period immediately after independence up to the early 1990s when most countries embraced the privatization agenda, even though half heartedly. This involved both state participation in economic decision making and the proliferation of public enterprises often

referred to as 'parastatals'. These dual roles of the state set the stage for (bureaucratic) corruption to thrive (Hope, 1997). The centralization of economic decision making, for example, culminated in an expanded bureaucracy vested with discretionary powers. In the wake of such power, corruption thrived with public enterprises becoming cheap targets. Increasingly, it became normal for bribes to be offered before a representative of the state bureaucracy could complete any transaction. The corruption emanating from expanded government involvement in the economy was compounded by the tendency, discussed earlier, for heads of state to surround themselves with influence peddlers (bureaucrats and politicians) who yearn for a share of and demanded kickbacks from any government contract (Makumbe, 1994). State involvement in the economy also created opportunities for embezzlement and unlawful accumulation of wealth. It is precisely because of this fact that many African leaders and government officials control wealth assets that are very disproportionate to their official earnings (Hope, 1997).

**4. Lack of Political Good Will.** A final constitutionally allied factor responsible for the entrenchment of corrupt practices in sub-Saharan Africa is the lack of political good will to fight the malaise. Although this may not be explicitly tied to the constitutional frameworks that govern most of Africa today, the association between the lack of political good will and the immense powers enjoyed by African political leaders and bureaucracies cannot be overlooked. We argue that the lack of commitment by these to end corrupt practices rests with the protection they are guaranteed by existing constitutional frameworks and practices. The lack of political good will suggests that governments are not doing much to address the problem or are involved in half hearted measures that are not meant to seriously tackle it. As such, the vice has continued to mushroom in our institutions and other areas of the society. The lack of good will and political commitment to stamping out corruption is reflected through the failure or reluctance on the part of governments to enforce existing statutes and to prosecute those involved in corrupt practices. It also manifests itself through government opposition to the passing of anti-corruption bills, the formation of independent agencies on corruption and economic crimes, and the freeing of important institutions particularly the legislature and judiciary.

Kenya offers a good illustrative example of the lack of political good will and commitment to the eradication of corruption. The government of Kenya has been very reluctant to pass the Anti-Corruption and Economic Crimes Bill. It appears that such a bill would only get the government's blessing if it contained a clause offering amnesty to certain categories of offenders. This means that what the government would support is a weak legislation rather than an effective law that would provide the tool for addressing the problem of corruption. The Kenyan government has also consistently fought any attempts to set up a formidable anti-corruption organization. Initially, it set up the Kenya

Anticorruption Authority (KACA), only for it to be killed through a decision of the government controlled High Court. Although the procedures used to declare KACA illegal were suspect and the Court's decision was not based on sound legal reasoning, the Attorney General was not eager to challenge the decision in the Court of Appeal. The constitutional challenge to, and demise of, KACA amounted to a significant setback in the fight against corruption. However, it is the apathetic stance adopted by the chief legal counsel of the government – the Attorney General – that testified to the lack of good will and commitment on the part of the Kenyan government to combat corruption.

In place of the KACA the Government decided to set up the Anti-Corruption Police Unit (ACPU). The ability of the ACPU to fight corruption, and even the Kenya government's faith in it, remain in serious doubt. This is particularly so in light of the fact that the ACPU is fundamentally a 'police unit' in an environment where the police are fundamentally corrupt or largely associated with the vice. Furthermore, it remains to be seen whether the Attorney General's Office was ready to support ACPU in prosecuting those involved in corruption. Without being overly sceptical, therefore, one is bound to conclude that the ACPU is yet another pointer to the lack of commitment on the part of the Government of Kenya to effectively combat corruption. Most recently (January 2002) the Kenya government commissioned a team from the Risk Advisory Group and Corporate Risk Services in the United Kingdom to undertake a strategic assessment of Kenya's progress in anti-corruption initiatives in the country. Following the British experts' report on graft, on 3 April 2002 the Kenya government published The Corruption Control Bill (2002). It provides for the setting up of an independent new Kenya Corruption Control Authority (KCCA) to replace the KACA which was disbanded in 2001.

The new Bill is part of a major effort by the government to fulfil the conditionalities by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the resumption of donor funding. These have insisted that the country must show evidence that it was committed to the fight against corruption through good governance, legislation and setting up of appropriate institutions to deal with corruption cases. The Bill provides for the appointment of a director to head KCCA who shall be appointed by the President following recommendations of a special advisory board. The person appointed Director, however, must be approved by Parliament. This is a major departure from past practice for those appointed by the President. The KCCA's activities will be monitored by the Kenya Corruption Control Advisory Board whose membership will be drawn from professional organizations in the civil sector, including religious organizations. Like the defunct KACA, the KCCA shall not undertake any prosecution before clearance with the office of Attorney General. In our view, this signifies the Kenya government's reluctance to set up a truly independent anti-corruption agency. In addition, the Bill states that one cannot be prosecuted or held for a crime which

was not an offence at the time it was committed. This means that corruption crimes committed before the new law comes into effect will not be dealt with. This is another testimony of the Kenya government's attempts to protect powerful people who have enriched themselves through the plunder of public funds and to cover up very costly corruption cases.

## **The Role of International Actors**

A comprehensive analysis of corruption must bring in its international dimension. The salience of this dimension has been elevated to new heights by the process of globalization. To analyse corruption in any one country, one has to understand the world system in which it functions. Globalization has been accompanied by the emergence of uncontrollable market forces and truly transnational corporations (TNCs) that dominate the basic dynamics of the world global economy, and by a worldwide spread of manufacturing and sales (Hirst and Thompson, 1996). According to Johnston (1998), increasing interdependence of economies and markets makes it possible for corrupt agents to extend their dealings across borders. For instance, it allows for the shifting of illicit profits out of poor countries into numbered bank accounts elsewhere.

Corruption in sub-Saharan Africa is not a problem that is caused and sustained by internal factors alone. Rather, it is also a consequence of external factors manifested through the activities of foreign governments, aid organizations and private companies seeking to further their own (economic) interests through actions and practices that condone corrupt practices or that are corrupt in themselves (Mulinge and Lesetedi, 1999). Most cases of grand corruption also have an international dimension: "the bribe giver might be a transnational corporation (TNC); a corrupt politician might seek refuge from prosecution abroad; and, most common of all, the proceeds of corruption can be secreted to numbered accounts in foreign destinations" (Galtung, 1998: 118). With respect to secreted accounts, tales abound of African leaders, such as dos Santos of Angola, Arap Moi of Kenya, Frederick Chiluba of Zambia, and Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, among others, who have stashed fortunes in Swiss banks at the expense of the economic development of their respective countries.

International governments, organizations and agencies further the entrenchment of high level (major) as well as lower level (minor) corruption in various ways. Any discussion of the factors responsible for corruption in sub-Saharan Africa must feature international communities as accomplices in corrupt practices, either because their actions and policies fail to counter (or appear to encourage) the same or because they serve as givers in corrupt exchanges. While international governments and aid organizations may enhance corruption through their policies and responses that appear to condone and urge on the takers in corrupt exchanges, international corporations and other private businesses may participate directly in corrupt exchanges as givers. The analysis

presented in this section focuses on the provision of conditional loans and grants in aid, the desire to protect economic and strategic interests, and the acquisition of contracts and business licenses through kickbacks as practices that promote corruption. It also examines the role of Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs).

### Conditional Loans and Grants in Aid

International governments, development organizations, and aid agencies often attach certain conditions to loans and grants availed to developing countries. Some of these conditions approximate corrupt practices (Mulinge and Lesetedi, 1999). For instance, an organization or agency may require the recipient of a loan or a grant in aid to draw from the donor country's technical capacity to implement the project for which funding is being sought without taking into consideration the availability of such technical capacity in the recipient nation. This constitutes a fraudulent act that may negatively affect the recipient nation concerned in two ways. First, where a recipient has the technical capacity being provided as part of a loan or grant in aid, this deprives it of a major benefit of investing in development projects – the creation of employment. Second, more often than not, aid organizations and donor agencies provide overpriced but unqualified, incompetent and inexperienced technical personnel as part of an aid packages to developing countries (Mulinge and Lesetedi, 1999). While the demand to rely on technical personnel from a donor agency or government may not itself constitute corruption, it would be naive to term the granting of incompetent technical personnel as anything else. This practice is responsible for sub-standard development projects such as poorly engineered roads. It furthers economic retardation and the general impoverishment of the people in the affected nations.

### Protection of Economic and Strategic Interests

A second way through which corruption can be understood within an international context is the need for international governments to extend and protect their economic and/or strategic interests in former colonies at any cost. As Mulinge and Lesetedi (1999) point out, this has created an environment that is conducive to the emergence of policies and actions that appear to aid the entrenchment of corruption. Several illustrations testify to this fact. First, there is the tendency by international governments and donor organizations to disburse aid to developing countries even where it is very clear that a considerable fraction of that money is wasted on bribes and kickbacks or diverted to private use. This practice, which is tantamount to subsidizing corruption, has encouraged most African political leaders to view aid as a reward for their cooperation in the fulfilment of the economic interests of their former masters (Mulinge and Lesetedi, 1999). The United States government (and to some extent France), for

instance, supported and subsidized, using tax payers money, a corrupt state in the former Zaire for over 30 years because it professed its opposition to communism. This support is pertinent to our understanding of the corruption that engulfed that country for decades. It gave Mobutu Sese Seko and his cronies greater immunity to practice their art of looting the country to the brink of economic collapse. The desire to protect economic interests could also be said to be responsible for the British government's continued support of corrupt regimes in her former colony, Kenya, including the current one of arap Moi.

Economic and other interests have also aided the entrenchment of corruption in sub-Saharan Africa through the adoption of half hearted, and often unclear and inconsistent, stances toward corruption itself and corrupt regimes. The linking of aid to the control of corruption and good governance is a case in point. The enforcement of this policy has, to say the least, been inconsistent and lacking in the commitment that would be central to its success. This appears to have sent mixed signals to corrupt bureaucracies that have given them the courage to engage international governments and organisations in what amounts to hide and seek games. As an illustration, the Kenya government engaged the World Bank, the IMF, and the United States and other governments in a protracted wild goose chase by promising to deliver on political and economic reforms as a condition for aid disbursement until around 1997 when these finally suspended aid to the country. Despite the suspension of funding, the Government of Kenya has continued to play truant in its negotiations with these world bodies for the total resumption of aid. Yet every once in a while a small dosage of aid will be released to the country.

### Acquisition of Contracts and Business Licenses

Multinational firms are central actors in many large scale corrupt deals. According to Rose-Ackerman (1999), these firms face a dilemma when dealing with corrupt regimes that leads them to believe that they need to pay bribes. They feel obliged to pay kickbacks – sometimes amounting to 10 percent or otherwise of the total value of the contract – in exchange contracts. By indulging or acquiescing in practices such as these, the organizations play the role of givers in corrupt exchanges and thus fuel corruption in developing countries. In many countries, bribes paid to obtain foreign business are tax deductible (Rose Ackerman, 1999). Unfortunately, this legal loophole encourages payoffs. The act of obtaining tenders through corrupt means also often breeds more corruption because tenders won this way are likely lead to poor quality projects that are an economic drain on the country affected (Mulinge and Lesetedi, 1999). Some contractors who acquire projects through corrupt deals may lack the technical capacity necessary for the satisfactory completion of the job and hence produce substandard projects. Africa is crowded with roads that were constructed under the guidance of engineers who knew nothing about engineering.

In addition, private companies can offer bribes in exchange for licenses to operate in a particular country. Such an act defeats common logic in light of the high rate of unemployment and retarded economic development affecting most African nations. African governments desperately need foreign investments to create jobs for the populace and win some semblance of legitimacy from them. Companies that win tenders and/or acquire licenses corruptly, it should be noted, are also likely to purchase illegitimate immunity from prosecution for the underpayment of their workers and for maintaining poor working conditions (Mulinge and Lesetedi, 1999).

### Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs)

An understanding of declining or devalued wages in some sub-Saharan African countries, however, must bring in IMF and World Bank fronted Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs). SAPs constitute another dimension in the international contextualization of corruption in sub-Saharan Africa. Where operational, such policies have been associated with declining social services for the mass of the African population and the stagnation of wages (Vandermoorle, 1994; Thompson, 1992). Although these policies are not solely responsible for wage stagnation – other factors such as deteriorating economic conditions (Hope, 1997) due to high level corruption also play a part – they have played a major role in accelerating this process. Thus, the IMF, World Bank and international governments that support and push for the implementation of the kind of austerity measures that SAPs prescribe are, to some extent, directly responsible for the entrenchment of lower level corruption in sub-Saharan Africa.

Diminishing salaries for lower cadre employees in most developing countries have been associated with lower level corruption (Lindauer, 1994; Hope, 1997). It has been argued that, while the desire to get rich quickly may be responsible for petty corruption, inadequate monthly incomes appear to be the major catalyst. As Hope (1997: 93) states, in a situation of declining incomes, public servants “disavow any sense of civic virtue and attempt to supplement their incomes by engaging in corrupt acts.” As it becomes increasingly impossible for employees to meet their minimum monthly budgets, acts such as the taking of bribes or embezzling funds from accounts they are responsible for acquire justification in their minds and are incorporated as part of the formal monthly budget.

### The Way Forward

Although corruption can never be entirely eliminated, the practice needs to be “reduced to levels that are both tolerable and incidental” (Galtung, 1998: 106). In sub-Saharan Africa, the problem is a particular concern because of its adverse effects. Corruption creates innumerable forms of injustice which affect almost every aspect of daily life for ordinary citizens and no sector of the population is

immune from it (Alatas, 1990; Riley, 1998). There is mounting evidence that, in sub-Saharan Africa, corruption impairs political, economic and social development (Hope, 1997; Osoba, 1996; Makumbe, 1994; Ayittey, 1992). The practice is not a victimless crime (Galtung, 1998). Rather, it is a transaction which carries substantial social, political and economic costs. Corruption hinders administrative development and performance (Hope, 1997) by generating overall inefficiency in the bureaucracy (Alatas, 1990). It undermines political institutions by weakening the legitimacy of accountability of governments (Johnston, 1998).

Most importantly, corruption erodes economic growth and impairs economic efficiency (Rose-Ackerman, 1997, 1999 Mauro, 1997; World Bank, 1997; Robinson, 1998; Ayittey, 2000). This occurs through the stifling of local initiative and enterprise (Hope, 1997), the discouragement of foreign investment, the undermining of the effectiveness of aid funded development projects and the weakening of political support for development assistance in donor countries (IMF, 1995; Rauch, 1995; Johnston, 1998). The practice also breeds wastage, aggravates budget deficit problems, reduces resources available for infrastructure, public services and anti-poverty programmes and serves as a heavy tax upon investment (Robinson, 1998; Ayittey, 2000). Not to forget that corruption creates composite problems like 'brain drain' of educated people from developing countries (Alatas, 1990). This, coupled with nepotism and favouritism, makes it impossible for countries plagued with corruption to make the best use of their human resources. Yet, human resources are one of the primary inputs for development across most of Africa. Finally, corruption undermines the effective utilisation of natural resources leaving the affected countries vulnerable to and dependent on outside interests and markets. This, in turn, make it impossible for these countries to implement effective development strategies of their own (Johnston, 1998).

There are several strategies that can be utilised to stem corruption in sub-Saharan Africa. For ease of presentation and maintaining consistency, these will be grouped into national interventions and international initiatives.

## National Strategies

From the national context, the following strategies are explored: institutional reforms, formation of independent anti-corruption authorities, citizen empowerment, the establishment of codes of ethics for public servants, and other strategies. While most of these are not new, we argue that they need strengthening if they are going to produce the desired effects.

### Institutional Reforms

As alluded to earlier, corruption flourishes where national institutions and guarantees of basic economic rights are weak (Knack and Keefer, 1995).



Institutional reforms are thus indispensable ingredients of any sustainable anti-corruption strategy (Johnston, 1998). The reforms should be designed to enhance accountability and transparency in the operations of the state and major economic institutions. That is, they should facilitate the creation of more transparent procedures; the strengthening of internal and external accountability systems; improvement in recruitment, compensation and training for public and private sector officials; and the creation of channels of appeal for clients (Johnston, 1998). Although corrupt interests with a stake in the *status quo* may initially strongly oppose reform, reform advocates must sustain pressure on the political establishment to implement meaningful reforms.

In the developing countries, the salience assumed by the problem of corruption in recent years has occurred hand in hand with the increasing push for democratization and economic liberalization. These processes entail the reform of major institutions of our society that have a bearing on corruption. Primary emphasis should be placed on the total separation of powers of the three arms of government. This can only occur through the total emancipation of the civil service, legislature and judiciary from the stifling grip of the executive. That is, through the creation of totally independent civil services, parliaments, and judiciaries which are above the manipulation and domination of the executive. With respect to the civil service, appointments to senior positions should be vetted by parliament. This will guarantee merit appointments and curtail corrupt practices during the term of such appointments. It will also put to an end the patronage that has shielded corrupt officials from prosecution. Empowering parliament, on the other hand, will make it possible for it to deal with those named in corruption reports by watchdog committees.

Serious judicial reforms are imperative in most African countries for the effective combating of corruption. Having exemplary anti-corruption statutes is not adequate in the fight against corruption. These are irrelevant (Singh, 1997) unless an honest judicial system exists to support them by acting as a watchdog on constitutional values, monitoring the honesty of other branches of government, ensuring the rule of law and successfully investigating and prosecuting offenders (Muganda, 1999; Rose-Ackerman, 1999). According to Muganda, successful investigation and prosecution will encourage the public to report corrupt practices and also serve as a deterrent for members of the public. This applies to most sub-Saharan African countries since they are still struggling to establish democracy and the rule of law. Reforms should nevertheless go beyond the creation of independent judiciaries to incorporate the appointment of judicial officers after vetting by parliamentary committees. Vetting the candidates is likely to restore confidence among the public. It will ensure that people of questionable integrity (or tainted records) are not appointed judges, as has previously been the case. Vetting would also ensure that the process of appointing judicial personnel is itself free of corruption.

Reform should also give judicial officials security of tenure. This will empower them to discharge their duties without fear of intimidation by political leaders who hold their career destiny in their hands. Judicial reform should also include improvements in the professionalism, pay and working conditions of judges as efforts to reduce the incentive to accept bribes (Rose-Ackerman, 1999). Finally, given the magnitude of the corruption problem, special corruption courts should be established to deal directly with economic crimes. This will speed up the prosecution process and the deterrent effects will be felt much more quickly than is currently the case. These courts should be provided with adequate staff and equipment, both in the lower courts and at the appellate levels, to ensure that they can deal with cases swiftly.

### Independent Anti-Corruption Agencies

Conventionally, corruption has been fought through the use of penal statutes. However, the law alone has not proved to be an effective solution. For instance, the law can only apply after the fact and only where a corrupt practice has been unearthed (Muganda, 1999). Where an act has occurred but has not been exposed, the law remains impotent. The same may also apply when neither the giver nor the receiver is aggrieved. The creation of effective independent corruption fighting agencies operating under a strong statute is thus a necessary step in the war against corruption (Muganda, 1999; Rose-Ackerman, 1999). Hong Kong through its Independent Commission Against Corruption is a testimony that the war against corruption can be won.

In sub-Saharan Africa, a number of countries have embraced such agencies with varying degrees of success or setbacks. These include Botswana, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. Two major lessons can be drawn from the experience from these countries. First, that for anti-corruption commissions to be effective, they must be independent of the executive and imbued with all the necessary investigative powers. They must also have effective preventive and education programmes in support of the deterrent. Second, and most importantly, that the passing of anti-corruption laws and the constitution of anti-corruption agencies, while a necessary condition, may not be sufficient for the reduction of the vice. Political good will on the part of the state and the overall political leadership is critical to fight the problem for such laws and agencies to have an impact and play a meaningful role. To succeed, anti-corruption institutions need unqualified support and commitment by the political leadership. Corruption is actually in the leadership and, if the leadership is firm, corruption will naturally be reduced. For example, if stern action is taken in all corruption cases, nobody will want to be associated with corruption. Unfortunately, most African governments lack the political good will and serious commitment to fight the corruption which has eaten into the fabric of their society. This subverts the endeavours of corruption fighting agencies and institutions and, in

some countries, reduces anti-corruption laws and agencies to avenues of cover up rather than pillars of the elimination of corruption. It also makes them vulnerable to abuse and misrepresentation by members of the executive, (state officials), the judiciary and the legislature.

### The Empowerment of Civil Society

Corruption has been thriving in many countries because many people are unaware of their rights. As such, any long term anti-corruption strategy should incorporate citizen empowerment. It is the only way through which we can create citizens and organizations of civil society that are willing to confront the practice head on and take on the institutions that sustain it. Citizen empowerment should entail the strengthening of civil society by widening and protecting its political and economic resources "in order to enhance its political and economic vitality" (Johnston, 1998: 85). Empowerment should also provide the citizenry increased access to the state and lay down rules of interaction between the state and society. According to Johnston (1998), by reducing the economic and political vulnerability of grassroots communities and peoples we bequeath them more effective means of recourse. Empowerment reduces their vulnerability to exploitation and enhances their ability to participate effectively in politics and to check the self interested behaviour of official decision makers and each other (Johnston, 1998). Most importantly, it makes them effective watchdogs over corrupt public officials and also reduces their vulnerability to being corrupted or participating in corrupt deals. As Cooter (1997: 191) indicates, where social empowerment is effective, social groups and private interests can become, not the instigators or targets of corruption, but 'law merchants'. Citizen empowerment will bolster institutional reforms by enabling the citizenry to act as the watchdog over institutional practices.

Deeply rooted ethnic divisions and conflicts tend to enhance corruption (Easterly and Levine, 1996). Thus, in sub-Saharan Africa, where rampant ethnicization of the allocation of scarce but important resources (Mulinge and Munyae, 2000) has created extensive ethnic divisions, the citizen empowerment anti-corruption strategy must incorporate mechanisms for the termination of such practices and for redressing the imbalances that such practices have created. In this regard, above all else, development strategies that are directed at previously excluded groups are necessary.

### Establishment of Codes of Ethics for Public Servants

The lack of a code of ethics to guide public servants and the holders of other positions of responsibility in society is one of the major factors responsible for corrupt practices in Africa today. Logically, therefore, governments need to develop and, most importantly, enforce codes of conduct to govern the behaviour of their employees. Of significance are the conflicts of interest that most African bureaucrats seem not to pay attention to. This in itself creates condi-

tions for the peddling of corrupt practices such as a cabinet minister, a permanent secretary or any other senior bureaucrat awarding his or her company the tender for a government project. The rule of the thumb should be that no civil servants engage in private business while holding office.

To promote ethics in the civil service, clear rules governing conflicts of interest, expected behaviour, and obligatory disclosure of assets should be enacted and enforced (Shihata, 1999). All public servants, including the President, the Vice President, ministers, ordinary members of parliament and other high ranking civil servants should be made to declare their wealth every year. This should also apply to their spouses and any dependent children to circumvent attempts to hide stolen assets by registering them under a spouse or a child's name. At the beginning of every year, such officials should declare financial statements; income; assets, including land, buildings, vehicles, investments and any financial obligations owed to the person making the declaration; and any liabilities. Failure to comply with such requirements should lead to disciplinary action and possible prosecution. Those who give misleading information about their wealth should be liable for conviction and/or fine. The declaration of assets will also stem 'get rich quick' temptations among top public servants.

### Other Strategies

Long term strategies in the war against graft should also incorporate the review of public salaries with a view to increasing them. Some African countries have very poorly paid civil servants. This creates conditions for corruption to thrive. As Rose-Ackerman (1999: 72) points out, "if public sector pay is low, corruption is a survival strategy". Also, where government pay scales are not capable of attracting those with specialized skills, a selection bias will operate. The review of salaries is particularly urgent for those departments connected to the administration of the criminal justice system, that is the police, the courts and prisons. These are pertinent to the success of legal strategies for the control of corruption (Mbaku, 2000). For instance, judges and their functionaries are likely to accept bribes if they are underpaid.

### International Initiatives

For a long time, most anti-corruption activity focused exclusively on the use of national measures to control a national or local problem. A look at anti-corruption agencies or commissions across the continent, for example, reveals that most of them were formulated with the primary responsibility to deal with corruption from within. However, as demonstrated earlier, corruption has an international dimension that cannot be overlooked if the war against it is to bear fruit. As stated earlier, for example, multinational firms partake in large scale, corrupt deals and their inclusion in and support for the fight against corruption is imperative to its success.

The international community has not been completely silent and indifferent to the fight against corruption. As Rose-Ackerman (1999) notes, combating corruption is an emerging priority for the international community and some international tools are evolving to tackle the problem. The first such initiative appears to have been the US 1977 Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA). The Act was involved in fighting corruption outside US borders by prohibiting certain corrupt practices by US Corporations and unincorporated business entities. It was the first law to prohibit nationals of one country from bribing government officials in another country (Hermann, 1994).

International organisations like the IMF, OECD and World Bank have also signalled their desire for governments to demonstrate intolerance for corrupt practices and deal with the menace. They have pledged to take action to eliminate corruption from their own aid programmes (Hope, 2000). Since the mid 1990s, a series of anti-corruption initiatives associated with such organizations have emerged (OECD, 1997; Kaufman, 1997). Key among these has been the new World Bank and IMF policies tying lending more closely to efforts to reduce corruption. Jointly with other donors, the World Bank and the IMF have been pushing for public integrity and democratic reforms in Africa, linking them to economic and political liberalization. In 1996, the World Bank revised its guidelines to state explicitly that corruption and fraud would be grounds for cancelling a contract if a borrower had not taken appropriate action (Rose-Ackerman, 1999: 182). Since then, the Bank, jointly with the IMF and other donor agencies, has insisted that governments must show commitment to tackling the problem of corruption as a condition for aid (Robinson, 1998). According to Rose-Ackerman (1999), the World Bank, the IMF, the UNDP, the bilateral aid agencies, and the regional development banks are all contemplating anti-corruption policies that go beyond guaranteeing the integrity of their projects to supporting more fundamental structural reforms that would reduce the levels of corruption.

In 1996, the UN passed a Declaration Against Corruption and Bribery in International Commercial Transactions in which it emphasized the need to promote social responsibility and appropriate standards of ethics on the part of private and public corporations, including transnational corporations (Hope, 2000). Another international initiative to combat corruption is manifested in the efforts by the Council of the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to criminalize transnational bribery and the tax deductibility of bribes, and to establish transparency systems for competitive public procurement (Rose-Ackerman, 1999). More recently, the OECD Council passed an international convention that requires signatories to enact legislation ending the tax deductibility of bribes, to criminalize the bribing of foreign officials, to introduce specific corruption measures, and to make it illegal to use, deposit or transfer money acquired through corrupt practices (Hope, 2000). In

addition, countries like Switzerland have begun to cooperate with African governments in attempts to discourage the laundering of ill gotten or embezzled funds through their banks (Hope, 2000).

Despite the above steps taken by the international community, we argue that much more could have been, and still needs to be, done. We are of the opinion that there has been much talk, coupled with some legislative measures, but very little action. Consistent with Rose-Ackerman (1999), we consider the efforts of the international organizations and agencies not to be sufficient and call for a further strengthening of the same. More specifically, the area of enforcement, particularly commitment to effective enforcement of anti-corruption strategies, needs to be strengthened further. To illustrate this, the IMF 'good governance' clause has been invoked in countries such as Argentina, Cambodia and Kenya, with demands for demonstrable anti-corruption measures (Galtung, 1998) but the application of such measures has been rather half hearted and corrupt political leaders have seized the opportunity to play cat and mouse games with the IMF. Furthermore, as an 'operational directive' the clause is not a formal conditionality because of the fact that the IMF's Articles of Agreement stipulate that it should not deal in matters that are political in nature.

The international community must move beyond rhetoric to moot new concrete programs and develop better strategies to enforce all its programs for the reduction of corruption. As Rose-Ackerman (1999) indicates, individual firms must consider their obligations as international actors in the war against corruption. Companies operating in corrupt environments must take a stand against corruption and report it to local authorities and to the outside world. "Keeping quiet is probably the worst option" (Rose-Ackerman, 1999: 188). Similarly, for African countries to extricate themselves from the corrupt clutches of foreign companies, they must identify and blacklist these, and relevant information should be relayed to all governments (Muganda, 1999). Most countries should not only ratify treaties, such as those passed by the OECD Council outlawing bribery of foreign officials and criminalising the tax deductibility of bribes, they should also pass conforming legislation. Steps like those taken by countries like Switzerland to discourage the laundering of ill gotten funds through their banks should be strengthened further. To this end, nations should enter into binding treaties with other nations pledging total support in the fight against corruption. These treaties should guarantee freezing of accounts created through corrupt practices and the repatriation of the proceeds of corruption. The establishment of an International Corruption Court or tribunal charged with the responsibility to try corrupt leaders who flee from their countries to seek refuge abroad, to rule on their extradition and to hear cases of corruption involving transnational corporations, should also be given some thought.

With globalization, it is now becoming more feasible than ever before for professional bodies and associations to adopt universal codes of conduct such as

the application of a universal (uniform) code of conduct for all world engineers, lawyers, doctors and other professionals. Such a step would benefit the war against corruption tremendously. Its feasibility lies in the fact that some of these groups already have global organizations or associations with clear codes of conduct. The World Federation of Engineers, for example, has a code of conduct designed to prohibit engineers from passing substandard work (Galtung, 1998). Other groups, like the International Bar Association, could follow suit.

Inconsistent policies and practices on the part of international institutions and governments could be said to be partly responsible for the lack of political good will and commitment to the eradication of corruption on the part of most African bureaucracies. Without arguing that foreign governments and organizations should usurp the responsibility of policing African bureaucracies, we posit, that whenever they choose to get involved, they should do so consistently and persistently. Where the option adopted is to suspend aid, this should remain in force until the actual desired results are realised. Of course, there are those who argue that the suspension of aid hurts ordinary people and not corrupt bureaucrats but it is equally true that loans and grants in aid that have no economic benefits to people whose tax money is essential to service them hurt them (the people) more.

## **Conclusion**

This paper presents a holistic analysis of the genesis and entrenchment of corruption in sub-Saharan Africa by integrating the historical and international contexts of the problem. We link the origins and spread of the problem to the colonization of Africa, the lasting legacy of that colonization and the actions and practices of international actors. The adoption of a holistic approach to corruption is pegged on three facts. That is, that it enables us to understand the vice in its historical totality; affords a more encompassing explanation of the vice by integrating both its internal and external causes; and allows for the development of well rounded strategies for the alleviation of the problem. Consistent with the last fact, our discussion culminates with the examination of broad based national and international strategies that can be utilized to address the problem of corruption in sub-Saharan Africa today.

Certain basic conclusions derive from the discussion ensuing in the essay. First, that corruption is a multifaceted, complex problem. Any effort to combat it must recognize, from the onset, its complexity and the impossibility of eliminating it altogether (Shihata, 1999). It should also recognize the need for a comprehensive approach to the problem that cuts across disciplines. It is only through such an approach that the economic, social, legal, administrative and moral aspects of the problem can be targeted; the close linkages among these aspects recognized; and the international dimension of the causes of the problem drawn in. A second conclusion deriving from this essay is that, although

efforts have been expended at the national level to combat corruption, a lot of room remains for improvement. In fact, there is much more that can be, and needs to be, done. Within the national context, African countries have developed anti-corruption initiatives, such as anti-corruption agencies, inspector general systems, legal and quasi-legal trials, and public awareness campaigns (Doig, 1995; IRIS, 1996). However, the powerful have not been committed to act effectively to curb corruption (Kligaard, 1997) and most such initiatives have been ineffective and unsustainable. A reality check reveals a near total lack of commitment and political good will by political leaders and government officials to tackle the problem. In some countries, like Kenya and Nigeria, the lack of political good will to drastically reduce or stamp out corruption has been manifested through the initiation of what amount to cosmetic anti-corruption strategies.

Similarly, efforts dating back particularly to the 1990s by the international governments, agencies and organizations, though appreciated, still fall short of the kind of potential these are imbued with. It is our view that there has been a lot of talk without much action, some legislation without effective enforcement, and a general lack of total commitment to eradicating the problem. By advocating a greater role for the international community in the war against corruption we are by no means suggesting that it should usurp the responsibility of policing African bureaucracies and stamping out corruption from the continent. The responsibility for stamping out corruption in sub-Saharan Africa rests overwhelmingly with African political leaders and bureaucracies themselves. However, the international governments, agencies and organizations, being among the perpetrators of the problem, must be part of the solution if the problem is to be minimized. Otherwise any strategies that fail to bring them in will remain a partial approach to corruption. In sum, concrete anti-corruption initiatives must be ones that effectively capture the national and international factors that sustain it.

## References

- Adamolekun, L. and C. Bryant, (1994), *Governance Progress Report: The Africa Region Experience*, Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Adedeji, O. (1995), "The Challenge of Pluralism, Democracy, Governance and Development", *The Courier*, No. 150 (March–April), 93–95.
- Adedeji, O. (1991), "Role of Government in Bureaucratic Corruption: The Case of the Politicisation of the Civil Service", *Quarterly Journal of Administration*, 25 (2), 208–219.
- Alatas, S. H. (1990), *Corruption: Its Nature, Causes and Functions*, Aldershot: Avebury.
- Ayittey, G. B. N. (2000), "Combating Corruption in Africa: Analysis and Context", in K. R. Hope, Sr. and B. C. Chikulo (eds.), *Corruption and Development in Africa: Lessons from Country Case Studies*, London: Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Brass, P. (1985), "Ethnicity and the Colonial and Post-colonial Africa: Abstract" in P.



- Brass, *Ethnic Groups and the State*, London: Croom Helm.
- Collier, P. and D. Lal (1986), *Labor and Poverty in Kenya 1900–1980*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Cooter, R. D. (1997), "The Rule of State Law Versus the Rule-of-Law State: Economic Analysis of the Legal Foundations of Development", in M. Bruno and B. Pleskovic (eds.), *Annual World Bank Conference on Development Economics 1996*, Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Day, J. (1980), "The Insignificance of the Tribe in the African Politics of Zimbabwe Rhodesia", in W. H. Morris-Jones (ed.), *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, London: Frank Cass and Company Ltd.
- Doig, R. A. (1995), "Good Government and Sustainable Anti-Corruption Strategies: A Role for Independent Anti-Corruption Agencies?", *Public Administration and Development*, 15 (2), 151–65.
- Easterly W. and R. Levine (1996), "Africa's Growth Strategy: Policies and Ethnic Divisions", unpublished Manuscript, Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Galtung, F. (1998), "Criteria for Sustainable Corruption Control", in K. A. Elliot (ed.), *Corruption and the Global Economy*, Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics.
- Girling, J. (1997), *Corruption, Capitalism and Democracy*, London: Routledge.
- Heimann, F. (1994), *Should Foreign Bribery Be a Crime?*, Berlin: Transparency International.
- Hirst, P. and G. Thompson (1996), *Globalisation in Question: The International Economy and the Possibilities of Governance*, Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Hope, K. R. Sr. (2000), "Corruption and Development in Africa" in K. R. Hope, Sr. and B. C. Chikulo (eds.), *Corruption and Development in Africa: Lessons from Country Case Studies*, London: Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Hope, K. R. Sr. (1997), *African Political Economy: Contemporary Issues in Development*, London: M. E. Sharpe.
- Hope, K. R. Sr. (1996), *Development in the Third World: From Policy Failure to Policy Reform*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Hunt, C. L. and L. Walker (1974), *Ethnic Dynamics: Pattern of Inter-group Relations in Various Societies*, Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press.
- IMF (1995), "Unproductive Public Expenditures: A Pragmatic Approach to Policy Analysis", *IMF Pamphlet Series 48*, Washington, DC: IMF.
- IRIS (1996), "Governance and the Economy in Africa: Tools for Analysis and Reform of Corruption", University of Maryland: Center for Institutional Reform and the Informal Sector (IRIS).
- Johnston, M. (1998), "Fighting Systematic Corruption: Social Foundations for Institutional Reform", in M. Robinson (ed.), *Corruption and Development*, London: Frank Cass.
- Kalinga, O. J. M. (1985), "Colonial Rule, Missionaries and Ethnicity in the North Nyasa District, 1891–1938", *African Studies Review*, 28 (1), 57–72.
- Kaufmann, D. (1997), "Corruption: The Facts", *Foreign Policy*, No. 17, 114–131.
- Klitgaard, R. (1997), "Cleaning Up and Invigorating the Civil Service", A Report for the Operations Evaluation Department, Washington DC: The World Bank.

- Knack, S. and P. Keefer, (1995), "Institutions and Economic Performance: Cross-Country Tests Using Alternative Institutional Measures", *Economics and Politics*, 17 (3), 207-227.
- Leonard, D. K. (1991), *African Successes: Four Public Managers of Kenyan Rural Development*, USA: University of California Press.
- Lindauer, D. L. (1994). "Government Pay and Employment Policies and Economic Performance." in D. L. Lindauer and B. Nunberg (eds.), *Rehabilitating Government: Pay and Employment Reform in Africa*, Washington DC: World Bank.
- Makumbe, J. (1994). "Bureaucratic Corruption in Zimbabwe: Causes and Magnitude of the Problem." *Africa Development*, 19 (3): 45-60.
- Mauro, P. (1997). "The Effects of Corruption on Growth, Investment, and Government Expenditure: A Cross-Country Analysis", in K. A. Elliot (ed), *Corruption and the Global Economy*, Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics.
- Mazrui, A. A. and M. Tidy (1984), *Nationalism and New States in Africa From About 1935 to the Present*, New Hampshire: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.
- Mbaku, J. M. (2000), "Controlling Corruption in Africa: A Public Choice" in K. R. Hope, Sr. and B. C. Chikulo (eds.), *Corruption and Development in Africa: Lessons from Country Case Studies*, London: Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Muganda, A. A. (1999), "The Corruption Scourge in Africa: Its Causes, Impact and Control", in K. Frimpong and G. Jacques (eds.), *Corruption, Democracy and Good Governance in Africa: Essays on Accountability and Ethical Behavior*, Gaborone: Lentswe La Lesedi Publishers.
- Mulinge, M. M. and G. N. Lesetedi (1999), "The Genesis and Entrenchment of Corruption in sub-Saharan Africa: A Historical and International Contextualization" in K. Frimpong and G. Jacques (eds.), *Corruption, Democracy and Good Governance in Africa: Essays on Accountability and Ethical Behavior*, Gaborone: Lentswe La Lesedi Publishers.
- Mulinge, M. M. and G. N. Lesetedi (1998), "Interrogating Our Past: Colonialism and the Birth and Entrenchment of Corruption in sub-Saharan Africa", *African Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 3, No.2, 15-28.
- Mulinge, M. M. and M. M. Munyae (2000), "The Ethnicisation of the State and the Crisis of Development: The Kenyan Experience", *Journal of Cultural Studies*, 2 (1), 141-159.
- Nabudere, D. (1981), *Imperialism in East Africa: Imperialism and Exploitation*, London: Zed Press.
- OECD (1997), *OECD Actions to Fight Corruption*, Paris: OECD.
- Osoba, S. O. (1996), "Corruption in Nigeria: Historical Perspectives", *Review of African Political Economy*, 69, 371-386.
- Rauch, J. (1995), "Bureaucracy, Infrastructure and Economic Growth: Evidence from US Cities during the Progressive Era", *American Economic Review*, 85 (4), 968-79.
- Riley, S. P. (1998), "The Political Economy of Anti-Corruption Strategies in Africa", in M. Robinson (ed.), *Corruption and Development*, London: Frank Cass.
- Robb, G. (1992), *White-collar Crime in Modern England*, London: Cambridge University Press.
- Roberts, C. (1962), "The Sub-Imperialism of the Baganda", *Journal of African History*, 3 (3), 435-450.

- Robinson, M. (1998), "Corruption and Development: An Introduction", in M. Robinson (ed.), *Corruption and Development*, London: Frank Cass.
- Rodney, W. (1972), *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, London: Bagle-L'ouverture Publications.
- Rose-Ackerman, S. (1999), *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences, and Reform*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Rose-Ackerman, S. (1997), "The Political Economy of Corruption", in K. A. Elliot (ed), *Corruption and the Global Economy*, Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, [Ch. 2].
- Rose-Ackerman, S. and A. Stone (1996), *The Costs of Corruption for Private Business: Evidence from World Bank Surveys*, Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Shihata, F. I. (1999), "Corruption – A General Review with an Emphasis on the Role of the World Bank" in B. Rider (ed.), *Corruption: The Enemy from within*, London: Kluwer Law International.
- Singh, G. (1997), "Understanding Political Corruption in Contemporary Indian Politics", *Political Studies*, 45, 626–638.
- Stichter, S. (1982), *Migrant Labour in Kenya: Capitalism and African Response, 1895–1975*, Harlow: Longman Group Limited.
- Thompson, C. (1992), *Harvests Under Fire*, London: Zed Books.
- Thompson, D. F. (1995), *Ethics in Congress: From Individual to Institutional Corruption*, Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.
- Thompson, D. F. (1993), "Mediated Corruption: The Case of the Keating Five", *American Political Science Review*, 87 (2), 369–381.
- Tlou, T. and A. Campbell (1984), *History of Botswana*, Gaborone: Macmillan Botswana Publishing Company
- United Nations (1990), *Practical Measures Against Corruption*, New York: United Nations.
- Vandemoortele, J. (1994), "Austerity: Does it have a Human Face? A UNDP Note on Budgetary Expenditure and Recent Development in Malawi", *mimeo*.
- World Bank (1997), *The State in a Changing World: World Development Report 1997*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

