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Political corruption in sub-Saharan Africa: A comparative assessment of Kenya, Nigeria, and Zaire/Congo

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POLITICAL CORRUPTION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA:
A COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF KENYA,
NIGERIA, AND ZAIRE/CONGO

by

Kennedy Geoffrey Ondieki
Bachelor of Arts
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
1995

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

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in

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ABSTRACT

Political Corruption In Sub-Saharan Africa: 
A Comparative Assessment Of Kenya, 
Nigeria, And Zaire/Congo

by

Kennedy Geoffrey Ondieki

Dr. Mehran Tamadonfar, Examination Committee Chair 
Professor of Political Science 
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Legally, politically, academically, and culturally, 
political corruption eludes clear, precise, and 
comprehensive definition. It is a universal phenomenon 
that afflicts every political system. It means different 
things to different people. It manifests itself in a 
variety of ways in both developed and developing countries. 
It is considered morally, economically, politically, and 
socially devastating. This thesis addresses the dynamics of 
political corruption in sub-Saharan Africa and explores some 
central and perplexing questions. How is it that one of the 
most serious problems in sub-Saharan Africa receives such 
limited attention despite its magnitude, pervasiveness, and 
consequences? Is political corruption a cultural 
characteristic of the African continent? What do the
peoples of Africa think about political corruption? What are their historical, cultural, and contemporary explanations for corruption, i.e., its definitions, causes, effects, and remedies? Indeed, we cannot understand political corruption in sub-Saharan Africa outside the framework of the legacy of colonialism, neo-colonialism, the “Big Men”, tribalism and nepotism, underdevelopment, and frustrated economies. These factors are discussed in detail. Three country case studies—Kenya, Nigeria, and Zaire/Congo—are discussed to demonstrate how corruption can frustrate, impede, and paralyze all developmental efforts, administrative performance, economic growth, and social and political integration in Africa. Finally, some critical remedies are suggested to eradicate political corruption in sub-Saharan Africa.
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INTRODUCTION

Corruption is an ancient phenomenon and a universal malady that afflicts all societies and polities in one form or another. It is endemic and pervasive in politics, and hardly any is government totally immune from corruption. It is particularly rampant in post-independent Africa, and it has reached alarming proportions. It has permeated every sector of government and society as a whole; it has become part and parcel of the African lifestyle. Since it has grown in such gigantic proportions and affects all spheres of life--political, social, economic, and cultural--it is a dilemma that urgently demands the continent's serious attention.¹ According to Ronald E. Wraith and Edgar Simpkins, corruption in Africa,

flourishes as luxuriantly as the bush and weeds which it so much resembles, taking the goodness from the soil and suffocating the growth of plants which have been carefully and expensively bred and tended.²

Political corruption in politics and leadership is a common practice in contemporary African political systems. Scholars and commentators argue that through the fabric of political life runs the scarlet thread of bribery and corruption. Andreski Stanislav, in particular, states that
"venality pervades through and through the fabric of African states"¹, and like an ogre it refuses to let go of African communities, assert Kivutha Kibwana et al.⁴

In recent years, the notoriously affected countries in sub-Saharan Africa—Nigeria, Congo/Zaire, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Kenya, Malawi, and Zambia—have had numerous episodes of governmental and individual misdeeds reported in both the local and international press. These reports heavily indict the African elite, top government officials, presidents (the "Big Men"), civil servants, businessmen, and even the public with the perpetration of such corrupt activities as embezzlement, fraud, kickbacks, theft, misappropriation of funds, bribery and extortion, report padding, tribalism, and nepotism.⁵

Interestingly enough, even African leaders, the elite, officials in top government institutions/echelons, and intellectuals acknowledge the existence of such high levels of government corruption. To control or alleviate this problem—the illegal practices and immoral activities—many African states have, in conjunction with their judicial systems, formed special anti-corruption squads and created committees for national inquiries to these activities and bring the wrongdoers to justice. Unfortunately, these anti-corruption institutions are all too impotent because, all
too often, these agencies are under the thumb of the "Strong Men" and thus are controlled by those most heavily involved in the corrupt activities.

The sad fact is that political corruption keeps raging on unabated, eating the very fabric of African societies—from "top political levels to the family unit". Its impact is far-reaching resulting in underdevelopment, political unrest, economic decline, unemployment, social malaise, crime and violence, and other human miseries.

The most perplexing questions posed are: (1) How is it that one of the most serious problems in Africa remains an understudied phenomenon, despite its magnitude, pervasiveness, and consequences? (2) Why is it that for decades political corruption in Africa received such limited attention from researchers? and (3) What has been done recently to correct this crisis? The answers to these questions are hard to pin down. Perhaps Wraith and Simpkins's succinct explanation tackles this dilemma when they eloquently write that:

It is frustrating to try to write, one's phrases wrapped in a cocoon of ambiguity, about something which everybody knows, which no one dares openly acknowledge, which may lead to serious trouble if one is in the least incautious.

Indeed, the above statement extrapolates in a nutshell two reasons why scholars are disinterested in African corruption. First, the shortcomings and risks that are
involved in undertaking such a sensitive and delicate issue outweigh the benefits. Second, political corruption is widely accepted as a "necessary fact of life" in most of African nations. In fact, bribery and venality are viewed as essential ingredients that turn the wheels of government and facilitate business transactions. Therefore, these facts of life or biases have contributed to thwarting local and international researchers from studying this problem and, thus, possibly provide remedies.¹

Theoretically speaking, when the concept of corruption is placed under social science's macroscopic lens, it indeed, proves broad and complicated, because it involves various interpretations and meanings. Therefore, the answer to the question why corruption has been understudied in Africa and why many scholars for decades have been discouraged from undertaking this phenomenon runs the gamut from the risks involved to lack of information and accessibility of sources, from lack of consensus among scholars on the precise definition of corruption to lack of scientific methods relevant to studying this subject on a universal or cross-cultural basis.

However, because of the severe impact of political corruption in sub-Saharan Africa, numerous scholars, especially those who are brave enough, as well as those who place primacy on the substance over method, have in recent
years ventured to study this subject regardless of the consequences, opting to understand the phenomenon and provide remedies.

The question that arises is: Why has Africa become the "poster boy" for the study of political corruption? Simply put, why are scholars and students of corruption paying special attention to contemporary Africa? First and foremost, there is a general consensus among scholars that corruption is a global problem whose effects are far-reaching. According to Syed Hussein Alatas,

The problem with corruption is trans-systemic; that is, it inheres in all social systems--feudalism, capitalism, communism, and socialism. It affects all classes of society; all state organizations, monarchies and republics; all situations in war and peace; all age groups; both sexes; and all times, ancient, medieval, and modern.\(^{10}\)

Indeed, on a continent where corruption has "passed the alarming and entered the fatal stage"\(^{11}\); where the problem has transcended individuals and entered the state system; where the practice is so endemic, pervasive, and viewed as a fact of life; and where the whole society keeps nipping like termites at its very scarce natural resources to the extent of turning the whole continent into a basket case, clearly studying the manifestations and ramifications of this disease is, indeed, a step forward toward finding the cure.

Similarly, sub-Saharan Africa is appealing to scholars and students of political corruption for various reasons.
James Gibbs Jr., contends that for decades the primary interest of scholars and academicians focused mainly on the peoples and cultures of Africa. Perusing social science studies and the rich and varied literature on the peoples of Africa as presented by anthropologists and sociologists, one is convinced that African corruption was either insignificant or uninteresting to most scholars. However, with the end of the cold war, Africa moved to center stage, not purely because it is the "home" of human misery, but also because it is underdeveloped. 

Furthermore, most scholars generally agree that the prevalence of political corruption in the newly independent nations of Africa seriously hinders economic growth and political development. Therefore, scholars and students of corruption have not only been lured towards Africa because of its supposedly open and democratic political systems that have made it possible and conducive to study political corruption in contemporary Africa but also because it is significant to understand its nature and effects.

Additionally, it is argued that, for sub-Saharan Africa,

The past thirty years have been disastrous. The region has been beset by famine, drought, civil war, disease, population explosion, shortage of food, environmental degradation, a fall in production and exports, massive governmental indebtedness, and political corruption. Worse yet, Africa now faces severe competition from Eastern European countries for scarce international
aid. Therefore, without finding a cure for corruption, future economic decline, political unrest, poverty, human suffering, and cries for self-determination are inevitable.¹⁴

Other factors why social scientists are now interested in studying corruption in sub-Saharan Africa include: First, Africa stands highly vulnerable to government corruption compared to other developing countries¹⁵ due to political and economic instability, ineffective government institutions, particularly, the judicial system; due to lack of democratic tradition, political pluralism, and skilled manpower.

Second, Africa still remains terra incognita, to many scholars and researchers. In fact, some of Africa's "primitive" regions are to-date understudied and hence undiscovered. Most of these areas are found in the rural areas where the majority of people reside. Indeed, for decades, scholars and researchers have concentrate their energies in studying African predicaments in the urban centers especially capital cities, but with recent discovery of rural regions, researchers have began to incorporated rural and urban areas to understand Africa's problems.

Third, Africa provides lively, fresh, and juicy episodes of both petty and grand-scale corruption. These episodes run the gamut from buying a cup of coffee, lunch, drinks, to giving bribes in monetary currency to acquire
jobs or driver's licenses, to offering large kickbacks, or "percentages" to acquire business licenses or begin a factory at certain areas or locations in urban centers. Therefore, these factors have played a key role into attracting scholars, academicians, and students of political corruption to probe the ramifications of this phenomenon with the hope of understanding it, mitigating its impacts, and setting a precedent on how to study government or bureaucratic corruption.

In spite of the endeavors to study corruption in sub-Saharan Africa, social scientists still face some disturbing questions: How does one study corruption where it is said be so prevalent? Where does one draw a line between a gift and a bribe where the two phrases are often used synonymously? How does one tell corrupt acts from normal acts where laws are often unclear or mute? Which criteria are relevant and applicable to studying corruption? With these factors in mind, a thorough theoretical, conceptual, and methodological framework are of utmost importance to understanding this phenomenon.

THESIS OBJECTIVES

This thesis analyzes what Africans think about political corruption. It examines the nature of corruption, its causes, effects, and remedies. It assesses and compares
corruption in three African countries—Kenya, Nigeria, and the former Zaire. The purpose of this thesis is two-fold. One is to shed some light to understanding political corruption from an African perspective. Two is to show that, if this problem rages on unabated, it can become a deadly disease. Additionally, it is my contention that political corruption may not rank high in the minds of the African peoples who daily live with such problems as poverty, disease, civil war, hunger, tribalism, and illiteracy; nonetheless, it is a dilemma that requires the continent's special attention. Attempts to alleviate "these problems can only be hampered when citizens lack confidence in their governments and are distrustful of their officials, a situation not likely to change so long as corruption remains at its present level". This is the overriding message I hope to convey in this thesis.

The findings of this research confirm that corruption is indeed the number one problem and the major obstacle to Africa's economic growth, political development and integration, and political leadership. Therefore, it is my contention that political corruption has ruined Nigeria, the former Zaire, Kenya, and many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa. It also my assertion that, if this trend continues at its current rate and if sub-Saharan Africa falls short of sunshine remedies before the end of this century, the whole
of the African continent will be one big political and economic basket-case.

The introduction part provides a set of dimensions on the study of corruption; offers a general overview of corruption and a theoretical framework and addresses some key questions and delineates the primary objectives of this thesis.

Chapter One provides the major conceptual, and methodological framework necessary for the study of political corruption. To provide a broad and comprehensive analysis of corruption; explores both the Western and non-Western (indigenous) explanations; discusses various definitions of political corruption based on legality, public interest, public opinion, market-oriented and philosophical views; provides differences between corruption and political corruption, corruption and bribery, bribery and gift-giving, corruption and tribalism/nepotism, and political corruption and culture; and offers descriptive, prescriptive, and analytic indigenous explanations of corruption as understood by Africans. The fact that, the concept of political corruption precludes a universal definition and a continental consensus a detailed comparative analysis of this phenomenon is oftentimes unachievable and/or myopic. Therefore, I intend to provide
a precise "working" (all-African) definition to simplify the task of operationalizing this concept.

Chapter Two traces the genesis of political corruption commencing from the Biblical standpoint; Ancient and Roman medieval Rome; modern Europe and North American perspectives; to Middle-Eastern and African purview. This chapter intends to show that corruption is as old as mankind and their governments.

Chapter Three delineates the genesis and development of political corruption and discusses its causes from both external and internal perspectives. Additionally, two schools of thought (international and national) and the dependency theory are analyzed in endeavoring to search for the underlying reasons for corruption. Therefore, the causes of corruption in sub-Saharan African states are drawn from a variety of factors--the legacy of colonialism and neo-colonialism, tribalism and nepotism, the centralization of state structures, the "Big Man" syndrome, lack of state accountability and transparency, and simply due to personal avarice and greed and, of course, other physical realities.

Chapter Four examines the nuts and bolts of Africa's paternalistic and neo-tribal models of leadership that contribute to corruption. Indeed, in almost every African society, paternalism, clientalism, and tribalism still
remain the defining features of politics and leadership. Due to lack of a sense of national identity that transcends tribalism or ethnicity, current political leaders play the "tribal card" to rule and/or remain in power. Also it shows that even among some charismatic leaders—Kwame Nkrumah, Patrice Lumumba, Jomo Kenyatta, and Nelson Madikizela Mandela leadership styles and the cult of personality were/are replicas of tribal forms of leadership.

Chapter Five discusses the economic, social and political impacts of political corruption and ascertains that corruption is indeed the major impediment to development and the primary cause for sub-Saharan Africa's economic decline, political instability, and its many other manmade miseries.

Chapter Six provides three country case studies from three different regions in sub-Saharan Africa. The first one is Kenya, once Africa's shining star and according to many people a country that was destined to succeed in East Africa. Second is Nigeria, once Africa's economic powerhouse blessed with oil and a leading star in West Africa. Last is the former Zaire, a country that was blessed with natural resources including diamonds, Copper, and Iron ore that became a kleptocratic state in the midst of Central Africa. This chapter shows that, although these countries are far away from each other and have
different forms of government, one thing they share in common is high-scale political corruption.

Chapter Seven offers some feasible theoretical and practical remedies appropriate for eradicating or reducing political corruption in contemporary sub-Saharan Africa. Additionally, it provides some conclusions and findings. One of this conclusions is that, without sunshine mechanisms and measures or "a magic bullet" to control political corruption before the end of this century, sub-Saharan Africa is going to be nothing but a big basket-case.
REFERENCES


6. Ibid., p. 219.


8. Wraith and Simpkins, op. cit., p. 15.


CHAPTER 1

POLITICAL CORRUPTION: A CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

"Truth is whatever promotes your government. If something is not favorable to your country, then it isn't true and you should not publish falsehoods". --Quoted in David Lamb, *The Africans*

Research on political corruption and its causes and consequences has been lamentably insular. Studies on systemic corruption, for instance, have been limited to a handful of developed countries, specifically Great Britain and the United States. The major reason for this cultural bias has been attributed to the chronic shortage of information and/or access to the major primary sources and historical data. For decades social scientists, academicians, and especially students of political corruption have been faced with severe obstacles in undertaking this phenomenon.¹

These problems are a result of either the non-existence of adequate information and/or government redtape--data hidden by parties concerned. Consequently, any attempt to understand the nature of political corruption, its causes and its impacts, remains provincial at best and, at worst, subjective and filled with unproven theories.²

In the absence of primary sources against which to

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test and evaluate specific patterns or attributes of corruption pertinent to drawing some objective and concrete generalizations, efforts to study and understand corruption are often "guided by intuition and political expediency". Here, a cultural analogy may be appropriate: "One man's terrorist is to another a liberator" or as John Peters and Susan Welch state, "what may be corrupt to one citizen, scholar, or public official is just politics to another, or indiscretion to a third". Put simply, what some observers may call corruption may be just a normal practice.

THE MAJOR OBSTACLES TO THE STUDY OF CORRUPTION

The question is: Why is it so difficult for social scientists to study political corruption in Third World nations, specifically contemporary African governments? Robert Klitgaard probably sums it up best when he states that:

Researchers find it increasingly complex and frustrating to empirically study government corruption because the parties involved have every reason to keep data hidden and governments are reluctant to allow foreigners and even their own citizens to work on such a sensitive question. Consequently, academic debates over the toxic and tonic properties of corruption tend to rely too much upon anecdotes, hypothetical cases, and speculative linkages between corruption and the future social outcomes.

Obviously sources and accessibility are the prime obstacles that scholars face. It is Rory Miller's
contention that oftentimes the documentation on this subject has been sparse in official publications and records. Research in local archives which might uncover the lower level of politics, the bureaucracy, the judiciary, and other government institutions has commenced only in recent years. Consequently, much of the available evidence on corruption comes from the archives of foreign governments, journalists, scholars, businessmen, and travelers who at some point are forced to compromise with the endemic corruption which they encounter in Third World countries, particularly those in Africa.6

Obviously, relying heavily on Western scholars and sources introduces yet another bias in the study. However, with the present state of knowledge, these scholars probably offer one of the most fruitful ways of developing an analysis of the structure and dynamics of political corruption in post-independent Africa.7

Pertaining to corrupt government elites in Africa, and especially those in power, Kole Omotoso claims that they get away with their corruption unpublished.8 Furthermore, those who get prosecuted walk free or receive minor punishment. The primary reason why African researchers are discouraged from unearthing and publishing government corruption is xenophobia or fear of government repression. Many who brave to openly talk or write about systemic corruption often pay
with their lives. Recent examples of Nigerian poet and anti-corruption crusader Ken Saro Wiwa's public guillotining and former Kenya Minister for Foreign Affairs Robert Ouko's ghastly assassination serve as backdrops.

Other difficulties and dilemmas lie in the circumstantial nature of much of the evidence. For example, Africa did not have a radical press of the kind that exposed "Old Corruption" in early 19th century Britain. Similarly, many episodes of alleged corruption at the higher levels of government and key records are often missing, hidden, or ignored by scholars.

There is also the difficulty of drawing a line through the hazy area that lies between outright bribes and extortion on the one hand, and the relationship of clientalism, kinship, and tribal ties that characterize African political life on the other. Therefore, as long as researchers and students of corruption encounter a major problem of differentiating a bribe from a gift, or a corrupt activity from normal lifestyle, any attempt to grasp this phenomenon may blurred or deterred entirely.

In contrast, pertaining to sub-Saharan Africa, Kivutha Kibwana et al., contend that most social scientists were particularly disinterested in undertaking the study of political corruption because of the way African political systems were structured. They assert that "...prior to
1990, most African countries were either under military rule or single party governments and/or lacked adequate information or access to primary data on both foreign and local researchers.\textsuperscript{11} As a result, most of the information found about corruption in Africa relied heavily on a media that only occasionally exposed government scandal and often lacked authenticity, objectivity, and scientificity.

Another global factor that contributes to the complexity of studying political corruption includes lack of consensus among social scientists on the definition of corruption, lack of the approach and method on how to study corruption, and lack of relevance and applicability of some explanations. Specifically, due to lack of a germane cross-cultural paradigm necessary to study this phenomenon, the end result has been heated debates and disagreements among social scientists that dominated the literature of political corruption.\textsuperscript{12}

THE WESTERN AND NON-WESTERN EXPLANATIONS OF CORRUPTION

This problem is largely attributed to the scholars' political, economic, and social environments. Depending on the cultural orientation and background of a particular researcher (Western or non-Western), it is highly likely that he or she will define and explain corruption based on
his or her purview—culture and understanding. For example, what an American may see as a bribe may be a gift to an African. Similarly, what one scholar may see as behavior that constitutes corruption to another may be a normal and acceptable activity. Additionally, the interpretation or cultural connotation that one's research may attach to the concept of corruption may not necessarily be relevant or applicable to another. Indeed, where one looks depends upon where one stands.

Peter DeLeon argues that what is seen as corruption is "decidedly dependent on societal and cultural norms". Given the fact that sub-Saharan Africa comprises many diverse societies and cultures being cautious and sensitive to how we define or explain corruption is critical. DeLeon states that "What transpires in a Latin America, Middle East, or Asian nation as legitimate, excusable, or at least accepted business exchanges would be felonies in the United States". In the same vein, one can also argue that the practice of gift-giving may be interpreted by western observers as bribery and corruption while Africans may embrace and treat this practice as a normal way of life.
AFRICANS' JUSTIFICATION OF CORRUPTION

Measured by the modern standards or yardsticks, the system of government (chiefdoms) in pre-colonial Africa was deeply and pervasively corrupt just as it was during colonial and post-colonial eras. The question is, how do Africans today justify the endemic and pervasive existence of corruption? Indeed, what westerners may call moral corruption, average Africans may choose to call a parallel economy--it is not underground, it is a necessity. Ben Tahar Jelloun states that "they don't condone it, nor do they wish to live with it, but they don't confuse compensation with theft". He also notes that Africans read or hear daily of the developed world's systemic scandals and large-scale corruption, but they see corruption in their countries as small-scale--on an individual level. In developed nations it is no longer compensation for the people, it is misappropriation of large sums of monies, embezzlement, fraud, and organized crimes. Similarly, they see no correlation between their entirely small-scale and underdeveloped way of freeing up a file to save time and create jobs, and the numbered Swiss bank accounts Europeans and American politicians and businessmen open to stash payoffs for the compromises they make with parliament or congress, industrial, and even Mafia figures.
Furthermore, they are miserable and underpaid bureaucrats engaged in daily struggle so that their children, family, and relatives can have a normal lifestyle, education, and a decent life without sadness and poverty. In fact, most civil servants or bureaucrats do not see themselves as greedy and selfish but rather they just want to have their fair share. Therefore, it is perceived as entirely legitimate to cut corners and to help one's relatives and tribesmen survive. Thus, the issue of morality and ethics are non-existent.¹⁷ This, then, is how Africans justify corruption—a way of survival.

In sum, due to the lack of information, access to available data, a universal approach or traveling method relevant to studying political corruption on a cross-cultural basis, and the absence of concrete empirical data or evidence necessary to evaluate and test certain or specific variables and patterns of political corruption, attempts to draw comprehensive generalizations or explanations to this concept may be blurred and/or difficult to accomplish. Additionally, due to the lack of adequate scientific method to study this subject, the possibility of relying on anecdotes, hearsay, subjective, and biased explanations are most likely. Therefore, our lack of understanding of political corruption is brought by cultural, conceptual, and methodological frameworks.
In contrast, Charles A. Schwartz claims that although the study of political corruption has advanced in recent years in terms of its approach and method, there is yet, however, a gigantic lack of understanding on this subject on both the elite and non-elite levels. For instance, scholars still disagree a great deal about the applicability of some definitions and explanations regarding the concept of corruption. Nonetheless, Schwartz contends that today researchers use various paradigms to investigate this phenomenon and arrive at some general consensus and universal generalizations. He particularly states that social scientists have two major tasks and objectives to change the nature of inquiry from an inquisition of immoral individuals to an investigation of actual workings of corruption in the society...to apply system analysis to these workings with an eye to gaining new insights into the process of modernization and political development.18

For his part, Robert Tignor also admits that most of the literature on political corruption seeks to define the concept, its causes, its impacts, and its remedies regardless of the method—quantitative or qualitative.19 Arguing from these scholars, especially that of Syed Hussein Alatas, it is critical for researchers and students of corruption to study this subject as a "universal phenomenon" in order to clearly see how different factors or patterns of corruption when put together form a "composite whole".20 The
implication from these arguments is that if we increase our array, height and width, patterns and discourses of corruption, accommodate other cultures and their explanations, use holistic approaches, and apply multi-methodology methods such as content analysis, field work, interviews, surveys, experiments, historical comparative analysis, western and non-western viewpoints to the study of political corruption, we are highly likely to reach a universal consensus and understanding that would enable us to make comprehensive, accurate, objective, valid, reliable, and applicable generalizations of this phenomenon.

DATA COLLECTION

In researching and analyzing this thesis, I used several approaches and methods to probe and arrive at some conclusions. These are: content analysis, field research, personal interviews, and participant observation. Where possible, I conducted my project by traveling to some parts of sub-Saharan Africa—Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, and South Africa. Oftentimes, the interviews were face-to-face and the population involved journalists, lawyers, businessmen, college professors, students, civil servants, bus and taxi drivers, and the general public. The interviews were informal in that I followed no prepared schedule of questions. Instead I adopted my questions to
the interviews accordingly. In most cases, I benefitted and garnered more information during my conversations with the government workers and general public during their leisure time and social activities especially while watching soccer.

Nigeria and the former Zaire, I was unable to travel to conduct one-on-one research. Instead, I interviewed scholars and students studying and residing in the United States. I also relied heavily on content analysis, i.e., current materials such as textbooks, magazines, newspapers and journal articles.

To establish the nature of political corruption, its historical genesis, the forms in which it manifests itself in practice, its perceived causes and explanations, its political and socio-economic consequences, and its remedies, I sought data and relied heavily upon different scholarly and journalistic literatures, both Western and non-Western. I also made use of the international and national schools of thought and relied on several methods, i.e., content analysis, field study--participant observation and interviews. Most significant, I took note of what people said constituted political corruption, its causes, effects, and remedies to shed some light in understanding this subject.

Although corruption is widely observable in Africa, it is still regarded as a sensitive and delicate subject, a
topic that people are not accustomed to speaking about publicly without looking over their shoulders. A majority of Africans still prefer a "silence is golden" stance or a "don't ask, don't tell" mentality since, discussing corruption, one does so at his or her peril.

Even though corruption is an unlawful, criminal activity, it is nevertheless generally accepted as a normal way of life in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Still, discussing it openly can be incriminating. Thus, the major predicament I encountered researching this topic in Africa was a lack of straight talkers, especially among the African elites, top government officials, civil servants, and the public at large. There was a general hesitation to respond to most of my questions because of fear of government repression or the risk of being prosecuted. Worse still, the existing information on corruption or reports on national inquiries on government corruption were hardly accessible.

Therefore, due to the above dilemmas, I relied predominately upon current materials—magazines, newspapers (local and international), reports from United Nations agencies, non-governmental agencies, and some of their workers. While researching this project in Africa, sometimes I was forced to engage in bribery or the "African handshake" to access some information concerning government
documents, or for that matter to get some people, especially, the civil servants and the public to talk. The bribes ranged from cash to "nyama choma" (a leg of roasted goat meat) to beer and cigarettes. After encountering all these problems and setbacks in collecting data, I realized that one approach or method was quite inadequate to gather information in sub-Saharan Africa. I also found out that some of my prepared questionnaires were oftentimes ineffective and/or ignored by the respondents. The cardinal reason was, even within Africa, the concept of corruption means many things to different people. Thus I chose to use various methods in this study. Additionally, due to the need for a cultural explanation of political corruption, it seemed particularly important to undertake this phenomenon with as many approaches and explanations as possible to grasp what Africans think about political corruption and its cultural explanations. Besides, with such a remarkable topic, this is, of such broad magnitude, and of a variety of facets and caveats, it would be unrealistic to limit ourselves to only a single method and explanation. Therefore, I chose to use various methods in undertaking the study political corruption. Because it adds rigor, breadth, and depth to our understanding.
DEFINING POLITICAL CORRUPTION

"A concept that is boundless cannot be rationally defined".
--Franz Neuman, Behemoth, (1943:75)

The explicit significance of the above quotations is: 
it is extremely difficult to define the concept of corruption because it means different things to different people throughout the globe. Even though, the meaning of this phenomenon has many ramifications, it nonetheless, easily detected because its impacts are far-reaching and damaging.

In his preface, Robert Williams articulates that:

If you let people know that you are interested in controlling corruption in developing countries, you may find some surprising and skeptical reactions. 'Yes they may tell you that we have heard that corruption is a big problem in Third World governments. But who is to say a given act is actually corrupt? Maybe it is corrupt in your culture, but not theirs. And might not corruption play a useful role in developing societies? Doesn't it grease the wheels of commerce, build political coalitions, and help organizations overcome red tape? Besides what can you do or anyone else do about corruption? Like sin, it's everywhere.'

These rhetorical questions together, however, spawn definitional debate among social scientists and often dominate the literature of political corruption.

Legally, academically, politically, and culturally, corruption eludes clear definition. Corruption, like obscenity or democracy may mean different things to different people, depending on their individual,
ideological, methodological, and cultural or contextual viewpoints.\textsuperscript{3} According to Ernest Harsch, the term corruption "conjures up certain images but when closely examined it involves a wide spectrum of practices, of varying forms and significancies".\textsuperscript{4} In the same vein, Robert Williams claims that corruption "resists easy measurement and simple interpretation".\textsuperscript{5} Therefore, under no circumstances could corruption be studied in isolation of politics and power, political institutions and economic resources, and class and society.

Generally speaking, defining corruption either from a Western or non-Western context can be very difficult or a "tedious and dispiriting task".\textsuperscript{6} Any significant attempts to search for a comprehensive and all-embracing explanation is oftentimes myopic. Perhaps Robin Theobald's explanation captures this dilemma when he graphically writes that:

Corruption like many other forms of behavior when placed under the scrutiny of social science lens proves to be an elusive and complex phenomenon: in fact the more one examines it the more difficult it becomes to separate corruption from other forms of social exchange. The task of definition is not made easier by the fact that corruption by its very nature, is inseparable from questions of public morality and morality in general. This has sometimes excited a tendency to condemn which has impeded objective analysis. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that some writers, whilst dealing with the phenomenon in some detail, have deliberately avoided it.\textsuperscript{7}
This means that the deeper researchers probe this phenomenon, the more confusing and complicated it gets. Furthermore, it is highly likely that researchers may overlook or ignore the essential components of corruption.

Under these conditions, many scholars and students of corruption may argue that attempting an all-embracing definition of the concept of political corruption is indeed impossible, if not unrealistic. Unfortunately, those who do attempt to provide a precise universal definition oftentimes limit their focus and approach to certain patterns of corrupt behavior to arrive at a consensus. However, scholars who venture into this narrow purview fail to acknowledge that the concept of corruption is so broad and ambiguous and that it "assumes many different forms, levels, magnitudes, and frequencies" and is, therefore, difficult to pin down.

If this assertion is true—that corruption manifests itself in many sizes and shapes, the questions are: Would such an ambiguous concept as corruption be understood in the absence of a universal definition? Would it be practical to clearly define corruption without falling into conceptual problems? The answers to these questions are emphatically "no". Given the manifestations and ramifications of corruption, any endeavor to search for a cross-cultural definition would indeed lead to conceptual traps and also
invoke some serious ethnocentric labels. Furthermore, it would be unprecedented and insensitive for researchers to use a Western notion to explain, analyze, and measure corruption in Third World countries, specifically in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, it would also be absolutely impossible to study, operationalize, analyze, and understand political corruption without some general consensus on what constitutes corruption.

This chapter addresses five major questions: (1) What is corruption? (2) What is the difference between corruption and political corruption? (3) What type of behavior constitutes corruption? (4) How do Africans view/think about corruption? and (5) What kinds of behavior do they regard as corrupt? But, before discussing what peoples of Africa understand about corruption, it is important foremost to explore the different definitions of corruption based on legal and moral grounds, on public interest and public opinion viewpoints, and on economic and classical philosophy.

It is John G. Peters and Susan Welch's contention that no matter what aspect of behavior or political system is examined, the study of systemic or government corruption is still hampered by the lack of an adequate definition. For example, what may be "corrupt" to one person or government official, may just be "normal behavior" to another.
Equally significant, the cliche "one man's meat is another man's poison" or "one man's terrorist is to another a liberator" may be worn-out, but together they nonetheless illustrate how notoriously difficult it gets to define the concept of corruption or to separate corrupt from non-corrupt behavior in a diversified world.

According to Arnold J. Heidenheimer, any analysis of political corruption must confront the thorny issue of defining what is meant by the term. Elaine R. Johansen asserts that there has been a tremendous attempt to catalogue and delineate the identifying characteristics of political corruption, but to date no generally agreed upon definition has been achieved. In contrast, however, Walter Little and Eduardo Posada-Carbo contend that for all the moral indignation corruption generates, political corruption should be distinguished from crimes such as theft, burglary, and embezzlement. They maintain that while several forms of corruption may well involve criminality, a definition that is too "narrowly based on legal codes sacrifices consideration of corruption's more subtle and nebulous aspects".

For example, often political corruption is characterized by dual and contradictory elements. When engaging in bribes and backhanders, political officials and businesses may be fulfilling their legitimate functions.
The bribe may be a byproduct of the fulfillment of an official process, such as in the case of business licenses. In other cases, such as the use of "sweeteners" (tax incentives) by governments to attract investments in a given region or industry, the distinction between such inducements, which are claimed to be legitimate, and bribery, which is seen as corrupt, is sometimes hazy. Such overlaps have led some analysts to distinguish between black, white, and gray forms of corruption based on how public opinion perceives them. It is evident, for example, that members of the United States congress in Washington D.C. compete in a "rat-race" for pork-barrel projects for their states/constituencies and lobby Congress to offer tax incentives to businessmen investing in rundown inner-cities and crime ridden neighborhoods. The question is: Does this behavior constitute corruption? Put simply, under what category of corrupt behavior would this practice of logrolling fall?

Heidenheimer identifies three types of corruption—Black, Gray, and White. He labels an action ‘Black corruption’ which a majority consensus of both elite and mass opinion would condemn and would want see punished on grounds of principle. ‘Grey corruption’ indicates that some element, usually elites, may want to see the action punished, others not and majority may well be ambiguous. ‘White corruption’ signifies that the majority of both elite and mass opinion probably would not vigorously support an attempt to punish a form of corruption that they regard tolerable.
It is quite likely that the behavior/actions of the U.S. legislators who put their states' interests above those of the country would fall under the category of grey corruption.

LEGAL, PUBLIC INTEREST, PUBLIC OPINION, ECONOMIC, AND PHILOSOPHICAL

What is corruption? According to Ernest Harsch, corruption includes all practices or behavior that society identifies, labels, or condemns as being corrupt. These practices may include such activities as "outright theft, embezzlement of funds or other appropriations of state property, nepotism and the granting of favors to personal acquaintances, and the abuse of public authority and positions to exact payment and privileges". Even with clear and succinct behaviors and practices, evidently, explaining corruption still remains notoriously complex.

Numerous observers define corruption in different ways based on legality, public interest, public opinion, market-oriented principles, and philosophical viewpoints. According to Stephen Ellis, corruption is "the use of official position or authority for purposes of personal advantages". George Benson defines it as the "illegitimate use of public power for private gain". H. A. Brasz, on the
other hand, asserts that corruption is the "arbitrary use of power". For his part, Stanislav Andreski writes that corruption "designates the practice of using the power of office for making private gains in breach of laws and regulations nominally in force". M. McMullan states that "a public official is corrupt if he accepts money or money's worth for doing something that he is under a duty to do anyway or one that he is under a duty not to do, or to exercise a legitimate discretion for improper reasons". Joseph S. Nye defines corruption as "behavior which deviates from the formal duties of public role (elective or appointive) because of private-regarding (personal, close family, private clique) wealth or status gains: or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence". In the same vein, D.H. Bayley argues that corruption, while tied to the act of bribery in a general term, covers the "misuse of authority as a result of considerations of personal gain, which need not be monetary". For example, Richard Nixon's Watergate scandal and Ronald Reagan's Iran-Contra Affairs serve as backdrops to illustrate how United States presidentsmisused their executive authority, not purely to enrich themselves, but largely for other purposes—re-election in the case of Nixon and power and popularity for Reagan. In short, one can argue that those individuals who orchestrated the
Watergate and Iran-Contra scandals, including of course the two presidents, may not have benefitted financially, but the desire to see the Republican Party win election and stay in power or control the government's course of action was worthwhile.

Definitions of corruption based on the public interest perspective are significant because they essentially broaden the range of behavior considered corrupt. For instance, when a public officeholder accepts illegal rewards to give favors to donors, he or she threatens and damages the public interest and violates the public trust. According to Arnold A. Rogow and H. D. Lasswell,

A corrupt act violates responsibility towards at least one system of public or civic order and is, in fact, incompatible with (destructive of) any such system. A system of public or civic order exalts common interest over special interest; violations of common interest for special advantage are corrupt.23

Equally important is the definition of corruption based on public opinion that suggests that a political behavior is corrupt when the weight of public opinion determines it so.24 However, Peters and Welch assert that the conception of political corruption harbors similar limitations like public interest. Whose opinion carries much weight? Is it that of the elites, the rich and powerful, or the masses—the poor and powerless? Indeed, the elites' opinions are often key in almost all developed and developing countries. But one
cannot underestimate the power of the masses. As St. Paul once said in his poem, *DESIDERATA*, the masses and "even the dull and ignorant; they too have their story". Nonetheless, Peters and Welch contend studies show that when it comes to certain issues, public sentiment can be either ambiguous or divided among the public and even among the political elites in their assessment of appropriate standards of public conduct. Whatever the case may be, opinions of the elites often take precedent.

The market-oriented definition of corruption, on the other hand, seeks to extrapolate corruption based purely on economic theory. Economist Susan Rose-Ackerman defines corruption "as an allocative mechanism for scarce resources". In the same vein, Nathaniel Leff states that "corruption is an extra-legal institution used by individuals or groups to gain influence over the actions of the bureaucracy. As such, the existence of corruption per se indicates only that these groups participate in the decision-making process to a greater extent than would otherwise be the case".

For his part, Jacob van Klaveren asserts:

Thus, we will conceive of corruption in terms of a civil servant who regards his public office as a business, the income of which he will, in the extreme case, seek to maximize. The office then becomes a maximizing unit. The size of his income does not depend on an ethical evaluation of his usefulness for the common good but precisely upon the market situation and
his talents for finding the point of maximal gain on
the public demand curve.\textsuperscript{29}

Also, Robert Tilman agrees that:

Corruption...involves a shift from a mandatory pricing
model to a free-market model. The centralized
allocative mechanism, which is the ideal of modern
bureaucracy, may break down in the face of serious
disequilibrium between supply and demand. Clients may
decide that it is worthwhile to risk the known
sanctions and pay the higher costs in order to be
assured of receiving the desired benefits. When this
happens, bureaucracy ceases to be patterned after the
mandatory market and takes on the characteristics of
the free market.\textsuperscript{30}

Clearly, the economic approach or framework to corruption is
pertinent because it assists us in assessing the economic
impact of corruption in any given political system.

Finally, there is also the classical philosophical
explanation of "corruption of the body politic" as is
understood by Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, Thucydides, Thomas
Hobbes, and Niccolo Machiavelli. These theorists, in
particular, Niccolo Machiavelli, define corruption as:

The moral incapacity of citizens to make reasonably
disinterested commitments to actions, symbols and
institutions which benefit the substantive common
welfare. This extensive demise of loyalty to the
commonwealth comes from the interaction of human nature
with systematic inequality of wealth, power and status.
The corruption of the polity results in certain
identifiable patterns of political conflicts and
competition. The central feature of these patterns is
the emergence of quasi-governmental factions and an
increasingly polarized class system. The politics of
the factions leads to an undermining of the efficacy of
the basic political structures of the society and the
emergence of systematic corruption in all aspects of
political life.\textsuperscript{31}
In essence, these political theorists assert that corruption involves all the evils of a society and especially behavior that is immoral—inequality, placing private interest over public interest, and lack of virtue and justice that results in the moral disorder of societies and the decay of political systems.32

Therefore, according to the definitions presented above by different scholars, academicians, and theorists, it is safe to say that all illegitimate or unethical uses of government offices and public resources, misuse/abuse of power for private or selfish motives—economic, social, political, cultural, and ideological—at the expense of the public, can be regarded as corrupt behavior or practices. Indeed, no matter how one looks at corruption, its characteristics or features are the same in both developed and developing nations. The only difference is how it is practiced, how it is viewed, and what effects it has on a society.

Padhy Krushna Singh argues that in developed nations, specifically the United States, the possession of wealth was for decades a common road for political power and influence. In contrast, in developing countries, especially contemporary Africa the reverse is true, i.e., politics has become the sure path to wealth.33 The misuse of public
offices for personal enrichment has become the norm, not the exception, in post-independence Africa.

It is clearly argued that most African elites seek political offices not necessarily because they want to serve the public, but purely because of the economic and personal factors. This is because political office/power more often than not ensure automatic access to public or scarce resources and provides immediate avenues to personal enrichment. For his part, Samuel P. Huntington contends that when politics or political power is used for economic reasons, i.e., to promote a few persons' selfish ends at the expense of public good, "political values and institutions" or ethics become secondary and this by itself constitutes political corruption.

In distinguishing corruption from political corruption, Peter DeLeon and Le Vine Victor state that the latter is a "cooperative form of unsanctioned, usually condemned policy influence for some type of significant personal gain, in which the currency could be economic, social, political, or ideological remuneration". V.O. Key, Jr., claims that political corruption is an intentional act and neglecting to perform one's political duties.

Singh argues that, political corruption is indeed deliberate and intentional because political actors choose to neglect to perform their political duties as is required.
of them and instead perform these duties only after receiving bribes and kickbacks. For example, a political office is misused when business licenses, work permits, government contracts, allocation of public projects, hiring government employees, or providing quotas and other favors that stand to benefit a few to the highest bidder while deliberately ignoring those who meet the necessary qualifications or standards. Therefore, political corruption can assume different shapes and dimensions, *quid pro quo* being the obvious.\(^3\)

Theodore J. Lowi, on the other hand, identifies two types of political corruption. The first is Big Corruption (Big C) and the second is little corruption (little C). While the former is "corruption that contributes to the decomposition, dissolution, or disorientation of the constitution", the latter "is corruption that reflects or contributes to individual moral depravity". Lowi maintains that Big C puts the state at risk while little C is the most feared corruption of all, because it involves the public.\(^3\)

In addition, John A. Gardiner identifies three categories of political corruption. The first is non-feasance (failing to perform a required duty at all); second is malfeasance (the commission of some act which is positively unlawful); and third is misfeasance (the improper
performance of some act a person can properly do)." Evidently, it is argued that most political leaders, the elites, and top civil servants in sub-Saharan Africa are guilty of all three types of political corruption.

THE INDIGENOUS DEFINITIONS OF CORRUPTION

Clearly, just as the concept of political corruption is perceived and defined in various ways among Westerners, the same thing applies to non-Westerners, particularly among indigenous Africans. Indeed, it is true among Africans that behavior that usually benefits a few people "punishes" the majority, causes havoc, leads to slicing foreign aid, civil war, death, hunger, disease, tribalism, nepotism, genderism, clientalism, dictatorship, unemployment, low living standards, sin, etc. can be regarded as corrupt activities.

In 1994, Kenyan scholars conducted a study on political corruption, entitled The Anatomy of Political Corruption: Legal, Political and Socio-Economic Perspectives. In their inquiry, they asked the Kenyan public "What comes immediately in your mind when the word corruption is mentioned?" The following is a list of responses:

Money, government officers, unfair deals, theft, bribery, tribalism, Kenya police, underpaid staff, use of position to get rich, evil, mismanagement of funds, bad feeling, Indians, rich get richer, denial of one's rights, fear, injustice, TKK (Toa Kitu Kidogo--give out something small), civil war, no development, annoyed, irresponsibility, dishonesty, helplessness,
discrimination, oppression, no money nothing happens, unsatisfied human rights, rotten society, surprised, easy way out, damaging, unorthodox ways, unlawful ways, favoritism, financial experts, malpractice, destruction, disagreement, Kamlesh Pattni, immorality, fraud, deprivation, government not managing economy and resources, political instability, illegal, suffering, cheating, sinful, unfaithful, and indecency.40

The above responses, although exclusively applying to Kenya, are, however, inclusively applicable in part across the African continent and especially within many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. These responses show that the public attaches many things to the concept of corruption. In fact, it is not uncommon to find most Africans equating corruption to leaders like Mobutu Sese Seko, General Sani Abacha, Daniel arap Moi, Paul Biya, Omar Bongo, Charles Taylor, Yoweri Museveni, and former dictators such as Marshall Idi Amin Dada, Jean Bokasa, Babangida, or Pik Botha of South Africa during apartheid, and even to certain tribes—Kikuyu, Kalenjin, Zulu, Xhosa, Asmaran, Yoruba, Igbo, Gbandolite, and even to some foreigners—the British, French, Portuguese, Italian, Germans, Belgians (the former colonial masters) or to the indigenous Indian populations and even Americans. Depending on which group of people the question about corruption is directed/addressed to, there are as many and different response as there are peoples and tribes.

However, as Kivutha Kibwana et al assert, the responses can be categorized in a number of ways: those that identify
various perpetrators of corrupt activities in the form of institutions, departments, professions and individuals; those that identify specific aspects perceived as smacking of corruption—destruction, suffering etc.; and those that are a reflection of public outrage and desperation generated by the impact of corruption. These can be described as attitudinal definitions.41

A WORKING DEFINITION OF POLITICAL CORRUPTION

Surely, there is no clear-cut definition as to what political corruption means, nor can one single definition based on legality, public interest, public opinion, economics, and philosophy pin down the concept of corruption. But for the purpose of this study, I define political corruption as the use of political power and office in ways that are geared to some individual or collective self-interest that are illegal and/or considered corrupt, improper, or self-serving. Perhaps Syed Hussein Alatas' inclusive and comprehensive characteristics of what constitute corrupt acts sum it up well when he concludes that they include,

A betrayal of trust; deception of a public body, private institution or society at large; deliberate subordination of common interests to specific interests; secrecy of execution except in situations which allow powerful individuals or those under their protection to dispense with it; involvement of more
than one person or party; the presence of mutual obligations and benefits in pecuniary or other forms; the focusing of actions on those who want definite decisions and those who can influence them; the attempt to camouflage the corrupt act by form of lawful justification; and the expression of a contradictory dual function by the committing of the act. Alatas goes on to typologize corruption in seven distinct types—transactive, extortive, defensive, investive, nepotistic, autogenic, and supportive. He writes:

The transactive type refers to the mutual arrangement between the donor and the recipient to the advantage of an activity pursued by both parties. This normally involves business and government, or the public and government. The extortive type is the kind where the donor is compelled to bribe in order to avoid harm being inflicted upon his person, his interest, or upon those persons or things dear to him, defensive corruption in the behavior of the victim of extortive corruption. His corruption is in self-defense. Investive corruption involves the offer of goods or services without any direct link to a particular favor, but in anticipation of future occasions when the favor will be required. Nepotistic corruption, or nepotism, is the unjustified appointment or other forms, violating the norms and rules of the undertaking. Autogenic corruption is a form involving only the person himself, e.g., where a person makes fraudulent claims with everything properly accounted for. Supportive corruption does not directly involve money or any other immediate returns, but describes corrupt action undertaken to protect and strengthen the existing corruption.

Perhaps Alatas' above schema offers a clear definition of corruption that is neither rule-bound nor tied to a society's prevailing moral conventions or norms, but rather provides the most comprehensive analysis of this phenomenon. In an African context, therefore, it is clear that what has
been offered as corruption is an all-pervasive syndrome that resembles one or all of the forms discussed above. Corruption is an act or omission perpetuated by an individual or group of individuals which goes against the legitimate expectations and hence the interests of society. Such acts or omissions are not confined to the holders of public office.45

Indeed, corruption takes place in all spheres of human endeavor—in government offices, corporate organizations, private institutions, and daily lives. Political corruption can be both small- and big-scale, primitive or sophisticated. In contemporary Africa, this phenomenon has become a way of life, a common culture, or a continent-wide characteristic. This disease continues to have a strong grip in almost every African society and eats into its very fabric. As Kibwana et al argue, when corruption becomes a cancerous disease, the whole society is encapsulated and then holds the social fabric in ransom.46 It is with this holistic context—Western and non-Western—that I define and discuss political corruption.

CORRUPTION AND VERSUS POLITICAL CORRUPTION

But to distinguish further the concept of corruption and political corruption, it is imperative to turn to the differences between these two concepts. Although outwardly
the two appear to be synonymous, corruption is more comprehensive, having wider and broader connotations and ramifications. As discussed above, corruption involves all misuse of public office for selfish motives at the expense of the general public. For example, civil servants who use their office power to obtain extra income from the public are involved in corruption. Corruption, therefore, is the perversion of power, the violation of civic order, a breach of trust, an illegal behavior that exalts private interests over public interest. It can be either administratively, socially, or judicially-oriented, or business and political in nature.

Political corruption, on the other hand, is a narrower term and refers mainly to the abuse of power by political actors seeking to promote their own ends—enrichment. It is an illegitimate way of using political power for securing pecuniary or other advantages directly or indirectly either for oneself or for those in whom one is interested. Put simply, it is a trade of public interest for private gain.

To put this into perspective, if a political leader, a parliamentarian, a judge, a military general/admiral, or a mayor uses his or her political authority to benefit or enrich himself or herself or family, clan, or tribe without regard to others or in breach of a contract/trust, then this is referred to as political corruption. Unfortunately, this
tends to be the trend in almost all sub-Saharan African nations. Throughout Africa political leaders or elites are first and foremost interested in lining their pockets at the expense of the public. In addition, African leaders are, above all, loyal to their respective constituencies and most of all tend to serve their tribes first before service to the public or country. Most of their daily undertakings and decision-making is influenced by special ethnic interests. They demand bribes or kickbacks for their duties and often times the highest bidder gets the government's scarce goods and services, including government contracts.

POLITICAL CORRUPTION VERSUS BRIBERY

While political corruption is an inducement to commit a violation of duty $^5$, bribery, on the other hand, is a price, reward, gift, or favor bestowed or promised with a view to pervert the judgment or corrupt the conduct especially of a person in a position of trust.$^6$ Bribery whose currency is money, often sways and influences the judgment or decisions of the receiver or bribe taker--a political actor, judge, legislator, civil servant, voter, or witness. This kind of betrayal of trust is what V. O. Key. Jr., calls a cold-blooded commercial transaction.$^7$

John Noonan, Jr., on the other hand argues that bribes are ancient, universal and may arise from larger concepts of
reciprocity or the practice of gift-giving. Under this condition, the definition of a bribe would very much depend upon cultural understanding, that is, how people of a particular culture view bribes, and what criterion they use to distinguish bribes from genuine gifts. Bribes can be overt or covert in nature and can be disguised as businesses or loans. Additionally, they can be treated as voluntary gifts offered in good will or "soft" tokens/monies. Whatever the case may be, bribes are associated with the practice of quid pro quo (you scratch my back, and I scratch yours).55

In contrast, Daniel H. Lowenstern contends that equating bribes with quid pro quo is being unrealistic. He states that bribes take many shapes and come in different sizes when associated with political corruption. He defines bribery as "an explicit exchange of a specific benefit for a specific official action (or inaction)".56 He maintains that bribes are an exchange of "anything of value", e.g., campaign contribution, endorsement, agreement not to run, logrolling, and kickbacks. He concludes that "...distinguishing of bribes from non-bribes requires the application of more general standards distinguishing corrupt official conduct from proper conduct".57
In Africa, bribes are viewed as another source of supplementing meager government wages. Among the public, bribe-giving is the only sure avenue to acquire scarce government goods and services, i.e., business licenses, jobs, passports, scholarships, housing, farming equipment, and government contracts/projects. Wahome Mutahi states that, if there are bribes to be paid to get to heaven, Kenyans will bribe St. Paul at the gate to jump the queue. Everywhere in Africa, without a "handshake", many things may be unreachable and unattainable. The implication from this argument is that in Africa, bribery and corruption rule the day and are seen as politically correct.58

By no means, however, is political corruption synonymous with bribery. The two concepts are intimately linked together, but they are not inseparable. The latter is narrower, more direct, and less subtle.59 For instance, a person bribed is a person corrupted, but a person may be corrupt without taking recourse to bribery. In fact, political corruption can and does take place without even a tendency for personal gain. For example, the Watergate scandal—the criminal act of breaking into the Democratic headquarters during Richard Nixon's presidency—was not necessarily engineered for personal/monetary gain, but the need for the re-election of a Republican president for a
second term drove the Republican "Neanderthals" (the strong men) into committing this crime.

Furthermore, a person having an interest in a certain corporation may approach a parliamentarian and lure him to vote on a matter that may clearly be harmful to the public interest but beneficial to the corporation. If the bargain is accomplished, then this is unmistakably a case of bribery and the actions involved are also political corruption. In the same vein, if a parliamentarian uses his political power to demand bribes prior to voting for a certain bill, he is clearly disregarding his public duty for the sake of personal reasons. Under this circumstance, that parliamentarian or government official is involved in both bribery and political corruption. The term "auto corruption" clearly distinguishes political corruption from bribery. Therefore, political corruption, in the widest sense of the word, includes both "bribery and auto-corruption" and may be defined as an intentional misperformance or neglect of a recognized duty or unwarranted exercise of power with the motive of gaining some advantage more or less directly personal.

BRIBERY VERSUS GIFT-GIVING

The concepts of bribes and gifts are used somewhat separately and differently in the Western countries. But in
non-Western nations, especially African, the two are used indistinguishably because, for decades, the former was absent in the vocabulary. Generally speaking, this is a true national epic in Africa that can be traced back for centuries. Even social scientists, especially anthropologists who study non-Western societies, Africa included, prefer not to use the term "bribe", especially in those "primitive" societies in which offerings to the gods are a common practice or where the exchange of gifts among people--families, clans, or tribes--is viewed as an obligation that symbolizes gratitude, friendship, generosity, and reciprocity.

Thus anthropologists refrain from applying the modern concept judgmentally for to do so would be ethnocentric and violate their sense of cultural relativism. In fact, even the famous anthropologist, Marcel Mauss, in his book, The Gift, does not use the term "bribe" but instead calls all exchanges "gifts". Indeed, African societies strongly regard the practice of exchanging gifts in high esteem. They also view the practice of giving gifts to others as an unspoken obligation that is continuous in time of peace or turmoil, in health or sickness, in wealth or in poverty.

Marjorie Shostak states that among the primitive !Kung San--hunters and gathers in Africa, "giving gifts is a fairly formal affair or practice, and people remember
clearly who gave what to whom when". The !Kung San are undoubtedly fond of exchanging gifts because it is a reciprocal practice that is passed on to succeeding generations. Although the !Kung San are the only group that practice hunting and gathering for survival, the practice of gift-giving is nonetheless a continent-wide phenomenon that is also practiced by almost all African societies.

The cultural importance of reciprocal giving is not limited to Africa. Marcel Mauss reported similar practices among cultures in Melanesia, North America, and South America. He states that:

What they exchange is not exclusively goods and wealth, real and personal property, and things of economic value. They exchange rather courtesies, entertainment, ritual, military assistance, women, children, dances, and feasts....

Although these presentations and counter-presentations take place under a voluntary guise, they are nonetheless strictly obligatory, and failure to comply often leads to open warfare or conflict.

In Africa, gifts are not necessarily equivalent to bribes. Gift-giving is a normal practice that dates back many years and has a strong symbolic meaning—a sign of respect to the elders, especially the chief; a token of generosity and service to others, especially those in need; and a gesture of friendship, "I come not for war, but for peace". However, this practice began to be abused, misused,
and exploited with the introduction of monetary currencies that replaced the long tradition of barter trade. Also, because it is easy to demand bribes in terms of money, it is difficult to detect or identify bribe-givers and bribe-takers.

The practice of offering gifts has been misconstrued or misinterpreted to mean bribes. Undoubtedly, this labeling is a Western perception. Surely, Christopher Clapham argues that, whereas a Westerner may regard the practice of gift-giving as outright bribery, an African may see as genuine the exchange of gifts as a normal lifestyle and a continuation of traditional practice. He maintains that corruption makes no sense because there is no clear distinction between gifts and bribery. Where do gifts end and bribes (corruption) start? Pertaining to political leaders, he writes, "There is no embezzlement because the ruler's personal income is the same as the government revenue, no nepotism because there is no criterion for appointment to office apart from the ruler's favor".

It is Tahar Ben Jelloun's assertion that most African leaders and civil servants take part in corruption, not because they think it is illegal, but what Westerners may define as corruption or bribery, Africans view as only a subtle way of recouping what is theirs. Others think that without "cutting corners" (accepting bribes), it is
extremely hard to be better off if one is honest. Additionally, some argue that "saints or heroes" are never rewarded, but "flexible" officers are those who see their opportunities and take them and create the need to be sought after by the public for "connections" (favors).  

Contrary to Clapham and Jelloun, there is a general consensus among indigenous African societies that excessive demand for "gifts" (bribes), especially for free government services, constitutes corruption. Additionally, excessive practice of extortion by government officials for baksheesh or dash or kitu kidogo (something small) or "speed money" for state goods and services and other favors is seen as daylight bribery and corruption, although some accept them in the guise of gifts—a sign of gratitude.

In Africa, being overly selfish, greedy, tribalistic, nepotistic, or for that matter giving favors to friends, relatives, and tribesmen in terms of government contracts, jobs, promotions, loans, and business licenses purely on an ascriptive basis rather than on merit, i.e., those with qualifications, education, experience, skills or expertise, is definitely considered as Magendo, illicit, and corruption. Indeed, this practice is quite common in almost all African countries.

Similarly, the practice of using public office and/or economic or social status to influence decision-making in
parliament or other institutions of decision-making for the sake of creating opportunities for one's constituency, i.e., region or province, and to implement strategies that would generate/bring better living conditions, infrastructure, schools, hospitals, sanitation systems, and housing or for that matter the economic, social, and political development at the expense of others is regarded as illegal behavior that constitutes corruption.

Furthermore, blatant imbalance in the distribution of offices, privileges, goods, and services among tribal groupings is seen as corruption. The fact that the ruling tribe often times takes all, controls all, and has all explains why there is high-scale corruption to win favors from those tribes in power or to penetrate roadblocks to resources and power. In short, corruption in Africa includes all kinds of practices, legal or illegal, that stand to benefit only a few individuals, clans, or tribes who are strategically, economically, and politically positioned within government institutions and agencies, especially within the parastatals—government owned and/or subsidized agencies—Kenya Airways (KQ), Kenya Railways Corporation (KTC), Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA), and Kenya Power and Light Corporation (KPLC) to name a few.

But in Africa, like other Third World regions, where people are used to the practice of looking for "connections"
(middlemen or go-betweens) for scarce goods and services and favors, it would be foolishness to do otherwise; where it is normal conduct to do business behind dirty corridors covertly or clandestinely, it would be foolish to do otherwise; where government officers can get rich and be poverty free, "taxing" patients, clients, or the public is the only way out; where the public is willing to grease the palm of officers to jump queues or acquire a favor, it would be unreasonable to not follow suit or it would be suicidal to do otherwise.\textsuperscript{71}

Throughout Africa, due to the severe problems of poverty, hunger, drought, famine, population explosion, and scarcity of natural resources (in many areas), being "flexible" or "adapting" to a given situation is an essential key to survival. The public for their part looks for someone to intervene in order to pick up a document from a government office. In this sense, some officers tend to think that it is reasonable to be "paid" below the tables or be bribed for rendering their duties and services to the public. Others also justify these illicit activities as a way of contributing to a climate of "national solidarity."\textsuperscript{72} According to Jelloun, "corruption is a supplementary tax in disguise. Everyone goes along with it...."\textsuperscript{73} Indeed, Jelloun asserts that "Poverty is not always a good adviser. It pushes people to break the law, steal, swindle, and lie".\textsuperscript{74}
It is true among Africans that if it does not "rain" people will fight and starve because the bluer the sky, the emptier the pockets.\textsuperscript{75} This implies that when it rains, the farmer's crops germinate, he is paid, and may require farming equipment, fertilizer, or a loan from the government. But before acquiring his needs, he will "pay" (bribe) government officers for their services and in the end everyone is happy.

A senior government officer advising a junior has this to say:

The cost of living is going up. There is nothing we can do about it. You have to adapt. Everyone knows that most salaries are symbolic. The state knows it, just as it knows that people have ways to compensate for what they lack. It closes its eyes. It has to, otherwise there would be a revolution. Citizens participate in whatever ways that are available to them to fill the gap. It's normal practice. It's a national consensus, a balancing mechanism. The whole trick is to do it discreetly, even elegantly if possible.\textsuperscript{75}

In the African idiom, corruption is also equated with being "fat", implying that "fat" people extract from the "thin" people to maintain their rotund stomachs. Indeed, in walking through the corridors and government offices, one can quickly detect and discern the "fat cats" by their well-nourished bellies, while the bone-thin masses queue in the hallways of government offices waiting indefinitely to be provided with government goods and services--birth certificates, licenses, passports, farming equipment,
identification cards, permits, employment benefits, water, electricity, housing, loans, social security, medical treatment, and registration of businesses to name a few. The fact of the matter is that, only those who are able to grease the palms of the government officials and the civil servants expect to receive these services.

Perhaps the story of a fat and a thin man that is often repeated throughout Africa during hunger, famine, and starvation is worth mentioning:

'You should be ashamed of yourself', said the fat man to the thin man. 'If a foreigner saw you before he saw anyone else he would think there was a famine here'. 'And if he saw you next', replied the thin man, he would know the reason for famine'.

In sum, according to Africans, corruption is, therefore, "eating" too much from one's office or job; it is skimming and "taxing" or extorting too much from the poor public; it is skimming from government institutions and foreign aid assistance; it is being too greedy and too "fat"; it is an act of demanding money behind dirty corridors, bars, and streets; it is the refusal to accept traditional gifts— a goat, beads, a basket full of corn flour, a hand-made rug or other things that are valuable, but without monetary value; it is also refusing to accept small bribes for a roasted leg of goat meat, a couple of beers and brandies holding out for more as some usually do. Worse still, government officers
are regarded as corrupt if they fail to deliver the promised services or favors after receiving bribes.
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CHAPTER 2

POLITICAL CORRUPTION: A HISTORICAL SURVEY

"Old and corrupted nations cannot be governed
On the same principles with those [young nations]
Which are simple and virtuous".
--Napoleon I (1769-1821)

"In corrupt Governments the Place is given for
the sake of the Man; in good ones the Man is
chosen for the sake of the Place".
--George Savile (1633-1695)

"Corruption is like the garbage.
It has to be removed daily".
--Ignacio Pichardo Paraza,
Controller-General of Mexico (1987)

For decades, the existence of government corruption
has been regarded as a "normal" practice in almost all
political systems and societies. As Samuel Huntington
asserts, corruption is highly likely to be found in all
bureaucratic institutions in all periods of political
development, although the degree and magnitude varies
significantly among societies. Corruption is "obviously
more common in some societies than others and more common in
some time in the evolution of a society than at other
times".

Obviously, there is prima facie evidence that attests to
the fact that corruption was at one time or another
widespread in the Western world in ancient, medieval, and
modern periods. For instance, corruption was more common in Great Britain in the 18th century than in the 17th and 20th centuries. The practice was also more common in the United States in the 19th century than in the 18th and 20th centuries. Basically, during the Industrial Revolution, higher patterns of corrupt behavior were reported in Western industrialized nations, especially Great Britain and the United States.³

Historically, corruption was a normal practice in Oriental and Occidental societies during ancient and medieval periods.⁴ Furthermore, in many Asian, Middle Eastern, and African countries, corruption was a common practice. Debates that suggest that during early periods of history mankind was pure and incorrupt is a travesty, much like sweeping dirt under the rug. To assert that precolonial African societies were completely untainted by corrupt behavior would be simply untrue.

CORRUPTION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

For example, in ancient Egyptian, Babylonian and Hebrew societies judges received bribes while performing their required public duties.⁵ Conversely, from the Biblical point of view, one finds out that Eli's sons used their priesthood powers to demand or extort sacrifices from the people--much more than was required.⁶ Similarly, in the Old Testament,
the prophet Amos denounced the rule of King Jeroboam II for receiving bribes. In the same vein, the book of Exodus condemned bribery and other social injustices: "Beware of accepting bribes; it blinds even the prudent, and destroys the judgment even of just men". Prophet Isaiah of the Old Testament described the man who will be saved from the horror of destruction as one who refuses ill-gotten gains and bribes. The list is endless.

Clearly, one can argue that there is no place in the world that has not experienced some form of corrupt behavior that can easily be interpreted to mean corruption. Not even Greece, the land of the philosopher kings, was totally free from this scourge.

CORRUPTION IN GREECE AND ROME

Although corruption and bribery had a rather slow growth in ancient Greece, by early 6th century B.C. corruption had become a common feature in the political life of the Greeks. The growth of corruption in Greece during this century was attributed to an increase in economic activity and to political apathy. However, as windows of opportunity arose, political participation, bribery, and corruption steadily increased as Greeks struggled to capture public offices.
According to Aristotle, it was at this time that organized bribing of judges and public officials commenced. Because corruption was linked to political change and democracy or revolution, it attracted considerable attention among the Greeks. Even though corruption became the means for political advancement, it was nonetheless condemned and rejected by many Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato. In his book *The Laws*, Plato stated that:

> The servants of the nation are to render their services without any taking of presents....To form your judgment and then abide by it is no easy task, and 'tis a man's surest course to give loyal obedience to the law which commands, 'Do no service for a present'.

Therefore, Plato extols just and virtuous persons (philosopher kings) while condemning sycophants and corrupt tyrants. Clearly, there were all forms of corrupt practice in the history of Greece.

In the ancient Roman Empire, on the other hand, low-scale corrupt practices were also prevalent in the public sector. Public servants often received bribes for providing services to citizens. Later, bribery and corruption were commonly practiced on a grand-scale during elections for public positions in the legislature and judiciary. As Syed Hussein Alatas states, the intensity and variety of corruption was probably greater in Rome than Greece simply because of the possession of an Empire. During the first three decades of the second century B.C. Rome underwent a
series of economic, political, social, and agricultural changes. These changes led to a rapid increase of wealth, especially among the state and military echelons. Additionally, the growth in industry, commerce, and urbanization in ancient Rome gradually gave way to modern Rome and a rich class of people and new groups of wealthy capitalists who slowly rose to ascendancy. As Romans rose with the spoils of their victories throughout Europe, corruption and bribery became new adventures although not "entirely open and shameless".

As Carl J. Friedrich points out, in Rome the presence and prevalence of wide-scale corruption seemed to have a "consequence of an unwieldy electoral system which derived from history". Clearly, as the Roman Empire expanded its territories through conquest, electoral competition and corruption increased. During this period, corruption in Rome was a result of people seeking public office for bread and butter, or better still "the loaves and fishes of high offices".

As a matter of fact, bribery in the electoral system did not decline in ancient Rome or during the era of the emperor, but it continued to increase throughout the Roman Republic. During this time, corruption was, however, condemned by some members of the republican government and by persons such as Cicero who were interested in reforming
the degenerate republic by attempting to unearth and bring extreme cases of corruption to trial.\textsuperscript{19}

However, these attempts were often unsuccessful because the Roman republic as a whole had become so polluted with immoral practices that corrupt behavior became a norm.\textsuperscript{20} During medieval times, corruption manifested itself in Rome in the form of bribery and extortion by local and state officials who perverted justice. For instance, those who served kings and barons became the instruments for collecting illegal money.\textsuperscript{21} Efforts to regulate trade and commerce based upon the rule of law and principles unfortunately led to well-developed mechanisms for smuggling, which resulted in official corruption.\textsuperscript{22}

The moral decay/disintegration of the body politic in Greece and Rome were the consequences of corruption, injustice, inequality, and egoistic forces. The prevalence of these societal ills forced political philosophers such as Thucydides, Aristotle, Plato, and Machiavelli to condemn them. These theorists opted to create ideal polities that were just and ruled by virtuous persons for the sake of the commonweal.\textsuperscript{23}

Niccolo Machiavelli, opted to provide a recipe to \textit{The Prince} as to how to reform both man and public institutions to enhance civic culture and restore political order. After deeply and extensively studying the concept of corruption in
Italy's political and social life, Machiavelli concluded that corruption was a disease that destroyed the prosperity of Italy's body politic. In essence, the social and political decay, public immorality, and political disorder were phenomena that most political theorists such as Aristotle, Plato, Thomas Hobbes, Jean Jacques Rousseau, and Niccolo Machiavelli constantly confronted in their writings and thus suggested that, virtue, justice, and the public good ought to be the ultimate teleos of all polities.

Indeed, "standing on the shoulders of giants" of these philosophers, one can successfully construct a "theoretical account of the decay of a political order" in today's developed and developing countries and benefit from their uniform understanding of politics, corruption, and how to prevent it. Although these theorists differ on many occasions on certain concepts, they generally agree that any polity that portrays characteristics of moral decay, injustice, extensive inequality in wealth, power, and status, abuse of public office for personal reasons, betrayal of public trust, and the lack of civic culture and virtue is by and large a corrupt state.

In sum, although political life today tries to operate upon relatively high moral principles, bribery and corruption in electoral processes, mudslinging, and other abuses are nonetheless common and evident in many societies.
Unmistakably, two centuries ago Great Britain was a "sink hole" of corruption in all spheres of its political structure—civil service, police, judiciary and legislative, both within the monarchic and parliamentary systems. In the same vein, ethnic corruption and political machines and patronage were devastating to the United States in the 19th century in major cities, particularly New York and Chicago.

POLITICAL CORRUPTION IN AMERICA

Perhaps the best example is that of George Washington Plunkitt of Tammany Hall, who coined the phrase "honest graft". In his famous passage, Plunkitt said:

There's honest graft, and I'm an example of how it works. I might sum up the whole thing by sayin': I seen my opportunities and I took 'em'. Just let me explain by example. My party's in power in the city and it's goin' to undertake a lot of public improvements. Well, I'm tipped off, say, that they are going to lay out a new park at a certain place. I see my opportunity and I take it. I go to that place and I buy up all the land I can in the neighborhood. Then the board of this or that makes its plan public and there is a rush to get that land which nobody cared particular for before. Ain't it perfectly honest to charge a good profit and make a profit on my investment and foresight? Of course it is. Well, that's honest graft.

No doubt, "corruption in high offices is not unique" in the American political structure. According to Martin Gross, it is rife "from the smallest communities to the West Wing of the White House, whichever party occupies it". One of the most celebrated episodes of corruption in high office
involved a vice president of the United State, Spiro T. Agnew. Former Governor of Maryland, he was elected on the Richard Nixon ticket in 1968 and again in 1972. As a county executive in Baltimore, he received up to one thousand dollars a week on kickbacks from contractors, architects, and engineers. He continued this practice as governor and finally as the U.S. Vice President. It began when Agnew received a friendly payment/donation of $50,000 to secure a government contract for the donors. At first he denied the charge but during the federal grand jury, he pleaded nolo contendere (no contest) to the charge of evading income tax on the tainted money. In October 1973 he resigned as vice president just before the Watergate break-in.32

Another heinously corrupt scandal was that of Housing and Urban Development HUD in the 1980s which showed that the agency was riddled with influence peddling and special deals that cost the taxpayers millions of dollars. The House investigative committee reported that "HUD was enveloped by influence peddling, favoritism, abuse, greed, fraud, embezzlement, and theft. In many housing programs, objective criteria gave way to political preference and cronyism, and favoritism supplanted fairness". The committee concluded that the "rehabilitation program which was intended for the poor, became a cash cow which was milked by former HUD
officials and the politically well-connected". Luckily, most of the officials involved in this scandal were prosecuted and sentenced.

In Chicago, during the era of political machines, election fraud was also reported throughout the state whereby dead men and women were voting on local and state levels. During this period, there were reports that local, state, and national officials were accepting bribes and kickbacks and/or taking part in government fraud and embezzlement. According to Gross, the practice was from the bottom up. In fact, local officials would take bribes for such simple favors as zoning changes, assessments, and city contracts. At the top levels, crooked politicians or legislators took part in lining their pockets first before those of their constituents. For most of these politicians the motto is "once bought they remain bought" or as one U.S. Congressman calls them "bastards who stay bought".

In New York, the tradition of graft was established in the 19th century with Tammany Hall—the crooked Democratic machine. It continued almost unabated well into the 1930s and 1980s. It is Gross's assertion that, "Corruption in New York flourished in the post war years, with new twists in the old scenario". For example, in the 1980s, Donald Mannes, the Democratic boss in Queens County was implicated in an extortion-bribery scheme in the city's Parking
Violation Bureau (PVB) where millions of dollars were missing. Before he could be charged, he resigned and later committed suicide. The deputy director of the PVB, Geoffrey G. Lindenauer, admitted to extorting up to $140,000 in bribes from contractors and sharing it with other officials, including Donald Mannes. Fortunately, Lindenauer was prosecuted and sentenced with others for bribery and fixing parking tickets in New York. The list is endless. Recent cases of political corruption involve Whitewater, that implicates the President of the United States Bill Clinton, and the 1996 dirty money or illegal campaign contribution funds that implicate both Democratic and Republican parties and their leaders.

In conclusion, it is important to acknowledge that sophisticated corruption is still a big problem in the U.S. "Lest it be presumed that the United States is an oasis of moral purity in a desert of worldwide corruption". Nathan Miller reminds us that "...from Jamestown to Watergate, corruption runs through our history like a scarlet thread. Although we self-righteously congratulate ourselves on our high moral standards, the grafting politicians, corrupt tycoons, and crooked labor barons are prominent fixtures in American folklore".

Perhaps Robert Klitgaard sums it up best when he eloquently states that:
Corruption is not the province of one particular culture or region. Not many years ago, corruption flourished in countries we now call 'developed'--and, indeed, there is evidence that some forms of corrupt behavior are today on the rise in most economically and politically 'advanced' nations.39

Evidence of scandals and fraud have been extensively reported in Great Britain, Italy, France, Japan, and the United States. In America, episodes such as Watergate, Iran-Contra, Whitewater, and illegal campaign funds top the list of endless government political scandals. Nevertheless, Klitgaard claims that "the situation is particularly worrisome in 'developing' nations"40 because they are most vulnerable to government/bureaucratic corruption.

POLITICAL CORRUPTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Political corruption is also a pervasive feature in the Middle East. David M. Miller and Clark D. Moore state that, for centuries, the Ottoman Empire's misrule enhanced the habits of corruption in the Islamic World.41 Consequently, the payment of bribes (baksheesh) in the Arabic and Turkish-speaking countries and roshveyeh in Iran are deeply embedded in the social and cultural fabric of these countries, asserts Fernand Braudel.42 From Iraq to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia to Jordan, the prevalence of political payments in the Middle East is derived from the historical presence of the
all-powerful states. Manfred Halpern claims that, typically, governments have been the major source and owners of capital, i.e., land, natural resources (particularly oil), the primary dispensers of contracts, and the arbiters of the rules of trade and investment. State ownership of, and control over, much of the means of production have been an essential part of Middle Eastern economics.*

Unlike Europe or the United States, the Middle East did not produce a politically and economically influential bourgeoisie or middle class that could act as a countervailing power to the state and its rulers.** French philosopher, Fernand Braudel states that, paradoxically, the political payment was an accepted method by which the tyranny of the ruler and venality of his officials were curbed.*** Halpern concludes that, because today the Middle East is the world's foremost oil-producing region, it is not uncommon to find government inefficiencies, mismanagement, and tolerance of corruption and bribery for those who must deal with Middle Eastern political leaders, bureaucrats, and civil servants. Indeed, corruption is prevalent not only among government employees but also among the businessmen who have to bribe royal family members for contracts or other concessions to do business.**** Therefore, from Jordan to Iran, Palestine to Pakistan, Saudi Arabia to Kuwait, and Iraq to Israel, the
practice of giving gifts or bribes to acquire favors is a common norm. But like anywhere else in developing nations, gifts today carry a negative connotation—bribery and corruption.

Perhaps the worst affected region in Africa is sub-Saharan Africa. The fact is that corruption is a problem that Africans face daily can neither be "blithely ignored or treated as a minor social malaise". But before discussing the problem of corruption in Africa, it is important to trace the genesis of political corruption from pre-colonial and colonial to post-colonial Africa.

POLITICAL CORRUPTION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Then our people lived peacefully, under the democratic rule of their kings....Then the country was ours, in our name and right....All men were free and equal and this was the foundation of government. The council [of elders] was completely democratic that all members of the tribe could participate in its deliberations. Chiefs and subjects, warriors and medicine men, all took part and endeavored to influence its decisions.


In pre-colonial Africa, the organizational structure of the indigenous political system was generally based on kinship and ancestry. The survival of the tribe was the primary objective of the African people. Each ethnic group had its own system of government that was ruled by custom and tradition. Written constitutions were non-existent.
Many groupings that existed as separate political entities were ruled by kings or chiefs. Ethnic groups that were under the rule of chiefs were referred to as chiefdoms and were generally independent and autonomous. For example, the Asante and Zande of West Africa and the Zulu of South Africa fall under this category. Those tribes or ethnicities that did not have chiefs or kings, on the other hand, were referred to as stateless tribes and were easy prey for conquerors who assimilated conquered areas into empires. This was evident among the Mandika, Fulani, Hausa, and the Islamic empires in West Africa in the 18th and 19th centuries. Generally, in all African tribes, political organizations began at lineage or village levels and expanded into the tribes, chiefdoms, kingdoms, and state settings.  

Robert Williams observes that lineage was the most powerful and effective means for unity and stability in early Africa. Each lineage had its head elected according to its own rules. The Fante of Ghana used wealth as the criterion while other lineages in West, Central, East, and Southern African communities used personality cult and characteristics such as age, maturity, relations to ancestors, social status—many wives and children—generosity, and oratory. The leaders were usually male elders. Because of the system of patriarchy that is
predominant and manifested in almost all African societies, males usually were chosen as chiefs or elders. Also there is a general consensus among Africans that wisdom comes with age and experience. Therefore, the elderly are major assets in Africa, and usually occupy the highest positions of tribal leadership.

In early African systems, kings or chiefs were not necessarily paid for performing their duties; however, they occasionally received gifts and dues from their subjects because they were supposed to live well above common tribesmen in order to enhance their status and the stature of the tribe. The traditional practice of offering gifts to chiefs has been misinterpreted and misconstrued by scholars to provide a cultural explanation for the pervasive incidence of bribery and corruption in contemporary Africa. The truth of the matter is that the offering or the exchange of gifts among Africans is a traditional practice that dates back for centuries and serves a variety of purposes.

For instance, in Sierra Leone when a plaintiff called upon the chief for legal action/function, he offered dash usually in terms of water, food, or drinks. Among the Shona of Zimbabwe, before a dispute was solved, the plaintiff and defendant offered a small token or fee to the chief and his "judges" that was later shared among the chief and his chosen elders/adversaries. In addition, the guilty party
paid full cost of the case to the victor, who in turn shared his compensation with the chief as a sign of gratitude for a fair hearing. The same practice was present among the Asante of Ghana, the Luo, Luhya, and Gusii of Kenya, and the Baganda of Uganda.54

Under these conditions, a gift of dash or kitu kidogo that is generously given to the chief and his elders is not seen as bribery or corruption. Rather, the token is seen as some type of gratitude, respect, and appreciation for the service rendered. One can see it as a tax that supported the courts. As a matter of fact, gifts were given publicly and everybody was aware of who gave what to whom and for what purpose. In contrast, today's bribes are extorted clandestinely by civil servants before they can perform services for the public which they are paid to render in the first case.

In fact, in traditional Africa, there was evidence that suggests that native Africans were intolerant of bribes and corruption. For example, in Ghana during the 6th and 8th centuries A.D., there was a popular or mass revolution against corrupt leaders, specifically the members of the dynasty that routinely accepted bribes. The rebels systematically massacred and even extracted fetuses from the
wombs of the royal family in order to completely wipe out corruption.®

Does this mean that pre-colonial Africa was pure and pristine or immune to corruption? To the contrary. Indeed, for the kings/chiefs to live luxuriously, and they did, mandatory annual taxes and dues were required of subjects. Oftentimes, the chief's chosen tax collectors accepted bribes or diverted the dues meant for the chief into their pockets. Also, they used the chief's office to extort bribes or favors from the people in terms of drink, sex, food, and money. Thus, bribery and corruption were not unknown phenomena in pre-colonial Africa.

Indeed, large-scale corruption manifested itself in Africa during the colonial period; the introduction of political systems, parliaments, urbanization, new currency, white collar jobs, and schools contributed to competition and bribery and corruption. As Robert Williams asserts, upon colonization African corruption began to become more entrenched, especially in those countries where a feudal way of life had already set the climate for corruption or a gift-giving system of authority.® Therefore, it is imperative to recognize and appreciate that the unethical behavior in post-independent Africa has a history outside of and within Africa. This is not, however, to justify the continued existence of corruption in Africa, but to argue
that large-scale corruption in modern day Africa has its roots with the European colonialists as well as within the Africans themselves.⁵⁷

The truth of the matter is, in East Africa and some countries in Central and West Africa where Great Britain had her colonies, the British used indirect rule, divide and conquer, and Western influences such as religion, education, English, sophisticated weapons, etc., to conquer and dominate indigenous Africa. As for the issues of kings/chiefs, the colonialists bribed them with clothes, guns, and other Western items to relinquish or share their power, sell their subjects as slaves, and allocate land to the colonists. Similarly, the artificial partitioning of Africa by the European powers in the late 1800s was by all means morally corrupt because native Africans were never consulted during the scramble for lands and territories in their countries. Instead, they were dislocated and disoriented from their lands and forced to live together in squatters while their fertile lands were grabbed and used for cash crops--coffee, tea, cotton, and sugarcane plantations, forced to adopt western lifestyles--systems of government, constitutions, forms of education, religion, and language. One can make a strong case that, the natives were stripped off their culture, dignity, and lifestyle by the
European colonialists. Indeed, this in itself is corruption at its very best.

As the African saying goes, when the white men or missionaries came to Africa they told Africans to close their eyes for prayer. While they were praying, the white men's eyes were open. It was during this time the whites were able to grab the most fertile lands, usually at gunpoint. When the Africans opened their eyes and realized that the white men's motives were lands, raw materials, and cheap labor and not Christianity or "civilization", they began rebelling to recapture their lands and lifestyles, but it was too late because the colonialist's influence and control had spread like wild fire. The natives were told not to close their eyes for prayer this time, but to sing the Christian hymn--"trust and believe, for there is no other way, but to trust and believe". The literal implication from this hymn was that the white men had taken over Africa and the natives were better off if they trusted and believed. Therefore, the fact that Africans see governments as the enemy or the tool of oppression is no surprise. According to many Africans, a good government is one that allows avenues for personal enrichment.

In sum, the African nations that won their independence from the European colonial powers are for the most part uneasy confederations of tribes that are traditional
enemies. The primary loyalty of their citizens is not the state, but the tribe and its chiefs. The political objective of the dominant tribe is to capture the country's economic power base, which is the government, and once it has been seized, to hold onto it. Political corruption is probably the most destructive moral disease in Africa. Although this malaise is found in nearly all societies, it appears to be especially virulent south of the Sahara with the exception of some Southern African countries particularly South Africa. As some European entrepreneurs with interest in Africa once stated, "they bribe a good deal in Uganda, some in Kenya but not at all in Tanzania and Zambia"\textsuperscript{58}, a tribute to the high personal integrity of Julius Nyerere and Kenneth Kaunda, former presidents of the two countries, respectively. Therefore, corruption cannot be "dismissed as 'one of those things'; it is an evil which challenges the very bedrock on which our juridical independence stands"\textsuperscript{59} assert Neil Jacoby et al. What emerges from these brief examples is a sense of the pervasiveness of corruption that is practiced in both developed and developing nations. These scholars argue that, political/government corruption often "declines as society advances in its awareness and support of nationhood, in wealth and income, in political and legal stability, and in building of strong social institutions".\textsuperscript{61} However, to
make a case that, political corruption ends at some stage with the social and economic development would be stretching too far. Indeed, in a world populated by human beings with their moral frailties, desires, appetites, selfishness, and lust for personal enrichment, to eradicate political corruption from the face of the earth is perhaps a utopian concept. As Jacoby et al., conclude, "socio-economic development does tend to curb practices that civilized men and women agree are morally wrong and economically inefficient". 

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CHAPTER 3

THE CAUSES OF POLITICAL CORRUPTION

"Not every black man is my brother, Not every white man is my enemy".
--Lucky Dube

"Your pocket will decide".
--Ghanaian bribe request

"Every franc we give impoverished Africa, comes back to France, or is smuggled into Switzerland and even Japan".
--Le Monde, March 1990

An investigation into the causes of political corruption in African societies would provide many different explanations depending upon the question and time. Generally and broadly speaking, the motives for corruption can be divided into two categories: the external corruption—the legacy of colonialism, neo-colonialism, and dependency—and the internal corruption—the "Big Men" of Africa, centralized states, inefficient leadership, maladministration of government institutions and parastatals, tribalism and nepotism, population explosion, unemployment, and other physical and man-made realities.

Indeed, massive corruption in Africa seems to grow from both historical and contemporary sources. In fact, on a continent where corruption is seen as "a way of life", it would seem unrealistic and somewhat biased to blame a few
"bad apples" or factors. Despite extraordinary consequences the exposure of corruption has had in recent years, corruption is by no means new in political life. On the contrary, it has a long pedigree running throughout the history of both pre-colonial and colonial periods. In fact, it is not uncommon to find a large number of the African public who admit that corruption is a "national feature" or the "way things are done". However, as April Gordon and Donald Gordon assert, corrupt practices among the strategically positioned politicians, bureaucrats, and the elites are rampant and habitual. Therefore, one can strongly argue that African elites' primary purpose is to chase for profits and work for their own pockets at the expense of the public. Yet when the question arises as to why there is pervasive and habitual corruption in African continent-wide societies, the legacy of colonialism and neocolonialism are mentioned.

**POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND COLONIALISM**

It has been suggested and strongly argued that the prevalence of government corruption in post-independent Africa was brought about by colonial rule. Indeed, Syed Hussein Alatas agrees when he states that, "Not only was there corruption in colonial administration but it was further increased by the indirect effect of nationalist
agitation against the government". For example, in Nigeria, Zaire, Kenya, and other British, French, Belgian, and Italian colonies, during the period of colonial imperialism, cheating, plundering, and stealing from the enemy government was popularly considered as patriotic. Protecting offenders from the police, income tax evasion (land and dog taxes), or hiding those individuals who were fighting for national liberation/independence were regarded as heroic acts. But after independence (which for many of these countries occurred in the 1960s), the habit of cheating and stealing from the government continued. As of the 1990s, the trend of stealing has increased and spread to the point of choking the whole continent.

It should be borne in mind that the main purpose of European imperialism in Africa was solely and purely the economic motive—acquire raw materials, cheap labor, and markets. Thus, one can argue that the partitioning of Africa during the late 1800s was geared towards enslaving and exploiting Africa's natural resources and labor power. The consequences were displacement, dislocation, disorientation, and alienation of tribal societies from their territories, lands, and resources. The Biafran War in Nigeria during the later 1960s was a result of colonial rule.
Undoubtedly, the imperialists were successful in their endeavors and managed to bulldoze their lifestyles and their economic and political regimes into the African mindset. While the British used indirect rule and a divide and rule (instigating tribal confrontations) strategy to achieve total collaboration and rule, the French and Belgians used direct and cultural means to control their colonies. In all instances, the colonialists held out the carrot and wielded the stick. In essence, classes were formed, economic opportunities and education established, especially in urban centers, and some tribes benefitted more and wielded more economic and political power than others. Those tribes that were at a disadvantage lacked economic and political power and access to scarce natural resources and, thus, corruption and bribery became tools of choice for penetrating any real or imaginary barriers or roadblocks to government goods and services.  

According to Robert Williams, the legacy of colonialism can be blamed for economic underdevelopment, political instability, tribalism, and political corruption. Because the Europeans strived to bring "civilization" to Africa and to transform its supposedly "barbaric" or "savage" ways of life to modern lifestyles—in terms of language, education, Christianity, political institutions, constitutions, technologies, and machineries—disregarded African tribal
and customary lifestyles. Thus, as Europe attempted to bring modernization, civilization, and development to Africa, it cast an image of "heroes doing battle with cannibalism, lust, and depravity—the forces of 'darkness'" and uncultured people, which was not necessarily the case.

Niccolo Machiavelli argues that civilization is a factor in corruption, especially in civic political life. He related civilization and the difficulty in establishing a sound form of government in this manner: "Doubtless....anyone seeking to establish a republic at the present time would find it easier to do so amongst uncultured men of the mountain than amongst dwellers in cities where civilization is corrupt; just as a sculptor will more easily carve a beautiful statue from rough marble than from marble already spoiled by a bungling workman". 11

According to Alfred Bonadeo, the assumption from Machiavelli's statement underscores that corruption is more likely to be found among those peoples whose civilization is highly evolved, among the inhabitants of cities and, finally, it indicates that where such corruption is present it is vain to hope for the establishment of a republican government. 13 Indeed, the same can be said of the eradication of corruption in Africa. Since people now know the new way of corruption—through the exchange of currency—
-it would be impossible to totally clean up this act. In fact, Africans say "mlamba hazari halambi mara moja" (one who licks honey does not do it only once). When this idiom is applied to government officials, it literally means that as long as they are in charge of distributing scarce goods and services, the temptations to become corrupt are inevitable. Thus they will keep deepening their hands in the national honey pot and lick not only once but from time to time. As the saying goes, "kawaida ni kama sheria" (normalcy is like law). This literally means that, if government workers are used to being bribed for their duties and services, it becomes a routine or a "law" to expect bribes before and after these services are rendered.

In the same vein, Samuel Huntington asserts that in developing nations, particularly Africa, corruption is a "virtually inevitable phenomenon of the initial stages of 'modernization'", one likely to disappear/diminish as African economies and nation-states move beyond the infant/early phases of capitalist development, as tended to be the case of Western Europe's bourgeois transition.

Additionally, other scholars argue that the aspirations of Africa's administrative elites for the status symbols and lifestyles of the continent's former colonial masters are inclinations reinforced at the lower rungs of the bureaucracy by the social disorientation of rapid
urbanization, that is, the imbalance between rural and urban development. While the rural areas, where a majority of African citizens live, are neglected at the expense of cities, there is a high rural-urban migration for government goods and services—jobs, social amenities, and a higher standard of living. This migration leads to overpopulation, crime, unemployment, and a lack of housing and water, thus necessitating corruption. In Africa money talks and character walks; who you know is more significant than what you know; the highest bidder is more important than meeting the qualifications or simply being in need. Thus, as scarce government goods and services, especially government contracts, projects, jobs, housing, etc., are on sale, the strong survive while the weak wither away.

Going back to colonialism, the international school of thought also agrees that the aftermath of colonialism, capitalism, and the exploitation of Africa by Western countries necessitated corruption. Indeed, with Africa's overweighed dependence on economic/foreign aid, political independence seems illusionary. In this condition, the notion of manifest destiny in Africa is far from real. Roger Tangri also points out that "During the colonial period, African countries were made both politically and economically subordinate to the interests of imperial capital....Local economies were subordinated to externally
defined needs....When the colonial bureaucrats departed from Africa, they left behind highly distorted economies". To date, this trend continues coupled with yet another new fashion of colonialism--"back-door colonialism" or neo-colonialism.

POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND NEO-COLONIALISM

According to Ralph J. Onwuka and Timothy M. Shaw, neo-colonialism is the "survival of the colonial system in spite of the formal recognition of political independence in the emerging countries which become the victims of indirect and subtle forms of domination by political, economic, social, military, and technical means". These scholars maintain that the main "ploy of neo-colonialism is to make sure that the dominated countries do not have much direct horizontal contact among themselves, particularly, not economic interactions or trade". In fact, the chances of African countries doing business and trade on a regional or continental basis is slim to none.

Similarly, even after independence, many African countries have not completely changed their political and economic settings to reflect their own indigenous models. Most countries still use former colonial constitutions, laws, and economic apparatuses. For example, Africa still favors cash crops--coffee, cotton, and tea, etc--that are
sold abroad (to the mother colonialists) for foreign currency while neglecting consumer and immediate substance crops, e.g., corn, sugarcane, and other agricultural goods that could be used for its population, thus alleviating the problem of hunger. The fact that Africa is largely an agriculturalist continent and lacks the skills and technology to tap its rich natural resources and manufacture and consume its own goods, it is left with only one solution--to rely on the Western powers to feed and solve her problems. Worse still, Africa is forced to dance to the tunes of the western International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), and other international organizations. A case in point is that of Kenya, which was recently cut off by the IMF for loan transactions amounting to $220 million for having a large number of civil servants, too much government repression, violations of human rights, and a high level of corruption and bribery. One can argue that in Nigeria and the former Zaire, government repression and corruption are far worse than in Kenya; yet the international organizations for decades supported the dictatorial leadership of Babangida and Mobutu, their African puppets.

E.A. Boetang also observes that "the achievement of political sovereignty does not automatically lead to economic independence...." It is but a rubber stamp under
the guise of self-determination. Thus the Western nations still dictate and chart the course that Africans should follow lest they lose economic aid. This, is essence, destroys the self-determination and political sovereignty that Woodrow Wilson intended to see in Third World countries that were allies to the West during the First World War.

Clearly, until Africa fully realizes its full self-determination, until the West treats Africa as an equal partner in the world economy, Africa will forever remain a spectator of world politics. Therefore, the legacy of colonialism, neo-colonialism, and dependence have contributed to corruption in modern-day Africa. It is April and Donald Gordon's assertion that as long as Western nations still assign Africa the role of the "producer of cheap raw materials" in the global economy, they continue to prevent Africa from "achieving its economic potential". In addition, these scholars maintain that political oppression, foreign exploitation, economic inequality, and poverty contribute to corruption in sub-Saharan Africa. Undoubtedly, "colonial policies worked to handicap independent Africa's economic future".

Pertaining to neo-colonialism, African scholars, particularly Ben Turok, contend that it "has brought both hardship and social turbulence to many countries in the Third World", especially Africa. Turok, however, argues
that the reasons for this dilemma are to be sought in both external causes and in the inherited and developing internal structure of neo-colonialism and imperialism. He particularly points an incriminating finger at the international market as the primary cause for Africa's chronic problems, including corruption. He states that "the deterioration in international trading conditions have sorely reduced export earnings for previously high-value commodities" such as gold, diamonds, iron ore, oil, etc. Also, the unfavorable terms of trade for most African major agricultural items—coffee, cotton, sugarcane, pyrethrum, etc.—have inevitably hit the farmers crucially and directly in income received and in government support. Turok concludes that the basic reason for the new conditions after independence in Africa is that "Whereas colonial rule was exercised by an external force, neo-colonial rule is a function of two powers—imperialism and an internal ruling class".

**POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND THE NATIONALIST SCHOOL**

The nationalist school of thought agrees that rather than blaming colonial rule for corruption, it is about time to look at what is going on in the backyards of African societies. These scholars include Chinua Achebe, Wole
Sonyinka, Bankole Omotoso, Ben Turok, George Ayittey, Ngugi wa Thiongo, Kivutha Kibwana, and Blaine Harden, among others, who blame African elites—leaders, politicians, policy-makers, bureaucrats, businessmen, and top civil servants—as the causes for corruption. They point out that overbearing executive powers, government repression, single party states, big and centralized governments, inefficient state institutions, the underpaid civil service, tribalism and nepotism contribute a great deal to corruption.  

Even though it is unanimously agreed upon that the legacy of colonialism and today's neo-colonialism or "international straightjacket" share some of the blame for corruption, these scholars strongly think that Africa's problems, particularly corruption, are self-inflicted wounds. They concur with Christopher Hitchen who writes: "Yes, we know that colonialism was devastating and disruptive. Yes, we know that political borders of Africa make no sense and were drawn without regard to human reality. Yes, no doubt the international trade decks are stacked against African products..." but does this explain why life is so much more "brutish, cruel, and short" in modern Africa than during the colonial era? Does this justify why African elites are greedy, selfish, squander maniacs, and corrupt maniacs? Or should this reality deter Africa from removing the chains of backwardness?
Indeed, Africa seeks scapegoats in the West to justify corruption and her chronic problems—poverty, civil war, crime, low living standards, and unemployment. George B. Ayittey notes that, "True, there was colonial exploitation in the past, but today the real exploiters and oppressors of the African peasant are often the African elites". No doubt, African megalomaniacs, corruptimians, and squandermanians such as late Mobutu Sese Seko, Babangida, Kenneth Kaunda, Hasting Kamusu Banda, Omar Bongo, Sani Abacha, Paul Biya, and Daniel arap Moi, to name just a few, keep amassing wealth and exploiting their respective countries with impunity by stealing economic aid, by treating their national treasuries as if they were their personal bank accounts, and by stashing their riches in Swiss banks.

To negate the factors of colonialism and neocolonialism, conservative journalist Keith B. Richburg contends that Africa, like some Southeast Asian countries, e.g., Singapore, Taiwan, Malaysia, Vietnam, etc., were also under colonial rule. After independence during the 1950s and 1960s, Asian countries have succeeded while Africa is still in despair. Richburg asks:

Why has East Asia emerged as the model for economic success, while Africa has seen mostly poverty, hunger, and economies propped up by foreign aid? Why are East Asians now expanding their telecommunications capabilities when in most of Africa, it's still hard to
make a phone call next door? Why are East Asians now wrestling with ways to control access to the Internet, while African students still must use cardboard drawings of computer keyboards because they don't have real computers in the classroom? Why are East Asian airlines upgrading their long-haul fleets, while bankrupt African carriers let planes rust on weed-strewn runways because they can't afford fuel and repair costs? Why are the leaders in Southeast Asia negotiating ways to ease trade barriers and create a free trade zone, while Africans still levy some of the most prohibitive tariffs on earth, even for interregional trade?.

To put these questions in perspective, why is it relatively possible to travel throughout Asia, while it is hard to travel within Africa? Why is it possible for Asian countries to do business on a regional basis while Africa cannot? Why are the Asian markets and borders open to regional and world investors, while those in Africa are not? Why is Asia blossoming with economic success, while Africa lags behind? The ugly truth is that, it is not because Asians are workaholics and smarter while Africans are lazy and dumb. The cardinal reason for Africa's underdevelopment resides within Africa. Richburg argues that, for decades Africa's failures "have been hidden behind the veils of excuses and apologies". The ugly truth is that, it is not because Asians are workaholics and smarter while Africans are lazy and dumb. The cardinal reason for Africa's underdevelopment resides within Africa. Richburg argues that, for decades Africa's failures "have been hidden behind the veils of excuses and apologies". Indeed, there is no reason why Asia should succeed and Africa fail. Richburg notes that, both regions emerged from colonialism at about the same time and faced similar obstacles. For example, in 1957, when Ghana became
independent from Britain, it was one of the brightest hopes for black Africa with a higher gross national product than South Korea, which was itself still recovering from a destructive war and more than thirty years as a Japanese colony. Today, South Korea is recognized as one of the Asian "dragons" or "tigers"—an economic powerhouse expanding into new markets throughout the region and the world at large. In contrast, Ghana meanwhile has slid backward. In fact, today her gross national product is lower than it was at independence.  

Along the same line of argument, Kenya in the 1970s and early 1980s was regarded as East Africa's success story, a country in the horn of Africa that was destined to become a powerhouse, a country bubbling with economic growth and political integration, and a hub of an efficient civil service, of transportation and communications networks, and a haven for regional and international investment, a country with a history of political stability and tranquility. According to Julius Nyerere, Nairobi was the "London of Africa", a role model to many in sub-Saharan Africa. Today, Kenya has been relegated to the dustbin of history due to political corruption, tribalism, poverty, unemployment, crime, police brutality, and dictatorship. In short, all forms of development have stalled just as in many other countries in the horn of Africa.
Nigeria was also another potential African powerhouse blessed with oil reserves. During the 1960s and 1970s, Nigeria's gross national product was the highest in Africa. Today, the country is ruled by marauding military tigers and dictators who repress and take part in high levels of corruption that make the lives of ordinary Nigerians a nightmare.

The former Zaire (The Democratic Republic of Congo) is one of those African nations blessed with diamonds and iron ore. Like Lagos, Kinshasa was at one time a bustling modern city. Today, Zaire is nothing but a huge hole in the middle of Africa. It has been raped by its former dictator, Mobutu, and his colleagues, and today it is the eighth poorest country in the world.

Additionally, the reason for this peculiar atmosphere has to do with Africa's fear, suspicion, and oppression that the "Strong Men" engender among the public. Also, Africans still cling to their tribal loyalties and identities instead of a national loyalty and identity. For example, one is Yoruba or Hausa first and Nigerian second, Kalenjin first and Kenyan second, or a Zulu first and a South African second. Although this may seem minutely insignificant to some observers, where tribes are as numerous as they are in Africa, tribalism cannot be treated as a minor problem. It has as much to do with underdevelopment as colonialism.
There is no doubt in Ayittey's mind that what breeds corruption and bribery in sub-Saharan Africa is purely "the system of pervasive state controls, regulations, concentration of economic and political power, the institution of one-party state systems which lack accountability, and the muzzling of the press to expose corruption and wrongdoing." The truth of the matter is that, these conditions are also present in East Asia and other developing areas, but no place/region are these conditions so severely instituted than is Africa.

Writing on the issue of muzzling of the press to express government wrongdoing, Peter Warutere notes that by attacking the press for exposing government and individual corruption and other malfeasance of the African elites and business, the government is being insensitive, illogical, cynical, and undemocratic. He, therefore, asserts that governments that harass the media/press are "wrestling with the mighty power of the pen" that feeds the public with a for information and solutions to their problems. He concludes that, "victory can only be assured if there is political will to suppress corruption, tribal clashes and the other multitudes of critical problems which the newspapers and magazines continue to highlight in their quest for a transparent and democratic republic."
For their part, Wraith and Simpkins support these African scholars' claims when they state that, "In Africa corruption flourishes as luxuriantly as the bush and weeds which it so resembles, taking the goodness from the soil and suffocating the growth of plants which have been carefully and expensively bred and tended". Indeed, systemic corruption has simply destroyed what took many years to build. Wangari Mathai notes that corruption has reached devastating proportions, has destroyed and stalled democracy and economic development, and has led to "non-accountable and non-transparent leadership".

POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND THE "BIG MEN"

It is argued that those who suffocate and stall development in Africa are the "Big Men", or the "Strong Men", or the "national figures" or the "founding fathers" or the "god-like" presidents. According to Blaine Harden, "Africa's traditional dictators and tribal chieftains--the 'Big Men'--have proven surprisingly tenacious..." in corrupting and stealing with impunity Africa's scarce natural resources.

In describing the "Big Men" or the African excellencies, Harden states that, they can be recognized everywhere because their pictures can be found on every wall
and in office or business premises; their faces are on the local currencies; highways, schools, universities, hospitals, streets, avenues, shopping malls, football stadiums, military academies, hotels, airports, and public transportation services are named after them; they appear on the front pages of the local daily newspapers; their daily movements or undertakings are broadcast on radio and television on an hourly basis; they ban political parties except those of which they are members (usually the ruling party); they harass political opponents, rig elections, appoint and shuffle legislators/parliamentarians as they see fit; they make, modify, or amend laws without question; they receive the highest percentage of kickbacks and skim foreign aid; they treat their national treasuries as if they were their personal accounts, and stash their amassed wealth in Swiss banks and/or invest in foreign countries; and last, they are, tribalistic, all-powerful, brutal, tyrannical, and all government institutions, i.e., courts, civil service, universities, national hospitals, and parastatals are under their thumbs. With these characteristics, African leaders have created what is referred to as Mobutuism, Moiism, Abachaism, Bandaism, Biyaism, Kaundaism, Mugabeism, Bongoism, etc.

Without a doubt, the "Strong Men" of Africa have poisoned their respective countries, thus retarding economic growth.
Referring to the former Zaire's former dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko, Harden states that his "venality spawned a corruption ethic that underdeveloped Zaire...." David Gould also stresses that in Zaire "where corruption was central in the entire system of government and economic activity, the embezzlement of state funds, tax evasion, extortion, and other immoral practices facilitated the consolidation of the economic base, one that largely arises out of the state bureaucracy". In Zaire, as in many other countries in Africa, one is either rich or poor; there is no middle-class.

In fact, during Mobutu's reign, those individuals from his tribe, personal cliques, and members of parliament who sung the tune of Mobutu's songs or supported his tyrannical regime, or those who never "crossed him", benefitted economically and politically. Some rose to become millionaires and succeeded in business because they captured most of the government contracts, import-export licenses, and fat kickbacks or "percentages", as they are often called. Mobutu's family and friends spent three decade looting Zaire and helped themselves from the earnings to the copper, cobalt, and diamond mines. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the United States Treasury, Mobutu's personal fortune was worth four to five billion dollars during its height in the 1980s. Although
Mobutu denied this report of his vast wealth as sheer allegation, it is all too well known that denial is part and parcel of African leadership. 45

Kamuzu Banda of Malawi, Daniel arap Moi of Kenya, Sani Abacha of Nigeria, Paul Biya of Cameroon, and El Hadj Omar Bongo of Gabon, to name a few, are seen as "god-like figures", all-powerful, all-knowing, and presidents for life. Therefore, one can argue that, these "Big Men's" omnipresence and repressive leadership is detrimental to Africa's economic development and political integration because they discourage foreign investments, free elections, freedom of press and speech, unite among ethnicities, and above all plunder national resources.

The fact that they amass wealth with impunity; buy loyalty with hard currency using state resources; give favors to their families and relatives, clans, tribes, supporters, cliques, and friends; divide-and-rule; and stir tribal warfare, they in essence preside over the collapse of their respective countries, contribute to high-level of political corruption, and induce it in others. Yet they all blame Western nations for their countries' problems. Undoubtedly, therefore, one can make a strong case that the problems with Africa lie with the political elites/leaders themselves who plunder from their own national resources and
steal from their own people and yet openly and vehemently they deny this fact.**

Indeed, African leaders who embodied the hopes of the African continent at the start of the independence period, at a time when Africans proudly took the run of self-rule and vowed to build fair and more just societies than they had known under colonial rule, were the ones who became the colonizers of their own people. Makau wa Mutua reveals that "Once they replaced the colonial rulers, they wanted to become like them...they wanted to become all-powerful and omnipresent....We just replaced white faces with black faces".**

**POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND TRIBALISM/NEPOTISM**

Nepotism is another factor in political corruption. David Apter attributes corruption in Africa to the persistence of traditional values which conflict with the requirement for a secular way of life. Nepotism or favoritism is considered a grave crime in Western bureaucratic practices, yet in Africa, providing jobs, government contracts, business licenses, and promotions for members of one's own family, clan, and tribe is considered compulsory and quite normal.** In fact, many Africans would agree with this analysis--the more successful a civil servant or politician becomes, the more he or she is
expected to share his or her good fortunes with kinsmen.⁴⁵

Throughout Africa, asserts W. E. Abraham, the "family conscience is terribly loaded with a proliferation of duties and obligations owed to relatives known and unknown who may spring up and demand attention when one is busily performing his official duties".⁵⁰ He goes on to say that clan welfare takes priority over individual welfare. This is because African cultures emphasize clan achievement and cooperation more than individual self-help.⁵¹ C. S. Whitaker, Jr., notes that the "...high incidence of official corruption stems in large part from conflicting pressures and expectations regarding social and official positions, rather than from any singular aptitude for venality on the part of those who occupy them".⁵²

Generally speaking, these pressures emerge from the fact that Africans still believe in "yours is mine and mine is ours". And that it takes a village to raise a child. Therefore, it is the child's responsibility and obligation to serve his family, clan, and tribe. Neglecting or ignoring the needs of one's family and clan is the most terrible thing one can do. Generosity and assistance are the most appreciated human qualities and the most admired features in Africa. For example, when a politician or a member of parliament is generous, even at public expense, all his faults are forgiven. At the same time, African
elites derive satisfaction as well as prestige from having people dependent on them. The simple reason why African politicians and top civil servants surround themselves with their fellow clansmen or tribesmen and/or immediate family members and relatives is to avoid the accusation of ingratitude or betrayal of family. Kwame Nkrumah once admitted, "I could not have chosen my government without regard to tribal origin...and even within the party itself, there was a tendency to condemn or recommend some individual on the basis of his tribal or family origin".

Other factors that contribute to corruption include the population explosion, the shrinking and scarcity of natural resources and foodstuffs, and the high demand for scarce goods and services—education, healthcare, housing, and jobs. Under these circumstances, nepotism and tribalism oftentimes come in handy. April A. Gordon notes that the "patronage relationship based on ethnicity and kinship is often potent to gaining access to resources (such as jobs, schooling, or money)...." In the same vein, James C. Scott notes that kinship ties and parochial loyalty to one's tribesmen often dictate who gets what, how, and when. Put simply, who you know is more important than what you know. He maintains that the traditional obligations of kin, tribe, village, or religious sect are so strong that they contribute to a certain amount
of corruption. It is not uncommon to find a politician or a top civil servant who is at the same time an official of his tribal or clan organization and a civil servant. He may take unwarranted liberties with state funds and place his incompetent friends or tribesmen in office. But in the tribal or clan association, he is a scrupulously honest guardian of the ethnic interest. This is definitely what Africans call a "good man", or a "man of the people", or a "true son", or a "tribal hero". Because the clan/tribe engages his strong loyalties, the nation does not. Therefore, to steal from the state burdens his conscience little or not at all; to steal from his clan or tribe would seem like stealing from his own family.

Because governments in Africa are the sole or largest source of goods and services and the providers of jobs, status, prestige, wealth, and security, "it's the dream of every family and tribe to place at least one of his sons in the public service; the demand for Western-style education is, in part, a by-product of this demand for public office". Hence, the "scramble" for jobs in the civil service is a result of the opportunities one acquires working for the government, e.g., status, prestige, avenues to amass great wealth, and exercise of power with few restrictions. Indeed, these are things a politician or top civil servant does not want to "steal" from his family or
clan/tribesmen. Publius Gamesu also states that the keen competition for government employment contributes to ethnicity and gives greater impetus to nepotism and tribalism.\textsuperscript{61} Because there are big bureaucracies and a rapid increase of civil servants with chronic lower salaries, corruption and bribery is to most workers a supplementary source of income.

Taking from Peter to pay Paul is not a new concept in Africa, nor is it seen as an immoral thing, but rather it is expected of those who are in power and in positions of decision-making arenas. The fact that those tribes in power tend to take all and control all is a normal phenomenon. This is not to argue that all government officials or tribes engage in corruption for selfish or tribal reasons. There are, of course, a few good, decent, honest, and moral leaders. Nelson Mandela is a good example. Wraith and Simpkins write: "The ethnicity is there, but it has not yet been transferred from the seat of natural loyalty, which is the clan or tribe, to the new seat of loyalty which is the state".\textsuperscript{62} Put simply, due to the weak legitimacy of the political systems compared to pervasive pressures and ties of family and/or ethnicity, many Africans oftentimes serve tribe first and country second.

Therefore, one can strongly argue that tribalism and nepotism are two evils or factors that enhance and reinforce
political corruption in sub-Saharan Africa. Those tribes that are unrepresented or under-represented or "left out" of the government's political machine—economically and politically—find that their best shot/chance often is to buy their way into the system. Furthermore, severe poverty and meager wages impel people to tolerate corruption and bribery in order to survive. Indeed, the majority of government workers in many countries cannot afford a balanced diet or three meals a day even if they spent all their salaries on food alone. Furthermore, with the signs of affluence that people see around them—skyscrapers, expensive cars, big houses, and the unequal distribution of wealth—it is every person's dream to live a good life with power, money, status, and prestige.

Under these circumstances, it is understandable that civil servants are inclined to demand gratuities, speed money or *dash*, or *kitu kidogo* before performing their services. Therefore, due to frustration, most government workers are tempted to accept bribes to supplement their meager incomes. In sum, the historical legacy of colonialism, neo-colonialism, the "Big Men", nepotism and tribalism in concert cause political corruption in sub-Saharan Africa.
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CHAPTER 4

POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND LEADERSHIP IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: TRIBALISM AND PATERNALISM

"Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."
---Lord Action

"I am your god and teacher. I am the divine way, the torch that lights the dark. There is no god but Ali Solih".
---Ali Solih, the late president of Comoros

"After me, it will be upon you, if you allow even monkeys to rule you".
---Daniel arap Moi, Kenya's president

"We know so little of Africa, the 800 [sic] and some tribes that make up Africa... I say it is like a different world".
---Senator Hubert Humphrey, 1976

In this rapidly changing world, each decade/era has its own political horizon, its own system of values, its own experiences, its own political leaders, and, of course, its own style of political leadership. According to John Cartwright, "The essence of leadership is the ability to persuade others to comply voluntarily with one's wishes". However, when we endeavor to determine what creates this ability to persuade, the cult of personality, attributes, traits, ideology, and other elements that leaders possess are hard to pin down, even though they play a significant role.
Leadership is an elusive phenomenon that eludes precise definition. James MacGregor Burns asserts that, "The study of leadership has been largely neglected by modern social scientists, who for both methodological and ideological reasons have tended to concentrate on mass movements and more easily measured phenomena. No one has yet developed a general theory of leadership". Nonetheless, when we speak of "leadership" what comes to mind is the activity of an individual who draws from his people to pursue his intended goals. In Africa, individuals such as Kwame Nkrumah, Patrice Lumumba, Jomo Kenyatta, and Nelson Mandela appealed to the masses in their endeavor to liberate their countries from white domination.

But leadership not only revolves around "heroic" figures, but also around individuals who are capable of compromising out of a diversity of conflicting interests. For example, Nelson Mandela's ability to negotiate and compromise with both white and black South Africans to achieve harmony makes him a great leader. In essence, the ability of a leader to act, to persuade followers, and to win their support with the intent of bringing his goals into fruition and acquire legitimacy is what entails leadership.

Leadership does involve not only voluntary compliance but also a special kind of power relationship between the leader and the led—a symbiotic relationship. Because of
this special relationship, Burns contends that it is easier for "leaders to induce followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations—the wants and needs, the values and aspirations—of both the leaders and followers". Therefore, leadership is the power and ability to obtain non-coercion and voluntary compliance from followers that enable both the leaders and followers to achieve their goals.

However this is not to argue that leaders cannot obtain compliance with coercion. Quite to the contrary, tyrannical political leaders, e.g., Adolf Hitler, Idi Amin Dada, Samuel Doe, Jean Bokassa, Mengistu Haile Mariam, Kenneth Kaunda, Kamuzu Banda, Sani Abacha, and Mobutu Sese Seko have all ruled with an iron hand and, supposedly, acquired legitimacy. This kind of leadership, coercion, is, however, short-lived. Cartwright argues that "some material reward is needed, and the resources to provide such rewards are most readily obtained through control of the machinery of the state".

In Africa, it is hard not to find politics and political leaders untainted by high levels of state centralization, coercion, favoritism, tribalism, and paternalism. The salting away of government favors, contracts, developmental loans, etc., by the "Big Men" to their tribesmen, cliques, cronies, and loyal friends is
quite the norm. As a matter of fact, politics in Africa is influenced by tribal politics and tribal leadership. In other words, the style of political leadership in Africa is by and large that of the paternal and tribal model.

POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND TRIBALISM

When the focus turns to African politics, scholars and journalists oftentimes use terms such as "tribe" or "tribalism" to analyze the issues, but do not do the same for other parts of the world. As a matter of fact, the word "tribe", when applied to the African people, refers to something far different than when it is applied to North American Indians, Australian aborigines, or even European ethnic groupings. Additionally, some African tribes are described as village states, empires, or in terms of language groups.

According to Paul Bohannan and Philip Curtins, the term "tribalism" became common in European writing about Africa in the 19th century. They argue that, in the era of the slave trade, Europeans usually talked about different African "nations" or tribal-nations, but under colonial rule these "nations" became "tribes". In fact, European colonialists often encouraged Africans to band into tribes to make it economically less costly to administer and easier to divide and rule.
Keith Richburg contends that tribalism or ethnic self-interest remains the defining feature of politics and political leadership in Africa. Because there is a lack of a sense of nationalism, i.e., national identity, among African people that can transcend tribalism, political leaders—the "Big Men" often play the "tribal card" to come to power and/or remain in power. Scholars argue that the style of political leadership revolves around paternalism—"Strong Men" and tribalism. This style of leadership is to most leaders a means to an end. Even among some of Africa's most charismatic heroes—Lumumba, Kenyatta, Nkrumah, and Mandela—the manifestation of tribal politics was/is evident. To understand the role of tribal politics, it is vital to define tribalism as a concept.

In Webster's dictionary, tribalism is defined as:

An organization, culture, or a belief of a tribe. A tribe, on the other hand, is a system of social organization comprising several local villages, bands, districts, lineages, or other groups that share a common ancestry, culture, language, name, and territory. Within the tribe, there is solidarity and a sense of identity among people.

In Africa, tribalism is as old as Africa and forms the primary mode of leadership. Fred Burke asserts that, "tribalism or the value and behavior patterns that can be attributed to tribal organization and life, is not so much disappearing or reappearing as it is changing in form and substance". In fact, with the partitioning of Africa by
the Europeans in the late 1800s, tribes were displaced, dislocated, and/or forced to live together. Therefore, colonialism indeed reinforced tribal conflicts and competition for scarce economic resources and political power that have enhanced the tribal warfare/conflicts that exist to this day in modern Africa.

Regarding ethnic/tribal groups, Nigerian Chief Obafemi Awolowo once said:

It is a mistake to designate them 'tribes'. Each of them is a nation by itself...There is as much difference between them as there is between the Germans, English, Russians, and Turks....Their cultural backgrounds and social outlooks differ widely; and their indigenous political institutions have little in common.\textsuperscript{11}

Due to tribal or ethnic differences among the peoples of Africa, it is not surprising to find politics and leadership based upon the tribal setting.

No doubt African leaders oftentimes rule as kings/chiefs. In fact, in pre-colonial Africa, "larger tribes generally possessed more highly developed political systems wherein a paramount chief or divine right king ruled the tribal nation through the agency of a hierarchy of lesser chiefs...."\textsuperscript{12} In the same way, some modern day African leaders rule with absolute power over their people/subjects. As a matter of fact, these leaders make policy decisions individually and/or with the assistance of self-appointed officials. Therefore, because African leaders
emerge from traditional settings, they oftentimes adopt and rule as elders or chiefs—something that comes to them naturally. This is because during their childhood and adulthood, they were raised under the leadership of the elders or chiefs at the village level. Therefore, when they become leaders themselves, they tend to follow the traditional (elder/chief) styles of leadership even in modern settings.

Some scholars argue that the politics of ethnicity take the behavior they do because they are the only forms of identity that exist or are presumed to exist in many African societies. The fact that leaders rule as elder or chiefs and consistently offer favors to their own tribes/ethnic groups in terms of jobs, government contracts, business licenses, and development grants is to nobody's surprise.

The unending competition among other tribes and former chiefdoms for these scarce goods and services often leads to conflict because of ethnic consciousness. Under such circumstances, competition and conflict are bound to occur. This ethnic factor is commonly referred to as "tribalism" is so salient that Melson and Wolpe think it instigates conflicts that, in turn, produce tribalism and not vice versa.
Tom Mboya probably sums it up best when he writes that one of the microcosmic factors for the persistence of ethnic sentiment among African leaders is that, "They are still to some degree 'communal' because of their background and their relatives remaining tribal, and so they themselves cannot afford to change at the risk of offending and losing their family."\textsuperscript{15}

Most significantly, however, is the need for a leader to create and maintain a power base. It is Elliot Skinner's contention that, during the colonial era, any "African leader with universalistic values found that he had to appeal to group identity based on descent, if he would galvanize his followers to seek political power."\textsuperscript{16} And after independence, as P.H. Gullivers argues, "African politicians necessarily require a firm base for their operations in the still unstable, inchoate national arena. What better, in the short run, to ensure support, electoral and other, and to wield a powerful political weapon, than to stand as the representative and spokesman of the tribe?"\textsuperscript{17}

Even those leaders who wished to operate as nationalists stood to risk losing tribal support. For example, Jomo Kenyatta's dilemma in the 1940s was, as William Ochieng contends, a win-lose situation. Ochieng states that Kenyatta "wished to operate as a nationalist
leader of Kenya, but the Kikuyu were planning in tribal
terms". This dilemma can be applied to almost all African
leaders.

In sum, it is important to cite Colin Legum's theory
about the importance of a reciprocal relationship between
the leader and the led: "The elitist political leader in
the modern system needs his 'constituency' invariably a
tribe or at best a region--on which to rest his power, just
as the tribal or regional constituency needs its royal
representatives to defend and promote their interests in the
modern sector". Therefore, the leader's entrapment or
dilemma to meet his tribesmen's and followers' demands and
needs is indeed a driving force behind African political
leadership.

While it is true that tribalism causes political
corruption, ethnic conflicts, and retards development (the
"curse" of modern day Africa), political leaders seek to
secure class position and power by "constructing intra-
tribal patron-client hierarchies defining social conflicts
in terms of ethnic relationships...." and for the purpose
of acquiring legitimacy. In fact, African leaders derive
their power base and legitimacy first and foremost from
their ethnic groups, and through a patron-client
relationship. Therefore, tribalism and clientalism should
not be treated as phenomena peculiar to the so-called
"primitive world". According to Deborah Kaspin, "African tribalism is, in fact, fairly typical of identity politics so richly in evidence in the world at large.".

African ethnicity is treated differently from European ethnicity as reflected in the media coverage of "tribal warfare" in Rwanda as opposed to "ethnic violence" in Bosnia. Cohen states that, "somehow, ethnicity is more primordial in Black-Africa than it is in white Europe. Social scientists have scrutinized this concept from several perspectives and treated it alternatively as a fundamental aspect of identity.". Therefore, ethnic politics and ethnic leadership are part and parcel of the African political system.

POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND PATERNALISM

On the other hand, paternalism—the "father figure" or strong man syndrome—is another form/style of leadership in Africa. Paternalism derives its meaning and function from patriarchal societies whereby a father is regarded as the head of the household, the breadwinner, provider, and protector of the family. As for the ethnic group or tribe, a king/Chief is the head, protector, and overseer of the needs and demands of a whole ethnic group or tribe. Tribal kings/chiefs rule with the help of several self-appointed sub-chiefs who are answerable to chief the alone. In fact,
tribal kings/chiefs possess absolute authority because they are regarded by the tribe as "fathers" or "strong men".

In the same way that chiefs once ruled, modern day African leaders rule as "father figures" entitled to absolute power in decision-making, and oftentimes, of being above law. To win trust and support from the general public, a leader must prove that his policies provide benefits to his people. Cartwright asserts that "trust can derive from a number of attributes perceived in the leader by his followers: selflessness, age, intellectual ability, militance, or even familiarity". Perhaps selflessness, the perception that what the leader is doing is for the good of all and not particularly for his benefit, comes closest to being a necessary ingredient in creating this bond. "In Africa, respect for age has given a number of leaders a powerful hold over their countrymen. Felix Houphouet-Boigny, "Le Vieux" of the Ivory Coast, Jomo Kenyatta, "Mzee" or the "wise leader" of Kenya, William Tubman, "the Old Man" of Liberia, and Dr. Milton "Pa" Margai of Sierra Leone all enjoyed wide respect for the presumed wisdom and detachment that age and experience gave them". Other rulers built their bonds on quite different qualities. For example, "Kwame Nkrumah presented himself as militant, and eventually took the military title of "Osegeyfo", the warrior redeemer. Julius Nyerere has always cast himself a 'Mwalimu' the
teacher, and appears to maintain respect in the role of the thoughtful intellectual".  

Blaine Harden argues that, in Africa, everything from the judiciary, legislature, civil service, parastatals, media, and schools are under the Big Men's control. These Big Men regard themselves as all-powerful and honorable. In fact, most leaders often use heroic titles to make their case. Daniel arap Moi, is known as "Baba" (father) of Kenya, Mobutu Sese Seko as the "cock" of Zaire, and Nelson Mandela as a warrior of south. Some even insist on being called "doctors", "teachers", "conquerors", "the big elephants/lions", "the number-one peasants", "the wise old men", "the national miracles", "the most popular leaders in the world", "the immortal beings", or "the gods" In fact, the major reason why strong men are corrupt in contemporary Africa is purely because they can use their absolute strong men's power to use their government treasuries as they please.

The fact that they are supposedly entitled to a blank check as national providers and comptrollers of the state resources necessitates political corruption. In fact, "Strong Men" use the state's resources to feed a personality cult that defines them as incorruptible, all-knowing, physically strong, courageous in battles, sexually potent,
and kind to children and the public at large. However, these leaders' rules have one overriding goal: to perpetuate their reign as Big Men.26

Therefore, under such circumstances, they create patron-client relationships to ensure loyalty and legitimacy and thus enhance political corruption.27 More often than not, tribalism and paternalism are the norm among these leaders. For example, the eras of Mobutuism and Moiism are just two illustrations where both tribalism and paternalism played a great role in political leadership. Therefore, paternalism and tribalism--kinship ties or parochial tribal identity of a leader-led relationship--dictate "who gets what, how, and when".28 These two evils are ultimately the cause for political corruption.

POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND CHARISMATIC LEADERS

According to Richburg, "corruption is the cancer eating at the heart of the African state. It is what sustains Africa's strong men in power, and the money they pilfer, when spread generously throughout the system, is what allows them to continue to command allegiance long after their last shreds of legitimacy are gone".29 The question whether charismatic leaders, e.g., Nkrumah, Lumumba, Kenyatta, and
Mandela, ruled/rules as tribal chiefs is emphatically "yes". In the case of Nelson Mandela, a leader "who proudly displays a non-tribal stance, some of his followers nevertheless kill each other as Zulus and Xhosas". Furthermore, Mandela is accused of providing favors to his Xhosa tribesmen, especially among the ANC's top executive officials.

As for Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Richburg writes that, "Kenyatta was a harsh autocrat, a tribal chieftain of the first order who believed that it was the Kikuyus's national right to rule." Kenyatta consistently gave his Kikuyu tribesmen favors in terms of business licenses, farms, development grants, government contracts, top governmental positions, government scholarships, jobs, etc., thus enriching the Kikuyus. In the same footsteps that Kenyatta took, today the Kalenjin, the country's smallest tribe under Daniel arap Moi, has done the same thing.

In the case of Kwame Nkrumah and his advocacy of Pan-Africanism, the tasks that faced African revolution were "the struggle against imperialism and neo-colonialism, the liquidation of economic and cultural backwardness, the overcoming of tribalism." He was later, however, accused by some African politicians of having "just one goal in mind—to establish Ghana's hegemony in Africa and satisfy his
personal ambitions". Nonetheless, Nkrumah was truly the best example of a dynamic African leader. In his book, *Africa Must Unite*, Nkrumah wrote, "Africa needs a new type of citizen...a dedicated, modest, honest, informed man. A man who submerges self in service to his nation and mankind. A man who abhors greed and detests vanity. A new type of man whose humanity is his strength and whose integrity is his greatness".

Patrice Lumumba of Congo/Zaire also belonged in the company of Nkrumah, Nyerere of Tanzania, Tom Mboya of Kenya, and Ahmed Sekou Toure of Guinea. These leaders believed that the only way to build an effective modern state free from the shackles of narrow tribal loyalties was to create a single, and central government. Lumumba, although identified with his Beteteta tribe, was also able to attract the strongly expressed loyalties of a tribally-heterogeneous body of the Congolese. Because of this factor, Lumumba was truly the only national political leader. Although he was assassinated, Lumumba is still regarded as "a true son of Africa, and in his short unhappy lifetime, he was accepted as belonging to all of Africa, not just Congo". Whatever the case, it is truly impossible for a leader to be non-tribal in a multi-racial setting. Indeed, Lumumba, Nkrumah, Nyerere, and Toure's regimes were not necessarily less paternalistic or tribal in nature.
Tribalism may sound like an old cliche', but it is still part and parcel of Africa's body politic. Similarly, ethnicity dominates Africans' social and political life. It is Richburg's assertion that it is tribalism that prompted the Rwandan Hutus to exterminate tens of thousands of the Tutsis; that it was tribalism that recently turned Kenya's Kalenjins against the Kikuyus in the Rift Valley Province; that it is tribalism that turned the Zulus against the Xhosas; and that it is tribalism that has caused human atrocities throughout Africa—Zaire, Burundi, Somalia, Ethiopian, and the Sudan.38

Richburg maintains that, political leaders are willing to play the tribal card, to unleash tribal passions and rivalries for their own sinister motives, and to create the kind of violent chaos and atmosphere they need to justify their grip on power. Sadly, all too many Samuel Does, Juvenal Habyarimanas, Siad Barres, Mengistu Haile Mariams, Daniel arap Mois, Mobutu Sese Sekos, and Sani Abachas have proven to do just that.39 Wangari Maathai also adds that "...many of the current African leaders enjoy immense power and control and indeed run states as if they were their personal property...invent divisive and manipulative tactics, e.g., politically-motivated tribal clashes/conflicts among ethnic groups in order to stay in power".40 Because of this factor, most Africans have totally
lost faith in the political leadership of their countries. In fact, all throughout African society there is a noticeable absence of national pride and patriotism or a sense of national identity simply because of tribalism and paternalism.

In sum, it is quite in order to argue that, in Africa, politics and leadership are significantly influenced by both paternal and tribal practices. This style/model of leadership varies among different countries and societies both in substance and magnitude. But theoretically and practically, political leadership in particular revolves around tribal politics. Sadly, this trend was/is evident among some charismatic leaders, e.g., Lumumba, Nkrumah, Kenyatta, and Mandela.

Therefore, one can draw a general conclusion that political leadership in sub-Saharan Africa has a lot to do with paternalism and tribalism/ethnicity and above all political corruption. Indeed, one cannot study political corruption in sub-Saharan Africa without linking it to political leadership. These two concepts have a symbiotic relationship and often times they reinforce each other. For example, if the leaders are corrupt, paternalistic, and tribalistic, surely, one expects bad leadership and vice versa. Truly, a good leader such as Nelson Mandela serves
as a role-model or example to the general public and the African continent as a whole as to what good leadership entails. To eradicate political corruption and ensure good governance in sub-Saharan Africa, leaders such as Mandela are essential.
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CHAPTER 5

THE POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF POLITICAL CORRUPTION

Political corruption has its roots in ancient times. Philosophers, including Aristotle, warned that the states that wished to prevent revolutions in their monarchies, oligarchies, and democracies ought to guard against inequalities that arise out of corrupt practices by those in public office or public affairs. He stated that "Every state should be so regulated by law that its magistrates (read public servants) cannot possibly make money....People do not take great offence at being kept out of government;...What irritates them is to think that their rulers are stealing the public money". For example, in Rome, "unscrupulous gain from forbidden sources", especially the practice of bribe-taking was vehemently condemned and punishable by death. This is because bribery contributed to political and social decay and thus affecting economic growth. Clearly, even though political corruption has its complex manifestations in polities, it nonetheless remains one of the most destructive phenomena in the history of mankind and within contemporary societies.
Gregory Jaynes, for example, states that in recent years the complex interactions between multinational organizations and national governments, the bubba-ocracy in America, the narcotics undercover agents in Latin and North America, the Gonzalez crisis in Spain, the political scandals in Italy the current crimes and resistance to reform in Russia, are spurned and lubricated by the hydra-headed phenomenon of corruption. The truth of the matter is that, whichever way scholars and people across the globe may view political corruption, its consequences are undoubtedly damaging and deadly. Countries in Third World nations, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa, are the worst affected.

From a philosophical point of view Alatas states that:

Corruption promotes nihilism and cynicism....creates the composite problem such as the 'brain drain' of educated people from third world societies. In such problem corruption is a major constituent and combines with others to form a composite whole. Administrative inefficiency and parasitism are other examples of composite problem.

Consequently, the end results grand corruption are injustice, inequality, and human misery. For example, during periods of famine, and as recently as 1994, many Somali children and adults died of malnutrition and other diseases because Somali warlords and public officials stole relief supplies, food, and medicine that were meant for emergency and humanitarian purposes. From 1992 to 1994,
within Rwanda, Burundi, the former Zaire, and many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, it was reported that government officials were stealing relief supplies and selling them on the black-market, thus exacerbating the suffering of the poor, sick, and powerless.

Syed Hussein Alatas contends that countless episodes of injustice are clearly visible to those who wish to see in the majority of Third World countries, particularly Africa, where total systemic corruption is the order of the day. In the same vein, Stanislav Andreski cites many cases of injustice that are generated by corruption in West Africa. He states that in hospitals, for instance, patients pay nurses to bring them bedpans, and doctors too take bribes before treating or providing medication to the patients. Furthermore, medicinal supplies are stolen from dispensaries and public hospitals and sold on the street for profit and/or are stocked in doctors' private clinics. In fact, this pathological behavior of medical practitioners and other government workers applies within almost all of Sub-Saharan Africa. Alatas notes that without bribing doctors, nurses, or hospital staff, nothing can be obtained. In the 1990s, it was found that for years within Kenya's Ministry of Health, dead people were on the payroll and were still "receiving" monthly paychecks and other bonuses. The beneficiaries were top civil servants within the Ministry.
Ronald Wraith and Edgar Simpkins cite cases in Nigeria and elsewhere in West Africa in which outpatients had to bribe nurses and doctors in order to be admitted to hospitals or clinics and receive treatment. The same thing applies to people without jobs. For these unfortunates, the only way to acquire job application forms is by giving dash or bribes to government officials. In fact, job-seekers have to hand out bribes starting from as low as janitors to clerks to bosses. To arrange for an interview, it takes a series of illicit tolls, "speed money", to become eligible. Even after employment has been secured, dash to the bosses does not stop. Rather it takes a different shape. Monthly "gifts" or "pocket money", lunch, and other entertainment items are continually extorted from lower civil servants by their seniors. The penalty for not complying can be transfer to remote areas and hardship regions or even demotion.

This kind of systemic corruption is what Andreski Stanislav calls "kleptocracy"--a state that steals. Its results are as follows:

The losses caused by corruption exceed by far the sum of individual profits derived from it, because graft distorts the whole economy. Important decisions are determined by ulterior motives regardless of consequences to the wider community. When a useless factory is built in an impossible place simply because the former owner of the site bribed the official into buying it for an exorbitant price, then the cost to the community must exceed by far the profit of the
manipulators. An administrative machine permeated by graft does not respond to direction, so that even a most enlightened and personally honest leader can achieve nothing, his instructions are perverted in execution; and the network of collusion is so thick that he goes as in a fog. Every bureaucratic machine suffers to some extent from aversion to initiative and originality, from sycophancy and the preferment of intriguers and yes-men. But when graft adjoins these normal diseases the administrative services become a mere machine of extortion, scarcely able to maintain a minimum of public order, let alone to engage in successful economic planning.¹²

For a government plagued by systemic corruption such as was the case with the former Zaire, neglecting various duties and obligations essential to effective administrative management and smooth-running of a country is the end result. It is Wang An Shih's assertion that a corrupt state always neglects its responsibilities and obligations in its exclusive attention to political corruption. This neglect may reach a point that it becomes callous, disastrous, and deadly to the whole society.¹³ For instance, the deadly plague of ebola that killed many Zaireans in recent years was a result of the government of Zaire, and in particular that of Mobutu, neglecting to provide basic hygiene, sanitation, and preventive measures against the disease. Consequently, the death toll escalated and caused havoc in certain regions of the country. Meanwhile Mobutu and his cronies were busy continuing to enrich themselves.
Additionally, the loss and shortage of the water supply in Accra, Ghana, in 1979 was brought about by years of neglect in maintaining the Ashiaman reservoir. The effect of the lack of water in the capital of Ghana was alarming and damaging to the public. Shih goes on to state that, "During this period Ghana stood at the brink of a calamitous epidemic and consequent national disaster. Children drank from filthy pools; water from gutters was collected for human consumption; septic tanks remained unflushed for days and Accra stood in shame".14

THE FUNCTIONAL AND DYSFUNCTIONAL IMPACTS OF POLITICAL CORRUPTION

The question is: does political corruption have functional or dysfunctional impacts? While some scholars see corruption as dysfunctional others see it as functional. According to Charles Schwartz, corruption is on a micro and macro-level dysfunctional because it breeds and feeds upon economic wastefulness, investment distortions, administrative anarchy, political misrule, and social disintegration.15 To put this in perspective, in Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi, Angola, Mozambique, Nigeria, Zaire, Cameroon, and Kenya, corruption has bred disastrous effects such as civil war, ethnic conflict, coup d’etat, starvation, poverty, and human suffering.
Morally, corruption leads to ethical decay and instills a negative, widespread belief that state property belongs to no one in particular and, therefore, is free for all. On the systemic level, due to chronic mismanagement of state property, people lose hope in their governments and laws. Thus instead of joining hands to clean or fix a corrupt state, they spend their energies plundering scarce resources. Perhaps there are no other societies that so strongly believe that what belongs to one belongs to all (free for the taking) than are African societies. Among African states, property mali ya serikali is like holy water that everyone helps himself to.

Politically, corruption promotes apathy that arises because of the pilfering and wasting of state property. This leads to alienation, cynicism, and a reluctance to fight corruption or crimes that are related to bribery, and graft. It is Schwartz's argument that black, gray, and white types of corruption altogether breed specific patterns of corruption that contribute to blocking political development and economic growth.

In contrast, other scholars, particularly Stephen Morris, contends that the analysis of the consequences or functions of corruption hinges on the dialectic between the capacity of corruption to serve as a source of spoils among the elites on the one hand, and its negation of principles
of conduct set out by the legitimizing ideology on the other. He argues that, from the state perspective, corruption can enhance stability of the organizational components of the state and formal procedures that reflect popular legitimacy. Although corruption may provide a pragmatic co-operative device to gain political support crucial to the survival of the system, it can also be antithetical to legitimacy. Because corruption provides an avenue for the illegitimate enrichment of a group of elites at the expense of the public/majority, legitimacy crises can be the ultimate consequence.

Morris asserts that corruption plays a great role in integrating and accommodating the different state actors—patron clients, political teams, middlemen, politicians, policymakers, and their supporters by facilitating cooperation and creating a cooperative mechanism for the rising middle class by distributing spoils, implementing flexible public policy, facilitating social mobility, thus crippling mass-based organizations.

Political corruption also helps to bolster the feelings of legitimacy among political elites by offering material benefits to those who play the game according to the rules and support the status quo, thus standing to benefit financially and politically. James C. Scott states that
government supporters are handpicked by presidents to occupy strategic positions and are endowed with power to distribute goods and services as they see fit, and in so doing, they help to draw mass support and mobilize public participation in order to maintain the status quo.\(^\text{20}\)

Indeed, the use of corruption and bribery to integrate an elite and stabilize the system by "buying" with hard currency support, especially from those members of the opposite political parties (defectors) into the ruling party, is rampant and crucial in most African nations. In Kenya, for instance, it is known that President Daniel arap Moi buys potential opponents with state money by handing out hard currency, cars, houses, land, business sites, and government loans payable without interest, thus encouraging them to defect to his ruling party, Kenya African National Union (K.A.N.U.).\(^\text{21}\) In Nigeria, the former Zaire, and other military-ruled regimes, political or military leaders buy off top military officials in return for supporting or protecting the state against potential vigilantes or coup d'etat from within and without. The truth is, throughout Africa the practice of buying top civil servants, military officials, politicians, or opponents is part and parcel of the African style of leadership.\(^\text{22}\)

Joseph Nye remarks that corruption allows certain
political actors a means of escaping the constraints of policies that may not be in their best interest.\textsuperscript{21} Nathaniel Leff also notes that by permitting this behind-the-scenes influence, corruption also allows non-ideologically sanctioned actors an extralegal avenue to influence public policy at a more secretive implementation stage.\textsuperscript{24}

Furthermore, corruption provides a vehicle whereby political actors as well as criminals "buy" immunity from criminal prosecution or "purchase" well-paying government jobs or promotion.\textsuperscript{25} Indeed, for many people throughout Africa, political corruption has at one time or another helped solve a serious problem or dilemma, particularly when directly dealing with government institutions or bureaucrats. In this way, those who benefit from illegal connections often support the existing government and thus contribute in enhancing political stability.\textsuperscript{26}

Within the tribal setting, the so-called "divide and rule" principle has become a sure tool that African presidents use to guard against ethnic unity and revolution. This tactic helps leaders maintain their rule and legitimacy. Even when their legitimacy is waning, leaders often buy off their political opponents, powerful politicians, and members of those ethnic groups they see as "troublemakers" to secure their rulership. Usually, they hand out hard currency, loans, government scholarships,
contracts, jobs, and promotions and build schools, clinics, and roads.  

For instance, scholars argue that President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya sees the Luo, Kikuyu, Luhya, and Kisii tribes as "troublemakers" and thus buys them off from time to time. He directly appoints or nominates them to powerful and crucial government cabinet ministries, to Parastatals as executive directors, to top military positions, as ambassadors, university chancellors, provincial commissioners, and district commissioners. This does not mean that Moi cannot demote them if they fail to support his government or as Kenyans say, they do not "fuata nyayo" follow his foot-steps.  

It is also argued that Moi is one of the "worst tribalistic" leaders in Kenya. He has made sure that his Kalenjin tribesmen are placed within every strategic sector of government, Parastatals, non-governmental organization, military force, university, provincial and district level, national and local levels to guarantee his rule.  

The same can be said of Nigeria's dictator, Sani Abacha, who buys off members of the Ogoni and Yoruba tribes. The same goes on within his military force. Also the late Mobutu Sese Seko used the same strategy and gave favors to his cronies and favored tribes. These are only three examples, but the same can be said of almost all African
presidents and countries. Viewed from these presidents' and their beneficiaries' perspective, corruption and bribery can function because it helps to enhance their rule, prolong their leadership, achieve political stability and legitimacy, and enforce public participation and support.

It is also James C. Scott's assertion that political corruption can be functional at a personal level because it contributes to stabilizing the political system by discouraging horizontal mobilization of the classes or occupational groups. What this means is that, while corruption benefits the few who support the system, it discourages any potential group that may decide to overthrow the existing government, because those that benefit from corrupt deals or transactions also serve as "watchdogs" against any uprising or revolution.

Scott goes on to remark that this occurs in two ways: First is that corruption adds to the potential of co-opting leaders of potentially powerful and threatening horizontal groups, e.g., labor unions, non-governmental organizations, and women's organizations, into supporting the system. Indeed, this trend is a common practice in Africa because it allows powerful labor leaders and top executive officers the opportunity to exploit their organizations and to enjoy other privileges from the government in return for supporting the government of the day and by controlling the
demands of the labor unions, workers, and women. Simply put, they assist in taming workers and women to ensure that they support and vote only the rule of the controlling political parties.\textsuperscript{32}

In most African states, women's organizations often become the right arm of the ruling parties. Because women "hold the sky", that is, they are in the majority, political leaders want them on their side for support and votes. Often, women vote the president's party line or else they may encounter roadblocks or risk government subsidies, financial support, loans, and business licenses. In Kenya, for instance, the Kenya Mandeleo Ya Wanawake Organization (M.Y.W.O.) usually takes orders from the presidential level. The government is also usually very aware of and behind many women's undertakings both on national and local levels. Candidates running for MYWO's executive offices are usually either handpicked or supported by the government. The president makes sure that the chair is a Kenyan African National Organization (KANU) supporter and is capable of mobilizing women at both national and local levels to support and vote in favor of the ruling party's initiatives.\textsuperscript{33}

Secondly, Scott contends that corruption can make it relatively easy to channel demands through the system in a personal fashion at the implementation stage rather than
through broad-based pressures at the policy-making level. This personal contact with political officials yields more superb outcomes than when dealing with a large group of people. Stephen Morris concludes that corruption promotes political stability especially on the part of the elite through its integrative tendencies. It also encourages political pragmatism and helps the elite smooth the rough edges of public policies by altering their implementation. Put simply, corruption can facilitate co-optation among different groups and enhances political stability.

Charles Schwartz, on the other hand, argues that political corruption, particularly the white type, can be functional because it serves as an essential lubricant in otherwise rigidly regimented political regimes. He maintains that, within the administration sector, bribes and clandestine gift-giving and abuse of power can be functional for governmental capacity to the extent that it cuts bureaucratic redtape, provides greater managerial initiatives and responsibilities, and allows for legitimate business expenses to be recovered through misappropriations.

Nye also argues that for political corruption to have a generally beneficial effect on political development, it must meet three cardinal conditions. The first is a political culture that is tolerant or corrupt, the second is
a greater security for political elites, party hierarchy members, and politicians close to the president, and the third is the existence of adequate societal or institutional restraints on corruption through law.38

Throughout Africa, corruption is tolerated because political elites often deviate from morality and the rule of law while dealing with administration, governance, and the public. Second, all presidential "cliques" have full the protection of their presidents or government institutions and, thus, they are above the law and hardly ever do they get prosecuted or punished (jailed) for being corrupt. Because the political elites are protected, this dulls their sense of public responsibility; nor are they answerable to the public apart from the presidents only. Third, due to arbitrary and capricious African laws and their inadequacy to define what exactly constitutes corruption, gifts and bribes are oftentimes used interchangeably. For those who attempt to define corruption, they are either vague, ambiguous, or mute. For example, in Kenya there is no law that prohibits conflict of interest, thus making it legal for politicians and other political elites to engage in business when they want—and all of them do.39

Walter Little and Eduardo Posada-Carbo argue that grand corruption can boost the overall growth rate by increasing the investment ratio and improving the marginal productivity
of capital. They state that this "accumulation thesis is most likely to hold where corrupt rulers feel secure enough to reinvest the surplus which they illegally extract". According to these scholars, if corrupt leaders invest their illegally acquired wealth by creating jobs and building infrastructure such as roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, and public airports, this would assist in raising the living standards of their people and the trickle down effect would be realized. Dr. Nathan Ozobia also notes that:

If all Africans would plough their ill-gotten money back to their countries and communities, the trickle down effect can be possible. But the bitter truth is that African leaders are not willing to take that chance. They are better off stashing their wealth in the Swiss banks and other foreign countries because of paranoia.

The classic examples of those leaders who keep their ill-gotten wealth hidden in foreign countries are from Nigeria, the former Zaire, and Kenya. For these leaders, corruption provides an avenue to amass wealth and siphon it away unnoticed and undeclared. Take for example the case of the late Mobutu Sese Seko. All his ill-gotten wealth was stashed and scattered throughout the world from Africa (Morocco, Gabon, and Comoros) to Europe (France and Belgium) to North America (the United States) to South America (Brazil) and, of course, other countries where he owned villas, hotels, ranches, houses, and businesses. The same is true with Daniel arap Moi of Kenya, Sani Abacha of
Nigeria, and Paul Biya of the Cameroon. This behavior clearly damages the economy of Africa and contributes to its perpetual underdevelopment and political disintegration.

According to Colin Leys, a society that lacks effective public morality cannot develop economically. The fact that Africa's development depends upon government action in terms of planning and allocation of funds towards development, achieving these goals requires single-minded hard work, integrity, the rule of law, and moral principle at all levels—leaders, office-holders, and businessmen. Without this simple rule of thumb, the chances for economic growth and social and political development would be minimal. Unfortunately, the reason why Africa's development has stalled is primarily because its elites often consume all their energies and time getting rich quickly through illegal transactions, corruption, and placing self-interest above public interest.

Writing on the issue of morality and economic development, Patrick J. Dobel clearly sums it up by stating that:

An immoral society is where moral life has, so to speak, been privatized. As a result, social relations are characterized by complete self-interest and fellow citizens are seen as instruments, obstacles, or competitors. In the immorally corrupt society, civil virtue and social responsibility are abandoned and intense competition for spoils become the dominant social mode.
Other scholars argue that, due to Africa's high level of immoral behavior, i.e., corruption, bribery, embezzlement, abuse of power, selfishness, and lawlessness, economic and socio-political development have been hindered or compromised. Undoubtedly, political corruption is the most devastating problem second only to tribalism or ethnicity in Africa. According to Schwartz, this disease is dysfunctional because it leads to policy and investment distortions, theft of state property, and wastefulness. Indeed, in Africa corrupt maniacs loom large like predators on the streets of Dakar, Mogadishu, Khartoum, Maseru, Timbuktu, Lilongwe, Lagos, Dar es Salaam, Nairobi, and Kinshasa. Due to the slow prospect of democracy and reform against bribery and corruption, this problem will inevitably continue to damage African development. As the era of Moiism, Bandaism, and Abachaism, among others, continues to ruin development, there is an increasing continent-wide need for decentralization, privatization, downsizing of the civil service, limitation on executive authority, term limits that will force African governments and leaders to become accountable, transparent, and democratic. Indeed, the Berlin Transparency International Conference has joined hands with many Africans to reform and clean up bureaucratic corruption by using the power of the purse by denying economic aid to corrupt countries. However, as Schwartz
notes, new nation-states, particularly in Africa, cannot confidently curtail the dysfunctions of corruption without sacrificing the functional utility that in most of Africa is badly needed.47

THE GRAND POLITICAL CORRUPTION: ECONOMICALLY AND POLITICALLY DESTRUCTIVE

George Moody-Stuart also asserts that grand corruption which involves influencing policymakers can be politically and economically destructive in Third World nations, especially Africa. He states that where high-level corruption is rampant, there is no hope of controlling petty corruption. Economically, grand corruption increases the cost of the transaction. For instance, if a business person pays a ten percent bribe to top government officials to acquire government contracts or a license to start a company in a certain region or area, he will increase the prices of his goods to offset the loss (money used to bribe). On the other hand, if the sale involves imported goods and services, the cost of goods will increase in order to balance the transaction. Furthermore, pushing aside cost, quality, delivery, and other legitimate considerations in the awarding of contracts, the possibility of wrong or inefficient suppliers and contractors selected is higher because it depends on the highest bidder. In the end, the
possibility of purchasing the wrong goods, using inefficient contractors, and building shoddy infrastructure is high.\footnote{48}

Arguing from the same point of view, the former British Minister for International Development, Linda Chalker, strongly states that "corruption is a major impediment to development."\footnote{49} Michael Elliot argues that those who think that corruption is a way of doing business in Third World countries and Africa and that bribery is a cultural norm are dead wrong because bribery and corruption are not part of everyone's culture. He notes that this excuse is vehemently and indignantly rejected by honest Africans, Arabs, Asians, Europeans, and Americans. Chalker, in particular, does not think that corruption is "a necessary fact of life that helps the wheels of government and business to turn".\footnote{50}

Elliot argues that corruption slows economic growth. He articulates that:

Leaner times have given corruption a nastier taste. It was easy to joke about the size of a Rolex watch on the wrist of a general in Lagos when Nigeria's oil economy was growing. But since 1980 most of sub-Saharan Africa has grown poorer, which has made sumptuary excesses of the wabenzi that much harder to swallow. It's merely unpleasant to have to pay $12 to a junior Zimbabwean official for a driver's licence. But even strong stomachs turn when—as happened in Angola—a social welfare minister imports three hundred Mercedes-Benz cars into a country racked by civil war.\footnote{51}

Indeed, it is unpleasant for government officers earning less than five thousand dollars a year to own a series of
transportation businesses—"matatus" (mini-buses), big cars, houses for rent, land for developing, real estate, import-export businesses, and contracting companies, as is the case in most African countries. The truth is, most of these wealthy men and women have gotten rich through illegal means i.e, corruption.

Corruption also affects even the most sophisticated and developed nations in the world, especially the United States of America. Amitai Etzioni poses the question: "Yes, one can say there is evidence of corruption, here and there. But how encompassing is the effect? Is it eating away at the margin, or has it wormed its way into the core?" He argues that corruption has spread beyond such low levels into systemic or institutionalized corruption. In America, he contends campaign contributions are a form of legalized corruption. But, one may ask, if campaign contributions are legal, "how are they corrupt, and if corrupt, how are they legal"? The answer to this question is that "what is ethical is not always legal, and vice versa".

Additionally, he argues that, in American politics, legislators either buy their seats or sell their votes illegally for favors and private interests in violation of public will, moral principles, and the rule of law. He goes on to remark that this legalized form of corruption is the
most damaging and the most prevalent in contemporary America. Etzioni state that:

References to corruption in Washington scenes of Abscam, of Congressional members calmly stuffing their pockets with bribe money, embarrassed only by their pockets' not being deep enough to accommodate the day's take.56

Indeed, one can argue that corrupt transactions not only involve members of Congress, but also other political elites throughout the United States who often use their power and positions for personal gain and to influence public policy. To use Representative James A. S. Leach's fancier phrase, "A government of the people, by the people, and for the people cannot be a government where influence is purchased through large, private campaign contributions".57

Today, in American politics the issue that is hotly-debated and investigated by congressional committees deals with what influence some businessmen, both foreign and domestic, had in the 1992 presidential victory. In short, the issue of illegal campaign contributions or "dirty money" that implicates the President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore is the talk of Capitol Hill.

The issue of "dirty money" not only applies to the United States, but also to all of Africa. Indeed, politicians and parliamentarians receive or demand big contributions or "percentages" from local businessmen and foreign investors before casting their votes on certain
bills or laws. Often, decisions that are made benefit these elites personally as well as their "clients". For example, the concessions that Mobutu made with some Western investors benefitted him and his cronies and not the people of Zaire. It is reported that Mobutu stole "diamonds from his country to the tune of $15 million a year". Similar practices go on throughout Africa whereby scarce natural resources are used to enrich a few political elites who have power.

Stephen Morris also notes that corruption breeds bureaucratic inefficiency and waste and undermines legitimate social programs; especially when public funds are diverted by government officials to reward only those few who support the status quo, legitimate policy objectives are undermined. In the same vein, Kenneth Johnson states that corruption "defeats whatever quest there may be...for concrete government reforms".

Undoubtedly, the reason why Africa seems to be "developing", but somehow never really develops has to do with corruption. The truth is that African countries take one step forward and two backwards. Instead of spending their money on improving their communities by constructing roads, schools, water projects and hospitals; by funding the agricultural and economic sectors; by revitalizing rural areas; and by training workers, thus creating jobs and
raising living standards, most of their resources go into building private airports and palaces, purchasing private jets, building churches, and funding private armies.  

Additionally, scarce resources are squandered through the creation of complicated corrupt schemes and procedures. For example, the purchase of public lands by government officials who later resell them to the government for public works, recreational purposes, construction of business and office complexes, hospitals, and schools is a common practice in Africa. The ongoing land grabbing schemes in Kenya by political elites serve as a classic example. Politicians and top businessmen buy public lots during auctions and resell them for ten times more than the purchase price. As reported by the Daily Nation, even plots designated for public cemeteries and schools are being grabbed by politicians. Kenya is only one example; these same practices apply to other African countries as well. Therefore, as social projects that benefit the majority are continually compromised for personal gain, legitimacy, stability, economic growth, and political integration are hard to attain.

A CULTURE OF POLITICAL CORRUPTION

Perhaps the most pernicious effect of corruption on the public at large has been fostered by a generalized "culture
of corruption". According to Victor Le Vine, "such a culture exists when politically corrupt transactions become so pervasive in a political system that they become accepted norms". This is a common practice or norm in contemporary Africa. In fact, if one asked how often Africans pay bribes when dealing with government bureaucrats or officials, the answer is not surprising. Bribes are compulsory ingredients and almost always required before goods and services are rendered. This also applies to foreign investors.

Corruption also invades virtually all dimensions of social life, producing what Morris calls a "spillover effect", or to use Syed Hussein Alatas' term, a "metastatic effect". Alatas defines metastasis as, "a growth of pathogenic micro-organisms or of abnormal cells distant from the site primarily involved by the morbid process". It is a transfer of disease from one organ or part to another not directly connected to it. Typically, metastasis refers to the spread of malignant tumors to different parts of the body. Therefore, the nature of the malignant process is significant in understanding corruption.

The cancerous or malignant process begins as progressive, unrestrained division of abnormal cells. Viewed through a microscope, cancer cells may initially maintain some degree of differentiation—that is, their specialized structure and function—so that they resemble those cells from which they arise or some developmental stage of the tissue of origin. Some cancer cells may perform limited normal functions. As the disease progresses, however, the structures usually
becomes increasingly abnormal in appearance, structure, and function until they may not be recognizable as an offshoot of the tissue of origin. They may appear in a great variety of sizes and shapes. Chromosomes in malignant cells undergoing division may appear oversized or may have symmetrical spindles or other abnormalities.65

The analogy of cancer cells to political corruption is the fact that corruption can become unrestrained and can multiply and spread into other organs and perform dysfunctional roles. The same can be said of corrupt men, who, if unrestrained, can cause their corrupt actions to multiply and spread, thus affecting honest and hardworking men and women. This analogy shows us the essence of the pathology of corruption.66 Morris argues that the "spillover effect" from bureaucratic corruption can extend into non-governmental institutions, businesses, private schools and universities, and churches.67 The same is true with bribes or "dash", "kitu kidogo", or "speed money". It can spread from top public officials to lower civil servants, to private employees dealing with government, and to the common man, "mwananchi". Corruption can be very contagious.

Moreover, in Africa the culture of corruption exhibits a sub-cultural acceptance or glorification. This is what Alatas refers to as the "demonstration effect". This effect is expressed in the lifestyle of corrupt officials and the wealth that they display. In fact, this can give the public
the impression that corruption is indeed productive and worthwhile. The advantages of corruption are made visible so that others are encouraged to become corrupt—diamonds, Rolex watches, palaces, big cars, villas, luxury private jet aircraft, houses, etc. This glorification or demonstration of ill-gotten wealth can contribute to a variety of problems, e.g., divisiveness, cynicism, contempt for honesty and, eventually, the rejection of ethical values. It can also promote anger, crime, and lawlessness that may lead to revolution, a coup d’etat, or civil war.  

In Africa, the bitterness, anger, and cynicism that have emerged due to corrupt government officials and leaders have spawned civil wars and competition and conflict among ethnic groups, hoping to control the governments and natural resources and, thus, acquire power and wealth. No doubt, the on-going bloody civil wars, ethnic conflicts, religious violence, and the attempted coup d’etats Rwanda, Burundi, Angola, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Liberia, Zaire, Uganda, Congo, and Nigeria can be attributed to corruption and tribalism that result in inequality in sharing the national cake. Put simply, it is about the powerful against the weak and all are fighting to control the economic sector.
POLITICAL CORRUPTION: A CANCEROUS DISEASE

Paul Harrison asserts that corruption is a cancer at the heart of most Third World nations, especially Africa. He writes that, "It eats away at the foundations of trust between people and their rulers. It exemplifies the two key weaknesses of developing states. The unholy marriage of political and economic power, whereby money buys influence, and power attracts money; and the 'softness' of state's inability to apply and enforce its own laws and regulations, so that reform—even if it is legislated—rarely gets put into effect". He notes that corruption "riddles every part of the public edifice like a bad infestation of woodworm".

For example, in 1975 Ghana's official Commission of Inquiry into bribery and corruption reported that corrupt practices were rife in almost all governmental departments. The commission found out that more than one hundred sixty cases of corruption practiced ranged from "staff appointments, promotions, transfers; clearance of goods from customs; allocation of market stalls; leakage of exam questions to students; privileges for prisoners; sale of files on criminal investigations to the criminals being investigated. Nothing was sacred and secure against graft. Mortuary attendants were even demanding payment to release
dead bodies to relatives. And priests were extracting 'gifts' in exchange for burying non-churchgoers in consecrated grounds". Indeed, this pathological behavior is practiced on a continent-wide basis.

The most commonly used methods or phrases by Ghanaian officials and elsewhere in Africa tend to confuse and flatter members of the public on the complexity of government procedures and the chains of bureaucratic redtapes. Often times, civil servants purposely subject the public with intolerable delays in providing them with services and thus suggest that a bribe might produce a quick solution, or preferential treatment. This method is known as "speed money". In indigenous Africa, "gifts" were rarely solicited in public or openly. But today, phrases or "lingos" are used that have developed into a language of fraud. These range from those direct phrases, e.g., loosen your hand, bring out a feed for me, let your pocket decide, let something talk, to the ambiguous: are you strong?, can I see you in the corridor?, can we talk behind the bus/truck?, can you stretch my neck?, can you see me in the dark?, can you meet me in T. G. I. F.?, buy some coffee, talk to me well, talk like a man, make me laugh, to the most bizarre phrases such as clean nana's scandals, utter a hornbill cry, let your armpit collect water, to the clue phrases.
it is dry, show me a sign of rain, the government has not paid us, etc.\textsuperscript{72}

As Neil H. Jacoby et al., argue, payoffs are so much a part of nearly every culture that most languages provide words for them. In Africa, they range from\textit{ baksheesh} (Egypt),\textit{ dash} (Nigeria),\textit{ tarif de verre} (Zaire),\textit{ kitu kidogo} or something small (Kenya), and\textit{ kiinua mgonog} (Tanzania). In Central-South America, it is \textit{jeitinho} (Brazil),\textit{ coima} (Peru),\textit{ mordida} (Mexico), and\textit{ pajada} (Honduras). In Asia, it is\textit{ hatchien} (Hong Kong),\textit{ sin bone} (Thailand),\textit{ makan siap} (Malaysia),\textit{ uong sogok} (Indonesia), and\textit{ legay} (Philippines). In the Middle East, it is\textit{ roshvey} (Iran),\textit{ roshyat} (Pakistan), and "spend money" (India). In Europe, it is\textit{ baksissi} (Greece),\textit{ pot au vin} (France),\textit{ trink geld} (Germany),\textit{ bustarella} (Italy),\textit{ vzyathat} (Soviet Union), and in North America, it is "payoff" in the United States.\textsuperscript{73}

In sum, political corruption creates a climate of moral degeneration and makes a mockery of government. It promotes decadence and malaise, makes government incompetent and undermines its ability to rule. It creates injustice and chaos; it leads to political disintegration and cynicism; it promotes immoral behavior and violations of the rule of the law; it discourages honesty, hard work, and meritocracy; it promotes ethnic conflicts, civil war, crime, and violence; it creates economic inequality; it contributes to political
instability, legitimacy crises, revolutions, coup d'etats; and it leads to economic downturns and a lack of democracy and development.

POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND DEVELOPMENT

To grasp how political corruption impedes development and democratic change in contemporary Africa, a definition of what development and democracy means is pertinent. According to James H. Mittelman, "development is the increasing capacity to make rational use of natural and human resources for social ends". Meddy Mogyenyi adds that development means "to cope with internal and external demands. It includes increasing the capacity of individuals and collectivities". Therefore, development means creating abundant goods and services by controlling one's environment for the sake of improving the socio-economic conditions of the people as a whole.

In contemporary Africa, development is not only understood from a communal point of view but also on a personal level. April Gordon and Donald Gordon write that:

For ordinary Africans, development is seen in personal terms. It means additional money for children's school books, usable roads to allow the farmers to get their products to market, electric lights in the village, affordable rice and flour, and a health clinic within a walking distance. Development too is measured by access to land, jobs, and better housing.
Furthermore, development means better living conditions and economic growth, i.e., an increase in per capita income and access to basic human goods and services and, of course, self-sustainable development which, according to Joe Barkan et al., emerges largely from within the country's resources and not necessarily one "generated by resources injected from the outside". The point these scholars are making is that resources or economic aid from outside often open a window of opportunity for political corruption, waste, and exploitation that leads to lack of development.

The primary question is: How does corruption affect political and socio-economic development in post-independent Africa? Underdevelopment or lack of development can be understood from both external and internal perspectives. Externally, African economies are unmistakably tied to those of Western capitalist countries, especially those in Europe. Africa, like many other Third World regions, exports raw materials, largely agricultural products, and imports heavy industrial materials and finished goods. Within world markets, it is argued that there is a huge trade imbalance or market price transactions between African and Western nations. While Africa's raw materials continue to fetch lower prices on world markets, those of capitalist nations earn extraordinarily more, even when it is proven some are of cheaper or lower qualities. Therefore, the fact that
the world market is stacked against African goods; because Africa is exploited on all fronts by the Western capitalist countries (a form of corruption), and because the African voice is politically impotent or unheard in world trade transactions, her development plans, especially at levels of economic growth and self-sufficiency are seriously affected.

This condition or predicament is what John Galtung refers to as dependency. He asserts that due to external exploitation and the unequal relationship between the core and periphery countries, the latter heavily depend upon the former for their development. Other studies also show that Africa's economic development is seriously affected by economic domination and excessive exploitation by the West. Gordon and Gordon contend that "the wealthy, developed countries (the 'center') prevent (the 'periphery') from developing." Indeed, economic exploitation, neo-colonialism, or "back-door colonialism" has contributed a great deal to Africa's underdevelopment and debt crisis. Large-scale borrowing from international financial institutions and a tight link to the world economy leads to "an extreme dependence on public actors from outside Africa, particularly the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank..." to chart Africa's development.

Conversely, lack of development is also brought about by internal conditions within African governments. As
George B. N. Ayittey articulates, "For decades, African radicals railed against colonial plunder, American economic imperialism, the avaricious propensities of Western banks, the predatory practices of multinational corporations, and the tight-fisted International Monetary Fund as the causes of Africa's economic crisis". Even though Western countries' financial corporations and international markets are stacked against African goods, Ayittey still believes that Africans, and particularly their leaders, are the primary cause for a lack of political and socio-economic development. The truth of the matter is that some Third World nations, especially many in Asia that experienced conditions similar to those in Africa, have achieved great heights of economic growth and success at regional, continental, and global levels. In fact, some have become economic "tigers". Cases in point are Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Taiwan.

Similarly, as reported by the World Press Review, "One cannot gainsay allegations that in the majority of cases the continent's leaders have besmirched their character through corrupt and dishonest deals". Indeed, there are numerous cases of government fraud, embezzlement, bribes, kickbacks, extortion, and political elites' skimming economic aid throughout the continent; yet many people still blame
Western capitalist countries for Africa's snail's pace of development.

To the contrary, Africa must be blamed for its lack of development. It is Michael Chege's assertion that African governments spend huge sums of borrowed money and scarce national resources on their militaries and purchase sophisticated weapons and other unnecessary equipment for defense purposes rather than wisely investing scarce resources to create jobs, better living conditions, and infrastructure.\textsuperscript{84}

Generally speaking, political corruption leads to gigantic diversions of Africa's scarce national resources and public funds into private hands, especially within the political elites and their cronies and/or ethnic groups.\textsuperscript{85} Furthermore, even the economic aid that is given under strict and exorbitant rates or injected into Africa for development purposes ends up in the bottomless pockets of political leaders and top civil servants and military echelons "who are strategically placed and have access to local power and the fruits of public office".\textsuperscript{86}

In essence, political corruption prevents economic and political development rather than promoting it.\textsuperscript{87} For instance, instead of investing and concentrating in the agricultural sector, the backbone of Africa's economy, the revitalization of rural areas where the majority of Africans
live, attempts to provide farmers with adequate infrastructure—all-weather roads, a steady water supply for irrigation, fertilizers, plans to offer basic needs such as immunization clinics and medications, schools, and job training—often go nowhere. Instead gigantic presidential empires, estates, business complexes, palaces, skyscrapers, personal monuments, and airports are constructed in the cities. Expensive and unnecessary military weapons are purchased, personal police forces (known as the Special Branch) are created, and national treasuries are used for bribing political opponents and buying ethnic groups—all for the sake of seeking legitimacy. These personal aggrandizements are made possible by graft, kickbacks, corruption, and use of the national treasury as a personal fiefdom.88

For example, within Nigeria, as in many sub-Saharan African countries, the gap between the rich and the poor is quite big and evident. Richard Olaniyan claims that corruption breeds inequality, unemployment, grinding poverty, and anti-social behaviors such as violence, crime, cynicism, and ethnic cleansing. He specifically writes that, “the unsudden and unmerited affluence corruption brings to some people, the scandals of cases of embezzlement have created a gap between the government and the masses”.89 Throughout Africa, the truth is that the rich are getting
richer while the poor are getting poorer and the gap between the two is widening. Also, due to the culture of graft and bureaucratic corruption, governments are often seen as the major enemy and the cause of inequality and injustice. Thus, it is no surprise to see civil servants abuse their power or use their offices for personal enrichment and/or perform their duties only for those who can pay.  

Another scholar who strongly believes that corruption seriously hinders development is Michael Chege who asserts that corruption and graft cannot be dismissed in Africa's body politic as just another passing cloud; rather it is a deadly disease. He argues that political corruption has been identified on a continent-wide basis as the "poison" that chokes development. Ben Turok also makes a similar claim that corruption hurts political and socio-economic development throughout Africa. He articulates that "despite a powerful rhetoric in favor of development, the development process...in practice is uneven and limited". Indeed, any signs of development can be seen only in urban areas while rural areas are compromised and ignored for showcase businesses in the urban centers.

Aside from political corruption, the government's repressive mechanism that cracks down on anti-corruption crusaders and agencies such as the press, political opponents, and the public has become a norm, not the
exception. Scholars argue that without a tradition of democratic processes, economic growth and political integration will continue to be paralyzed for many years to come. Robert Rotberg, in particular, contends that since Africa lacks the democratic traditions necessary for development, attempts to develop are unlikely to succeed. He argues that, "corruption and zero-sum government bedevil Africa, flourishing as they do in the absence of meaningful participatory processes". Indeed, recent deaths in Kenya and the crackdown by the government on political opponents, university students, and the public who are demanding constitutional reforms for the purpose of fair general elections scheduled at the end of this year serve as a classic example of how public participation is discouraged.

Thomas Callaghy also argues that the processes of democratization have been uneven in contemporary Africa, because for years the governments have opposed democratic pluralism or multi-party systems that fight against political corruption. He therefore thinks that "developmental democracies" are unlikely in Africa soon. He also asserts that, even with Africa's democratic rhetoric and recent transition towards political democracy or pluralism, corruption is still more rampant.
POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND DEMOCRATIZATION

But what is democratization and how is it perceived in Africa? Sarah John Kpundeh states that democratization involves public participation, competition, fair elections, majority rule, political pluralism, political liberation, and freedom of the press and speech, among others. The description of this concept is what Mugyenyi refers to as "maximalist democracy". According to him, maximalist democracy "is more generous. It is phenomenally popular. It centers around popular participation in the allocation of values. But it also incorporates majority government, rights and freedoms related to speech, assembly, dissent, intellect, life, property, dignity, liberty, office, opposition, opportunity, movement of the press".

Furthermore, he argues that maximalist democracy "implies certain forms, structures, institutions, and procedure of government..." which, unfortunately, is lacking in Africa. Thus, he concludes that democracy comes to protect the accomplishment of development in what he calls "development first, democracy second". This means that, without political, social, and economic development, democracy alone is not going to liberate Africa. Even though democracy is an important ingredient for good governance, some people still argue that Africa does not need democracy per se,
Instead, it needs economic growth, political integration, and basic needs—food, clothing, shelter, better living conditions, education, jobs, housing, healthcare, and above all, political stability and tranquility that are necessary for development and democracy.

To the contrary, some scholars argue that, without democratic processes, attempts for development will be hindered as it is in Africa today. There is certainly an element of truth in this argument that without democratic institutions to fight political corruption, the primary cause for underdevelopment, economic growth and political integration would be remotely out of reach and eventually what would result is "dysfunctional development".99 Undoubtedly, political corruption leads to unstable democracies, empathy, alienation, cynicism, and mistrust between leaders and the masses. It also threatens attempts to establish efficient government, transparency, accountability, and finally, it stalls development and democracy.100
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CHAPTER 6

COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

KENYA

"L'etat, c'est moi" (I am the state)
--President Daniel arap Moi

Kenya, a former British colony, gained independence in 1963 and became a republic in 1964. According to recent statistics, Kenya's estimated population totals thirty million people divided among more than thirty ethnic groups. As many foreign visitors, investors, scholars, and academicians argue, compared to other countries in East Africa--Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Uganda, and Tanzania--"Kenya is an island of sanity".¹

To potential investors and businessmen, Kenya was regarded as capitalism's shining star on the African continent.² For many years, Kenya had been among the few countries in sub-Saharan Africa that seemed to work both politically and economically. Indeed, Kenya's once peaceful environment and economic and political stability played to its advantage and lured foreign investors. Kenya also benefitted from economic aid and the tourism industry. In fact, whenever the President and political leaders, especially parliamentarians, addressed the public, they
usually took credit for political tranquility and reminded Kenyans that the rest of Africa was jealous of Kenya's peaceful and prosperous climate.\(^3\)

Despite its recent trend of backward political movement and economic instability, Kenya has a modern telecommunications network, a developing infrastructure, an educated workforce, a free market economy, a government bureaucracy that functions relatively well, a multi-party system, and the rule of law. Because of these factors, Kenya became the second largest recipient of United States economic aid in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1980s.\(^4\)

However, even with its good reputation, Kenya's increasing corrupt practices have severely stained its reputation and affected its economic growth. According to a survey conducted by Transparency International in 1995-96, Kenya ranks as the third most corrupt nation in the world, following Nigeria and Pakistan.\(^5\) George N. Ayittey also contends that, "Corruption emerged in Kenya soon after independence and got progressively worse...."\(^6\) He maintains that "the first president of independent Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta, and his family amassed a large fortune of land, precious gems, ivory and casinos...."\(^7\) In short, Kenyatta and his Kikuyu ethnic group controlled Kenya's economic and political power base from the 1960s and 1970s. When Daniel arap Moi took over following Kenyatta's death, corruption
became institutionalized and grew worse. This assertion is also supported by anonymous Kenya authors and scholars who assert that, under Moi. "kickbacks, graft, and conflict of interest are evident at all levels of government". It is these authors' claim that, under Moi, the entire government and society is plagued by large-scale political corruption, bribery, extortion, favoritism, ethnicity, and general mismanagement of the state bureaucracy and resources.

Due to high-scale corruption among the most high-ranking political officials, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and many European countries have tremendously cut down economic aid to Kenya citing large-scale corruption and the failure of the Kenyan government to prosecute corrupt officials. For example, comments from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) state that:

In the past, corruption in Kenya was not widespread, and the number of people involved was rather limited. However, in recent years the extent seems to pervade the whole society. The reason is partly on economic development which increasingly puts pressure on the individual family's economy, but probably primarily a political structure which allows and at times even encourages corruption.

Comparing the eras of Kenyatta and Moi in order to trace the history of political corruption, Kivutha Kibwana et al., state that:

[Up to] 1969, corruption in Kenya was largely under control and the country never featured among the corrupt countries of Africa. This is attributed to the checks and balances that existed, especially in terms
of a fair Parliament, independent judiciary, effective police force and a substantially free press...The deliberate weakening and dismantling of political and civil society institutions that could act as pressure groups, during Moi's rule, especially after the attempted *coup d'etat* of 1982, dealt a severe blow to the country's ability to control corruption.\(^{12}\)

The point these scholars are making is that it is during Moi's nineteen years of rule that Kenya's corruption has worsened.

Additionally it is argued that corruption is a subject that people discuss gingerly if at all because of tremendous fear of government repression.\(^{13}\) Therefore, one can argue that Kenya's pervasive pattern of political corruption has worked against its, ruining its once proud reputation, and discouraging foreign investors and businesses that are critical to Kenya's economic growth. According to most foreign investors, it is extremely difficult to start or do business in Kenya given the demand of many illicit tolls/payoffs and extortions by government officials.\(^{14}\) As reported by the *Los Angeles Times*, Kenya, a country that once was regarded as a place that worked, has lost more than other sub-Saharan African countries since acquiring its reputation for corruption. This is because Kenya has squandered much of its goodwill while surrounded by some of the sorriest, war-torn, economically inept, politically
unstable, and overall desperate countries Africa has to offer.\textsuperscript{15}

THE KISUMU MOLASSES PLANT

The molasses project was initiated in 1977 under the name Kenya Chemical and Food Corporation Ltd. as a joint venture between the government, Chemfood Investment Corporation of the United States, and Adrait International, a subsidiary of Madhvani Group. Madhvani owned 40\% of the stock in Chemfood. The project was capitalized at 170 million Kenya Shillings of which the government invested Shillings 86.7 million, making it the majority shareholder with 51\% of the share-holding. Chemfood and Adrait invested a total of 83.3 million shillings in equity, taking up 34\% and 15\% share-holding, respectively. The Madhavani Group, an influential family of investors, invested 68 million shillings. The management of the project was entrusted to Eximcorp, a company in which the Madhavani Group participated actively.

Once it was completed, the project was expected to consume some 110,000 tones of molasses per year to produce 20 million liters of power alcohol annually and about ten other products. These included 3,000 tones of citric acid, 1,800 tones of fresh baker's and activated dry yeast, and 2,160 tones of sulphuric acid. The project was also

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designed to produce 6,800 tones of oxygen, 2,000 tones of ammonium sulphate fertilizer, 6,000 tones of gypsum, 9,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide and methane gas, which was expected to provide more than 50% of the projects total operating requirements of combustible fuels and also create jobs. After spending more than one billion shillings towards constructing the plant, the project soon stalled and finally collapsed due to bureaucratic corruption. It was alleged that some top government officials were demanding exorbitant kickbacks to allocate contracts to businessmen, especially foreign investors. Indeed, the Kisumu Molasses Plant became Kenya’s most celebrated white elephant and cost a foreign minister’s life. The ghastly murder of Robert Ouko was caused by his continuous condemnation of Kenya’s political corruption, particularly among the top cabinet ministers.

NIGERIA

"Keeping an average Nigerian from being corrupt is like keeping a goat from eating yam".

--Chinua Achebe

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with a population of more than 120 million, thus accounting for a quarter of sub-Saharan Africa's population. Nigeria's 250 ethnic groups provide an environment of diversity. Additionally, over the past few decades Nigeria has been an
economic powerhouse, i.e., the largest oil-exporting country on the continent.

Nigeria was a British colony until its independence in 1960. Through the years, Nigeria has experienced or suffered continuous political tensions based on regional, religious, and ethnic lines. For example, the northern region of the country is dominated by the Hausa and Fulani Muslims, while the south is dominated by the Christian Yorubas. The primary factor for these tensions and conflicts is the desire to control the economic spoils—oil and political leadership.\textsuperscript{15}

Larry Diamond asserts that, "Nigeria's ruinous political cycles" have rendered its politically and economically retarded.\textsuperscript{17} Since independence in 1960, Nigeria has seen seven successful coups and many aborted ones. The first coup d'\textsuperscript{et}at was in 1966 when a small group of army soldiers of the Ibo tribe overthrew the government, citing political corruption and government mismanagement. The most recent, successful coup was in 1983. It was led by General Ibrahim Gbandamasi Babangida, who until 1994 controlled the entire country politically and economically with an iron fist.

Curiously enough, whenever a coup d'\textsuperscript{et}at takes place, rampant political corruption is mentioned to justify the overthrow of the existing government. Propaganda
notwithstanding, political corruption flourishes regardless of who is in power or what type of government—civilian or military might be in control. Indeed, like Kenya and other sub-Saharan African countries, oppression and political repression are routinely practiced to discourage public uprisings. In addition, there is a lack of existing institutions in place to fight corruption. Those few who are brave enough to expose and condemn corruption often face severe punishment for opposing or criticizing the government. Indeed, the 1995 executions of the Nigerian anti-corruption activist, environmentalist, and poet Ken Saro-Wiwa and his nine compatriots serves as a backdrop.\footnote{16}

As Robert Williams observes, "When the foreign visitors to Nigeria have finished complaining about Lagos and its traffic jams....it is usually time for the travelers' tales of voracious and pervasive corruption".\footnote{19} According to many observers, Nigerians are the most corrupt people on the continent and perhaps in the world. This is partly due to the severe economic imbalance between the many ethnic groups. While a few, especially the military, control the oil resources and benefit from huge kickbacks and bribes, the majority struggle to survive or make ends meet.\footnote{20}

As reported in 1989 by the Christian Association of Nigeria, more than 3,000 Nigerians held Swiss bank accounts, making the Nigerians the majority of Third World patrons of
Swiss banks. In fact, during the oil boom of the 1980s, Nigeria was the only country in sub-Saharan Africa where government scandals and political corruption exceeded imagination. Government officials were competing for private Jaguar aircraft. Unfortunately, since the good old days of easy oil money are gone due to world markets, and excessive individual greed, and government mismanagement, Nigeria has become a den of corrupt officials in search of an easy way to make money while the sun shines. Therefore, political corruption has flourished no matter what type of government or ethnic group is in power. But one can make a strong case that generally corruption has not been organized or directed by a single individual or family as is the case in many other sub-Saharan African countries. This is to state that, even though Nigeria is the first or second most corrupt nation in the world, it has never produced a military predator of the stature of the late president Mobutu Sese Seko of the former Zaire.

ZAIRE/CONGO

"If you steal, do not steal too much at a time. You may be arrested. Steal cleverly (yiba na mayale), little by little".

--Mobutu Sese Seko

Perhaps there is no country in sub-Saharan Africa that is as systemically corrupt as the former Zaire. According
to Stanislav Andreski, Zaire was the world Kleptocratic state—a country that steals. Zaire, a former Belgian colony then known as the Belgian Congo gained independence in 1961. It is known to possess some of the most fertile lands and prodigious mineral deposits and other resources in Africa, particularly rubber, copper, diamonds, and iron ore. Like Nigeria, Zaire is composed of ethnic groups that are constantly at odds with one another.

In fact, in the early 1960s, at one time or another, the Congo was at the point of disintegrating because of tribal ideological conflict. However, with the assassination of Patrice Lumumba and assistance from the United States Central Intelligent Agency General Joseph Mobutu overthrew the government in 1964, renamed the country Zaire, and emerged as a military dictator. Mobutu's pervasive corruption cost Zaire's economy dearly, contributing to unimaginable poverty and suffering for the entire country, while Mobutu remained among the wealthiest billionaires in the world.

Scholars argue that in the former Zaire everyone was on the take because that was how the system was structured. George N. Ayittey asserts that in Zaire, one needed to know two things to survive—that is, "whom do I see and how much will it cost". Mobutu was known as the cock that left no hen untouched and the all-powerful warrior who stole on a
massive scale. In fact, it was claimed that Mobutu had before his death between five to ten billion dollars in the Swiss banks and that he "could clear the national debt by writing a personal check". In taking from the government, Mobutu once advised government officials during a speech that if they had to steal they better do it clandestinely, intelligently, and systematically or else they risked being caught and prosecuted. Undoubtedly, Mobutu practiced what he preached—a leader who stole cleverly from his own country. In fact, often when he was asked about his fortune, he would take pride and remind the people that his money in Swiss banks did not involve his other wealth—real estate, villas, chateaus, castles, building complexes, jets, and cattle ranches scattered all over the world.

As Blaine Harden claims, "Of all the countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Zaire has the ugliest reputation for state-sponsored corruption. Mobutu has legitimatized and systematized graft...kleptocracy". Similarly, as noted by Harden in the *The Washington Post*:

Zaire is a den of unregenerate thieves. Its president and top ministers mouth the free-market lingo that the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the Reagan administration like to hear, while continuing to fill foreign bank accounts with loot. No government project is begun without payoff. Payoffs are so ubiquitous and so exorbitant that many projects are never completed. Civil servants regard extortion as part of the job description.

Therefore, like other countries, corruption ruined the
former Zaire and instilled a culture whereby the powerful exploited the less powerful who in turn exploited the powerless. From top to bottom, bribes and corruption were the sure way to do business in Zaire. One Belgian diplomat referred to this transaction as follows: "It's like termites nibbling away at the structure of a society". Indeed, looting and stealing from government has become a Zairean motto. Thus, even though Zaire is one of the "most blessed countries with some of the richest mineral reserves in the world, [it] had managed by 1988 to become one of the eight poorest countries in the world". Undoubtedly, this is the position that Zaire or today's Democratic Republic of Congo holds under its new leader, Laurent Kabila.

Some African scholars think that Kabila is not any different from the late Mobutu, because his rule is described as dictatorial and his entourage as neo-Mobutuists. Secondly, because he comes from Katanga, in a Copper-rich region, the desire to fill his pockets is high because there is a lack of constitutional or other checks and balances to ensure that the corruption endemic to Mobutu's Zaire does not become endemic to Kabila's Congo. Furthermore, for the short period he has been the president, he has made many concessions with diamond, copper, and iron ore mining businesses from foreign countries and South Africa and is believed to be taking kickbacks and
benefitting from the country's natural resources—more political corruption. Additionally, his idea of changing the name of the country from Zaire to the Democratic Republic of Congo is not a magic bullet for the problems that face the country, especially political corruption. Indeed, according to one anonymous author, changing the name of Zaire was "like swapping a Rolls Royce for a Ford Escort, a diamond for a piece of glass, a princess for a whore". Similarly, as the Africa proverb says, "You cannot improve your child's behavior by changing his name...“ but rather teach him how to behave by example.

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CHAPTER 7

CONTROLLING POLITICAL CORRUPTION

The literature on political corruption identifies four types of strategies important to minimizing or eliminating corruption. They are: societal, legal, market, and political. Patrick Dobel, W. Etzioni-Halevy, and M. McMullan argue that societal strategies place emphasis on the determination of a common standard of morality against which politically corrupt behaviors can be measured. Vigilance by the members of society and education to make it relatively costly for individuals to engage in corruption are also emphasized.

Legally, it is believed that government behavior can be constrained effectively by the law. This can be done by creating or choosing special commissions of inquiry, special courts, or special prosecutors to probe individuals and groups accused of political corruption, bribery, or illegal transactions. Where evidence gathered points to corruption, it is up to the judicial system/courts alone to judge and render punishment to offenders based on national laws.

The market-related strategies to the clean-up of corruption emphasize that there is a relationship between the structure of the markets, bureaucracy, and the incidents
of corruption. Thus, the prescribed cure is less government regulation and bureaucratic redtape, and greater reliance on markets for the allocation of resources. It is Bayley, Macrae, Rose-Ackerman, and Tilman's assertion that such an approach, however, appears to emphasize the manipulation of outcomes within existing rules instead of proper reform of the rules. The fault is not with the market but with the rules that regulate the market. Since rules define market outcomes, greater reliance on markets for the allocation of resources without reforming existing rules will have little effect on outcomes, including government corruption. Unless there is effective reform of the socio-political rules within which the market functions, incentives for opportunism will remain and corruption will continue unabated.4

Political strategies for political corruption stress the decentralization of the public sector. It is argued that corruption arises from the concentration of power in the hands of a few political elites--politicians and bureaucrats--and that a process which provides citizens with greater access to public institutions will significantly minimize opportunities for corruption within the country. Under this approach, an effective cleanup program is expected to emphasize political deregulation and the subsequent expansion of opportunities for citizens to
participate in governance. Indeed, social scientists and decision-makers who favor this administrative reform as a way to minimize the incidence of corruption support increasing the legal compensation of bureaucrats in order to reduce the chances that civil servants will seek extra-legal income.®

Mbaku John Mukum contends that the impetus to clean up corruption can be provided primarily by political exigency rather than by genuine interest in the efficient functioning of the nation's political and economic institutions. In several countries, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa, post-coup commissions of inquiry are usually designed to discredit the ousted government and help incoming elites gain recognition and legitimacy. Incumbents also use the cleanup programs to help them stay in power and continue to monopolize the supply of legislation and the allocation of resources. An incumbent leader faced with deteriorating economic and social conditions and a challenge from opposition parties or groups may initiate a campaign to reduce corruption within the administration in an effort to direct attention away from existing problems and the government's inability or unwillingness to provide effective solutions for those problems.® However, as Gillespie and Okruhlik state, whether or not corruption cleanups are used for political exigency and how often is determined by
several factors including "the personal values of the head of state, challenges from counter elites, and popular discontent arising from socio-economic conditions" within a given country.

In several African countries, politicians regularly use cleanup campaigns to help them stay in power. Cleanup programs can be used to discredit members of a previous regime, to destroy the reputations of leaders of the opposition, and to improve support among the population for the incumbent regime. For instance, all political uprisings/revolutions or coups d'etat in Nigeria, Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Uganda, Angola, and elsewhere in Africa cite government corruption, mismanagement, ineffective bureaucracy, and malaise as the primary reasons for a new government and leadership. Additionally, even if a government seriously and honestly wishes to clean up corruption, existing approaches suffer from at least one obstacle: their success depends on the effectiveness of the countering agencies. In Africa, cleanup programs depend upon the judicial system, the police, and the press, and assume that those agencies are appropriately constrained by the law and are free of corruption and/or are independent or free of government manipulation and control. Because the judicial systems and the police rank high in corrupt
behavior themselves, the cleanup programs backed by these agencies are likely to be ineffective. Therefore, to ensure that the cleanup programs are effective, a selection of appropriate new rules must be established to make sure that the new social contract is capable of generating the outcome desired by the society.⁹

However, given the fact that political corruption has passed the alarming and entered the fatal stage in sub-Saharan Africa, only time can tell whether this social ill can be cleaned up and cured. According to Joseph N. Weatherby et al., "there is no magic bullet for the problems that Africa faces".¹⁰ They argue that expecting a total eradication of corruption in Africa would be unrealistic because in most developing nations corruption still runs large. Nonetheless, they argue that political corruption can be reduced "down to manageable levels"¹¹ if government agencies, political leaders, and the public at large play their roles. As for Africa, they state that the solution for corruption lies with the Africans themselves. Surely, without the African people realizing how vicious and damaging corruption can be and what it can do, short-term remedies or band-aids and economic aid would be hopeless and ineffective in curing this problem in the long term.¹²

Wraith and Simpkins suggest some cures for corruption in Africa. These remedies are: One, loyalty to the nation-
state rather than family, clan, or tribe. Two, the spread of education to enable the public to understand and comprehend the effects of corruption. Three, a democratic state and environment to allow public freedoms of speech and press in order to allow people to criticize the government, condemn corrupt officials, and campaign against corruption and bribery. Four, to create a climate conducive for encouraging commerce, open markets and trade, and a strong industrial sector. Five, to create jobs and increase wages in the government sector and elsewhere in order to raise the living standards and to discourage corruption. Six, to inculcate a concept of diffusion of power among ethnic groups. Seven, to reduce the civil service and decentralize government agencies. Eight, to apply merit rather than ascriptive measures when allocating jobs, promotions, business licenses, government loans, contracts, scholarships, and incentives. Nine, to encourage the growth of wealth and status throughout the whole society. And ten, to ensure an independent judicial system and vigorous law enforcement.\textsuperscript{13}

The truth of the matter is that, even with these remedies, African people and governments are loath to adopt them. For instance, in Africa, parochial loyalty, tribalism, and ethnicity predominate. When the issue of nationalism comes up, Africans place family, clan, and tribe
before country. Often, Africans identify themselves not as Zaireans, Nigerians, or Kenyans, but rather as Katangans, Yorubas, Kalenjins, etc.

Similarly, due to the high rate of illiteracy, the majority of Africans, especially those in the rural areas, lack an understanding of the workings and effects of corruption. Furthermore, many African nation-states have autocratic regimes masquerading as democracies. Indeed, dictators stalk Africa like wild cats in the night. These tyrants run the gamut from Sani Abacha to Omar Bongo, Daniel arap Moi to Yoweri Museveni, Robert Mugabe to Laurent Kabila, to name a few.

The freedoms of speech, press, and other human rights regarded as basic in the West are still non-existent in many African nations. Due to this, government critics and anti-corruption crusaders are severely oppressed, hunted down, tortured, detained without trial, imprisoned for life, or murdered. Put simply, criticizing the government or the top political elites and leaders is a state offense or treason. Thus, under these circumstances, political corruption continues to flourish because people fear to speak out publicly.

In Africa, political power is centered upon a few elites or groups based on clan or tribe. In fact, many African countries are ruled by a family, clan, or tribe.
because there is a lack of balance of power or wealth among ethnic groups. Furthermore, tribalism and nepotism, the two factors that encourage corruption, flourish unabated and unchecked.

Finally, in Africa, judicial systems still depend upon the government of the "Big Men" for orders. Judicial supremacy and independent judicial review are non-existent. In fact, justice systems in Africa usually serve the needs and wishes of the "Strong Men" who consider themselves and their cliques above the law. Under this condition, political leaders and their cliques go unprosecuted and unpunished for crimes of political corruption and this all contributes to choking the economies and development of their countries.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has unearthed many points that need to be reemphasized or highlighted. First, political corruption is a universal phenomenon that afflicts every society in both developed and developing nations. Second, corruption is far from being a novelty. Its practice is as ancient as other social phenomena such as violence, crime, or prostitution. Third, the meaning of political corruption has changed with time, place, and space. Fourth, its definition is elusive
and/or hard to pin down; corruption means different things to different people.

In contemporary Africa, political corruption has at least some of its roots in the past—the legacy of colonialism. In sub-Saharan Africa, political corruption cannot be understood outside a framework of the legacy of colonialism, neo-colonialism, the “Big Men”, tribalism, underdevelopment, frustrated economies, and a lack of enlightened leadership or techno-politicians. Throughout the continent there is a general consensus that corruption is morally wrong a economically, politically, and socially devastating. However, it is regarded as a way of life and of doing business and an outstanding characteristic of African public life. For many government workers, corruption is an alternative or “extra-legal” means of supplementing their wages and/or survival. Political corruption permeates the entire societal fabric of the African continent and poses serious political, social, and economic problems. It exists in both private and public sectors with the latter recording the highest incidences of corruption that place a heavy burden on the African people. Finally, a relatively large number of African people recognizes the presence of corruption but lack the power to reduce it and fear to speak out due to government repression.
The need to eradicate political corruption in sub-Saharan Africa requires a concerted effort of the political elites; governmental and non-governmental institutions; political parties; intellectuals; independent agencies--anti-corruption squads and national inquiry commissions, special court and the Prevention of Corruption Acts; constitutional reforms; democracy and plurality of political parties; the introduction of the bill of rights--freedom of speech and the press; transparency and accountability among government officials; and the enlightened public at large. Above all, to wage a merciless war on political corruption an enlightened leadership is needed.

It is the contention of this thesis that, political corruption can be defined, contained, reduced, or defeated in sub-Saharan Africa. However, it is impossible to prevent it completely once it has taken deep roots and manifests itself in a large scale (as is the case in many countries). Nonetheless, there are some signs of hope that political corruption can indeed be contained in sub-Saharan African countries as has occurred in South Africa.

But to be successful in controlling political corruption, we must treat corruption as a disease such as cancer. We must therefore, understand the nature of the disease, know its hosts, its distribution, causes and conditions, its consequences, and its remedies.
Unfortunately, some countries have displayed a marked propensity to corruption and certain remedial treatments have conspicuously failed, especially in Nigeria and Zaire/Congo. As the saying goes, however, "where there is a will, there is a way".
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