

# Ethics as an Antidote: Challenging the Decimation of a Continent

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**Abstract:** Corruption has attained an unmatched recognition as an undeniable culprit in the failure of national developmental goals and strategies in the least developed countries (LDCs). This truth is made more palpable by the realities of infrastructural and institutional decay that characterize the socio-economic and political landscapes of the region and hamper the effectiveness of its numerous anti-corruption strategies. The emphasis of the majority of these strategies has been on curbing the financial impropriety, misappropriation and embezzlement of funds that are blamed for the non-performance of sectors of the national economies and the policy and social service delivery failures of the governments of these developing nations. This paper adopts a distinct entry point that reflects a digression from the age-long perspectives of accountability and the plugging of loopholes through institutional mechanisms as strategies for curtailing the scourge of corruption. The paper is also a deviation from the perspectives of personal aggrandizement, the amassment of stupendous wealth, the benefits accruable from corrupt practices and the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor with which it is characterized. It rather seeks to provide a nexus between government action or inaction and human security by illuminating the dark sides of corruption. It relies on a qualitative methodology and descriptive analysis to provide a holistic appreciation of the implications of corruption and the nuances embedded where it is allowed to thrive. In the process, it sheds more light on the intricacies of corruption from the perspective of its far-reaching, dire consequences of a loss of human capital that is reflected in an increase in the death rate among the populations of the affected countries. Its role in the escalation of vices like ethno-religious crises, acts of terror and other population decimators is assessed as resulting from its metamorphosis into a man-made disaster with several permutations that present it as a formidable threat to human and material sustainability in the African continent. From this standpoint, it proposes a redirection of the anti-corruption strategies to embrace an individualized approach that is less impersonal and underpinned by the postulations of the ethical theory of consequentialism and the principles of ethics in checkmating the elusive nature of corruption in Africa. Focus is on the reorientation of the African polity, policy makers and implementers inclusive, and a reorganization of the state institutions, through processes that appeal to equity, fairness, good conscience and an incorporation of the inherent moral culture of the African societies in this fight against corruption.

**Keywords:** Anti-corruption Strategies, Ethics, Human Capital, Institutional Decay, National Development.

## Introduction

The import and implications of corruption on the posterity of a nation or a continent cannot be overemphasized. So much has been said, done and written about this endemic cankerworm but apparently, not much success has been recorded in the efforts to effectively cage the hydra-headed monster which Lawal (2007) defined as involving a violation of public duty or deviation from high moral standards in exchange for (or in anticipation of) personal pecuniary gains. Corruption is described as characterized by recipients and payers, extortion, lubricant of society, an ethical problem, poverty reduction, small is beautiful, culture and kindness among friends (www.corruptie.org). This may be attributable to its propensity to metamorphose to the extent that it has

assumed a life of its own, invariably becoming a way of life of people the world over. Van Duyne (2001) defined corruption as,

‘.....an improbity or decay in the decision-making process in which a decision-maker (in a private corporation or in a public service) consents or demands to deviate from the criterion, which should rule his decision making, in exchange for a reward, the promise or expectation of it’.

His definition of corruption is more encompassing than that of Transparency International (TI) though both definitions are pointers to the leadership dimension to it since they imply power plays. TI in brief, describes corruption as, ‘the abuse of entrusted power for personal gain’ ([www.business-anti-corruption.com](http://www.business-anti-corruption.com)). Van Duyne (2001) in his development model of corruption described the phenomenon as a leadership disease. He explained that it begins at the top with a ‘Caligula-effect’ before branching out into six other forms namely public sector corruption among officials, public/private sector corruption, public sector/political corruption, private sector corruption, private sector/political corruption and corruption between politicians. Caligula was the ‘owner-boss’ of the Roman Empire who claimed ownership of the state and according to legend, had appointed his horse, Incitatus, as a consul (Van Duyne, 2001).

His analysis explained the role of corruption in the heightened, depraved craving for power at all levels - a craving that is mirrored in the struggles for traditional titles and the desire to head conglomerates as renowned business moguls or to rule nations, etc. This power, mostly political and economic, implies or represents the desire to be, to do and to influence. It has culminated in the sacrifice of skill and mastery to cronyism and mediocrity that is geared toward the benefit of a minority over the majority, in resplendence of Lasswell’s who gets what, when and how. There is therefore no gainsaying that corruption in most countries thrives on lapses created by the quality of leadership at whatever level. This position is congruent upon the ‘be-all-and-end-all’ attitude of African leaders, political appointees and others to the seat of power or any position to which a degree of authority is ascribed and the attendant behaviours, etc. which normally culminate in a tendency to erode the rule of law, principles, regulations and procedures. Van Duyne (2001) suggested that a top-down approach for tackling the menace may be most effective since its root is at the top (leadership) from where the trend normally begins.

Transparency International (TI) suggested five key ingredients for handling corruption that combine ending impunity, reforming public administration and finance management, promoting transparency and access to information, citizen empowerment and the closure of international loopholes ([www.transparency.org](http://www.transparency.org)). Lopez-Carlos (2014) listed six strategies for fighting corruption that encompass paying civil servants well, creating transparency and openness in government spending, cutting red tape, replacing regressive and distorting subsidies with targeted cash transfers, establishing international conventions and deploying smart technology. That better pay for civil servants will make financial crimes less attractive (Lopez-Carlos, 2014) is agreeable and this has been empirically proven in Umoh’s (2016) research that covered the drivers of corruption and demotivation among civil servants in Nigeria’s public sector.

Corruption on the Agenda ([www.corruption-agenda.org](http://www.corruption-agenda.org)) discusses two models for tackling corruption - the Accountability model which entails the identification and blockage of possible weak spots and loopholes in organizations and the Interactive model which evaluates the relations between partners and stakeholders to the extent of the more complicated and demanding North-South partnerships with external donors and partners. The Policy Forum (1997) suggested an increase in governmental accountability and transparency, enhanced public participation in decision-making, greater adherence to the rule of law and the strengthening of the public sector and civil society institutions as vital to countering corruption and improving governance. Kahn (1996) on the other hand suggested that a free, professional press and media and access to channels of information are crucial to the cause.

Hunja (2015) explained that fighting corruption entails ten ways that also include some of the points listed by TI and Lopez-Carlos (2014). Among his ten points were: understanding that corruption is not only about bribes, is about the power of the people, the delivery of goods and services by the government, getting incentives right, the institution of sanctions, acting globally and locally with the incorporation of citizen involvement and finally, building capacity where it matters the most especially where the country in question suffers from chronic fragility, conflict and violence which contribute to a reduction of capacity and of the available internal resources for combating corruption.

His position that corruption transcends bribery is central to the trajectory of this paper which focuses on downplaying financial corruption and its attendant gains and rather highlighting the implications of corruption for human security. Further, his recognition of the power of the people in the fight against corruption through the provision of an enabling environment that allows citizens engage and participate in their governments by identifying priorities, problems and finding solutions is also relevant to a people-centred anti-corruption drive and strategic

development policies. However, besides these external direct influences on the individual as a partner in the fight against corruption, attention should be drawn to the potency of the internal direct influence on the individual that can be wielded by ethics.

### **Problem Statement**

Goudie and Stasavage (1998) describe corruption as broader in scope than politics, public administration and good governance - concepts which ideally lie in the scope of the government. Today, it permeates the fabric of the society, going beyond the well-known acts of bureaucratic corruption, etc., descending into the abyss of extreme moral decadence and becoming deeply ingrained in the 'lifestyles' of the people. Most remedies for combating corruption are government-oriented with responsibilities spanning policies, anti-corruption capacity building, etc. In my view, these remedies depict a scenario in which a thief is given every leeway to steal but is faced with all exit routes (loopholes) shut up or plugged to prevent his escape.

It is noteworthy that though corrupt practices pervade virtually every society on the face of the earth, it appears to thrive more in black Africa and other developing nations of the world for three main reasons. First, is in the fact that the definition of corrupt practices is primarily and traditionally a spin-off of the agency theory which upholds that corruption involves the interactions or transactions between a principal, an agent and possibly a client (Groenendijk, 1997) – a definition that is traceable to Western origins (Sylla, 2013) and which for Groenendijk (1997) should not be limited to bureaucratic corruption. This brings about a glaring inability to properly contextualize corrupt practices for what they are as a result of certain inherent characteristics which appear similar to actions that may best be analyzed as reflective of Africa's cultural heritage (Sylla, 2013). Second is that there is an apparent lack of the wherewithal to checkmate it. This truth resonates in the fact that the mechanisms in terms of policies and institutions on which the anti-corruption garbs should be anchored are frustrated by the anomalies that bedevil the bureaucratic systems of these African nations, namely the peculiarities of their policy-making and administrative environments, policy inconsistency and lack of continuity, failing institutions and the lack of infrastructure, an inadequacy of target-specific measures and lots more. This may also be described as an offshoot of the first reason in the sense that the African societies for which these mechanisms are developed are not structured or suited for the functions for which they are intended thereby raising the propensity for their failure. Third is the fact that despite the population explosion in the region, there is a dearth of the requisite human and material resources in the right positions to cushion the dire consequences of corruption on the larger society. This situation is made worse by the promotion of mediocrity through the ascriptive criteria which is tainted by class, religious and ethnic considerations rather than upholding the achievement and attainment criteria which are skill and merit driven (Riggs, 1961).

The interest of this paper is in the development of strategies for tackling corruption that derive from and appeal to the psyche of the individual. This perspective has arisen out of the reality that most of the suggested remedies adopt processes that are more government-oriented, leaving the responsibility for curbing the menace within the purview of the state and other related institutions. The overall reason for the position of this article on the need to adopt the individual-based approach that borders more on the ethical question than on the institutional mechanisms to tackling corruption is the fact that corruption is fast decimating the black African race. This individualized approach requires a paradigm shift from the macro to a micro approach to anti-corruption. This may come across as an oversimplification of the import of the concept in view of its effects on development. However, where the realities are that the complex, analytical remedies and other institutional mechanisms for ensuring accountability are not forthcoming on results and are contexts with which the African societies may not easily identify or lack the wherewithal to prospect, a re-evaluation becomes imperative.

### **Contextualizing Corruption as a Challenge to Human Security**

Sir Winston Churchill stated that, 'the human tragedy reaches its climax in the fact that after all the exertions and sacrifices of people and of the victories of the Righteous Cause, we have still not found Peace or Security' (Liotta and Owen, 2006). This tragedy can be expounded to include the escalating mutations of corruption and the ripple effects on human security and socio-economic development that demand a reassessment of corruption in the context of the threat which it portends for posterity in Africa. Hunja's (2015) position on the importance of understanding that corruption is not only about bribes calls for introspections as per its far-reaching consequences. It vacillates between levels at the different sectors and strata in African societies, boasting a strong presence in everyday life activities, having become a 'value' or 'norm' embedded in the socio-culture. Its notorious endemicity as the common denominator in the decimation of the African populace derives from the potency and reach of its political, administrative, socio-economic, socio-psychological, religious and other dimensions. The domino effects of allowing them to continue unchecked span:

- Political – Tribalism, cronyism and the enthronement of mediocrity by the cabals that control sectors of the economy leading to an ‘ownership’ of government by a few to the detriment of the majority, compromise of voters as a result of immediate need satisfaction leading to the electoral victory of the financially strong who have proven from experience, to be bereft of ideas in efficacious governance. The impression of deprivation arising from boundaries set by marginalization and ethnicity results in conflagrations including ethnic cleansing, genocides, electoral violence emanating from electoral frauds and the impervious actions of unconscionable leaders who remain in the ‘island’ of power surrounded by bloodletting (Nkurunziza of Burundi), deeply-ingrained hunger, lack and death resulting from geometrically-progressive socio-economic downturns (Mugabe of Zimbabwe), etc. occasioned by their refusal to either allow for and conduct free, fair elections or to hand over to democratically elected successors. Leaders like these thrive on the discretionary power that they wield over public policy design and implementation (Owoye and Bissessar, 2012) and their control over the civil service, electoral commission, judiciary, the media, the security forces and the central bank (Ayittey, 2012) and are oblivious to the happenings beyond these walls.
- Administrative – Man’s nature is to seek greener pastures and to desire to explore other climes but these should not be occasioned by the failure of a government to deliver tangible political and socio-economic goods to its citizenry through effective policy-making and implementation. The presence of cabals at the helm of the decision-making and administrative units of government circles, sacred cows with skeletons in their cupboards, government inaction, policy inconsistency and lack of continuity of policies, poor levels of policy implementation, ineffective or non-existent feedback mechanisms, constitute political and administrative hiccups that combine to frustrate the anti-corruption efforts. These failures account for the migration of several Africans into other African countries and through other African countries, to European nations. This exposes them to the resultant migrant deaths from botched sea-crossing attempts, xenophobic attacks, human trafficking, sex trade and slavery, hazards of climatic conditions, etc. with grave consequences.
- Socio-psychological – Ideally convergence in the postcolonial state-centric model of public management which represents administration in developing nations is reflected in the integration of society with the developmental processes (Haque, 2010). However, Riggs’ (1961) formalism plays out in the departure from rules and procedures in terms of policy formulation and implementation and a consequential intangible impact of the policy and reform processes on the developing/transitional societies. This results in a divergence that threatens social cohesion in the rural and urban areas. It is characterized by rural-urban migration, a decline of rural life, rural areas and settlements and a proliferation of slums in urban dwelling places. Humanity and the sanctity of life are eroded by despicable actions such as sale of children, child-marriages, ritual killings, etc. to which individuals resort as a means of survival in the face of rising poverty levels and the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor.

The decay of societal values becomes a pathway to the escalation of social vices and anti-social behavior encompassing payment for university admission, sex for marks and the degeneration of educational standards, human trafficking, sex trade and slavery, the use of drugs, and a rise in crimes spanning rape, etc. These bring on a corresponding increase in physical and mental instability, medical pathologies and the rate of suicides among youth and society in general. The lack of social justice, abuse of human rights especially to life and freedom of expression, glaring social exclusion, sexism and gender discrimination that imposes a glass ceiling and deprives society of tangible input and contributions from the women folk, are repelled through acts of religious intolerance, terrorism and social revolutions against blatant government neglect and leadership failures.

- Socio-economic – The leadership that seeks to perpetuate itself in power enlists the support of strategically-positioned cronies who are rewarded for their efforts with their effective control of sectors of the economy. These governments are symbolized by aggravated financial mismanagement that borders on money laundering, bribery, embezzlement, looting of government coffers, the misappropriation of public funds and an inability to revive the ailing sectors. Meager salaries and other allowances are delayed or unpaid leading to strikes in the already comatose sectors of the economy e.g. the health, education, petroleum and bureaucratic sectors. The effect of strikes in the health sector of an African nation like Nigeria in terms of untimely and preventable deaths should not be downplayed, particularly as they are already not up to par with the minimum acceptable global standards with regard to the quality of healthcare service delivery.

In Nigeria for instance, the power sector has remained dysfunctional through successive governments' legislative and financial efforts to revive it. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of deaths from electrocution as a result of faulty or badly managed installations, vandalism and the likes as well as deaths from generator fumes, fire outbreaks and explosions from adulterated petroleum products which citizens have to resort for powering alternative sources of electricity. Other criminal acts totter on the production and importation of fake drugs, smuggling of banned and expired goods and the adulteration of products e.g. food, beverages, drugs, etc. for the maximization of profit.

The underlying triggers of most of the unconscionable acts and deviant behavior that pervades most African societies are poverty and intangible delivery of social services. Even Nigeria's whistle-blower policy that offers financial advantages to the whistleblower in terms of a 2.5 – 5 percent cut of the recovered funds (Kazeem, 2017) also appears to appeal to this poverty and lack that pervades the society. The general opinion held is that looters of public funds are turned in, not for the fact that it is right to do so, but for the gains that are accruable from the 'venture'.

- Religious – Karl Marx stated that 'Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people' (McKinnon, 2005). Religion has become the opium of the masses that have no option than to begin to 'look unto God' for reliefs from the surrounding societal decay in the form of 'miracles'. Lenin (1905) described a scenario in which religion is used to elicit submission from the people (toilers) with the promise of rewards in heaven while those who reap the benefits of the labours of the 'toilers' approach religion from the context that it is an obligator for the practice of charity towards the toilers. This inadvertently justifies their existence as exploiters. Increasingly, the masses are exposed to fraudulent 'mediums', 'pastors' and 'ministers' of God who take advantage of their ignorance to engage in self-enrichment. The media is awash with reports of criminality that has crept into the religious arena, destroying church boards, dethroning religious leaders and reports of 'men of God' that engage in ritualistic killings, rapes and inhumane treatments of minors and teenagers, illicit affairs with members of their congregations, embezzlement of church funds, etc. all in the name of freeing them from the grip of poverty.

Religion has also become a means through which the youth in society are brainwashed into accepting anti-social doctrines and a medium through which violent terrorist acts are prospected by groups like Boko Haram, Al-Shabbab and ISIS. Immerzeel and Tubergen's (2011) exposition on the insecurity theory depicts an increase in insecurity as associated with an increase in religiosity. They held that groups that tend to be deeply enmeshed in religiosity are comprised of people with insecure job positions, people whose parents are unemployed or have lower status job positions, people who have experienced wars in their own country, those who have lost partners and those who reside in countries with lower social welfare spending and a higher unemployment rate. In relating this analysis to the African situation, there is indeed an interaction between both variables further buttressing the fact that these groups leverage on the lack of social service delivery, diminishing social values, psycho-social/mental instability, hunger, poverty and unemployment to increase their followership.

These connotations are not all encompassing in the description of the effects of corruption in Africa. The focus here is on those with the capacity to result in death or grievous bodily harm to one or many depending on the circumstances and factors at play. They reflect obstacles and consequences fuelled both by the failures of the institutional anti-corruption mechanisms and by the negligence of and lip service paid by the leadership that is entrusted with the political will and capacity to effectively tackle it. Ogungbamila (2014) in his analyses of the Nigerian scenario assesses this position as exacerbated by the inability of the legal framework in Nigeria to effectively reduce corruption in the nation.

As a scourge that must be addressed from the perspective of the danger that it poses to the viability of her human and material resources and the overall sustainability of the continent, this African model of corruption requires the conception of holistic, home-grown strategies for checkmating it. A concerted action against corruption is therefore inevitable if African countries are to be redirected and more integrated into the global economy, attract foreign and domestic investment, achieve the growth rate necessary to reduce poverty and improve the well-being of their populations (Lawal, 2007).

### **Theoretical Underpinning**

Ethics, also moral philosophy, involves 'systematizing, defending and recommending concepts of right and wrong behavior' (www.iep.utm.edu). Paul and Elder (2006) defined it as 'a set of concepts or principles that guide us in

determining what behavior helps or harms sentient creatures'. The Syracuse University School of Education described the ethical theory of consequentialism as positing that the rightness or wrongness of an action is dependent on the consequences that the action produces. It goes further to describe its most common form as utilitarianism or social consequentialism which proposes that actions must produce the greatest good for the greatest number. It describes the principles as entailing:

- Respect for autonomy that allows individuals act as they wish so long as the actions do not negatively infringe on the comfort and rights of others.
- Nonmaleficence which implies doing no harm or not engaging in activities with the propensity to cause harm to others.
- Beneficence which entails engaging in actions that are beneficial to others.
- Justice which implies engaging in actions that reflect equity, fairness and justice. In essence, impartiality, equality and reciprocity are the fundamental values through which actions are evaluated.
- Fidelity that involves faithfulness, loyalty, truthfulness, promise-keeping and respect. The presence of these is seen as relevant to an individual's exercise of his right to choose. Basically, this right to choose must be exercised within the limits set by the comfort of others who may be affected by the outcome of the choice in one way or the other.

### **Discussion**

The focus of public policies is both on efficiency and effectiveness in social service delivery and on the delivery of other services that can be described as the attributes of good governance. This focus and the means of achievement have been marred by several intervening variables as discussed in preceding sections, with far-reaching consequences. A lack of the requisite resources to prospect all-out anti-corruption strategies makes it imperative to look inwards into possibly more effective strategies that derive from the provisions of the ethical theory of consequentialism and the ethical principles in a bid to reinvent high moral standards not only in government business but also in the daily lives of individuals in society.

Hunja (2015) stressed the importance of an environment that allows citizen take responsibility for their governance by participating in their governments through the identification of priorities and problems and finding solutions that are relevant to people-centric development. This view is synonymous with the provisions of the ethical decision-making model discussed by Corey et al. (1998) as a framework for analyzing and making ethical decisions.

The framework entails steps which encompass the identification of the problem and the potential issues involved, a review of the relevant ethical guidelines as well as the requisite laws and regulations, consultation with the relevant stakeholders to determine possible and probable courses of action in order to adequately assess the consequences of the probable actions and finally decide on the most workable option. The essence of ethics and ethical behavior is in ensuring that the good of the individual or the group is taken into cognizance and ensured either in decision-making processes or in the actions which are undertaken in the course of governance at all levels.

The recurring decimal in all of these analyses is the individual in the various capacities and roles that he has to play or chooses to play as a social animal and a member of society. Though corruption is a social malaise, this position on the complicity of the individual draws its strength from the standpoint that corruption stems from the decisions of individuals (Groenendijk, 1997). The government which is responsible for efficient service delivery but is not managed in ways that should result in the desired goals is run by individuals that are either elected or appointed into power. The organizations and institutions with the responsibility for credible elections, policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation that rather implement policies which only serve the interests of the select few to the detriment of the majority are administered by individuals. The organizations responsible for quality assurance, ensuring and maintaining standards and adherence to the prescribed rules and regulations but throw concerns for these minimum acceptable standards to the wind are also managed by individuals. From this perspective, it is in place to agree with Whitton (2001) that ethical conduct and corruption are two sides of the same coin.

Whitton (2001) distinguished between the Code of Ethics and the Code of Conduct, describing the former as more non-specific than the latter as a result of the inability to clearly define or assert breaches of general principles set out in the Codes of Ethics. He defined the Code of Ethics as the general set of core values which define the professional role of the civil service while the Code of Conduct are the specific standards of conduct expected in a range of realistic circumstances representing an organization's preferred or required interpretation of the core values characteristic of and important to its work (Whitton, 2001). He further averred that unlike the Code of Conduct which can be upheld and provides guidance for the evaluation of actions that are clearly in or out of line with

expectations, the effectiveness of Codes of Ethics can be hindered by the lack of personal, technical and professional competence of individual civil servants to recognize an ethics problem for what it is and a 'compliance mentality'. This mentality is etched on the commitment to the narrow compliance with rules so as to avoid punishment thereby diminishing the import of ethics and culminating in an inability to take a stand for integrity and against corruption (Whitton, 2001). These challenges to the effectiveness of ethics which can be checkmated by constant professional training, committed political and administrative leadership and its effective institutionalization by management (Whitton, 2001) do not however remove from the fact that it is a less cumbersome and more individualistic anti-corruption strategy than the institutional efforts.

Sylla (2013) provided a context for an analysis of corruption in Africa that derived from an understanding of the cultural bases on which the African societies are founded. He noted that many observers evaluate corruption in Africa in particular as a cultural phenomenon inherent in her societies, a notion with which he disagreed for being erroneous. He held that an overview of Africa's cultural heritage and history would reveal that corruption is a new phenomenon that stemmed from the collusion between the colonial heritage and the indigenous cultures of African societies in the colonial era. This collusion led to confusion between what can be described as correct behavior or otherwise as a result of the confrontation between two opposing values, norms and behaviours. In many African societies for instance, gift-giving is not corruption and does not lead to bribery and embezzlement, rather the refusal of a gift is inimical to the cementing of relationships and the maintenance of peace and harmony in society (Sylla, 2013).

Most pre-colonial African societies were administered on the bases of morality and some form of theocracy which was characterized by the fear of an 'all-powerful invisible being' who was accessible either through a designated individual or group of individuals. Whitton (2001) noted that in African countries where there were significant Muslim traditions, 'traditional' moral virtues encompassing selflessness, self discipline and courage were invoked as part of the Civil Service Codes of Ethics. This is not to say that the Christian-dominated nations or traditions allow for corruption and other related practices to thrive. Sacks (2005) highlighted the relationship between being moved by the teachings of the prophets and having a social conscience. The consciousness of the far-reaching consequences of the violations of the tenets of these societies was virtually always sufficient to keep them in check and on track. In these societies, there was no middle course between right and wrong. Actions were adjudged acceptable or otherwise and this was on the basis of laws and traditions which were designed for the preservation and betterment of the society, a practice resplendent of consequentialism.

There was also the issue of trust in traditional Africa which was an important social norm. It constituted the basis of any cooperation and building block of the development of any institutions regarding good governance, community participation, etc. and created obligations for all members of the community thereby fostering bonding and building bridges across ethnic lines. Without these values and norms that were the foundations of the traditional indigenous values, nothing from the outside can create conditions for democracy and good governance in Africa (Sylla, 2013).

The alien values of politics and policy that came with the recreation and merger of the previously independent pre-colonial societies into 'states' seemed unable to find a place in the ethnic, cultural and social solidarity elements of their indigenous African cultures (Sylla, 2013). Apparently, the attempt to imbibe and perfect the blueprints for politics and administration left behind by colonialism and all it represents may be responsible for the fits and starts which characterize governance, politics and administration in most African countries today. Historical accounts hold that the colonial masters were worshipped as demi-gods in the societies where they held sway and the Africans who were opportune to work with them were also viewed as such. This resulted in a craze for opportunities to get into those offices and positions of power and most times, even without the requisite know-how. This politico-administrative malaise has been passed down and in contemporary Africa, nations are still battling with the appropriate forms and correct ways of practicing the ideal democracy.

The less extreme but stringent measures which entail institutional mechanisms have therefore been the 'go to' for most contemporary societies driven by the virtues of serving public interest, transparency, integrity, legitimacy, fairness, responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness as contained in the Codes of Ethics of the civil services. However, these virtues and the mechanisms instituted to uphold them are hindered by encumbrances that are socio-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural in character. Within the African societies, they are identifiable as the bureaucratic bottlenecks presented by the lack of policy continuity, lack of established and effective policy input, output, formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, dearth of infrastructure, dysfunctional institutions and technological know-how among others.

We cannot downplay the influence of the public administrative ecologies of African nations in slowing or derailing anti-corruption processes. Research findings show that the average Nigerian decision-maker is influenced by his social environment and social ties either as an individual or as a community member particularly where decision making processes border on relationships in which he is unable to be impartial (Umoh, 2016) in conformity with Riggs' (1961) 'clects'. This confirmed Ogungbamila's (2014) findings as per the influence of certain indices (togetherness, fear of being ostracized by the whistleblower's fellows, etc.) inherent in Nigeria's socio-cultural environment on the effectiveness of whistleblowing as an anti-corruption strategy. On the other hand, Whitton (2001) had noted that the effectiveness of whistleblowing as an anti-corruption strategy can be enhanced by the protection of individuals who make public interest disclosures.

The lapses created by these indices which Riggs (1961) described as 'non-administrative criteria' weigh heavily on administrative contents and extensively determine or frustrate their functionality. These non-administrative criteria are those factors with the capacity to impose particularistic obligations on the public administrators and interfere with goal attainment by diverting officials from the use of their labour to accomplish an organization's presumed policies or goals (Riggs, 1961). They allow people boycott the principles and procedures that should guide the actions of administrators and decision makers and heighten dysfunctions in the public sector that reverberate around the illegitimate use of state resources and over-reliance on connections and favours instead of the formal political, social and economic rules (Lawal, 2007).

### **Conclusion**

Financial corruption is to me, the bedrock of all other corrupt practices. It is the medium through which individuals enrich and empower themselves with the aim of exercising control over the political, socio-economic and all other aspects of governance in their nations. It may therefore not be fully curbable as it has assumed a 'normalcy' that permeates virtually every society and is an underlying factor in interactions that may require or are defined by the exchange of social goods and services for payment.

The failure of leadership to effectively mainstream good governance through strategic, purpose-specific policy making, monitoring and evaluation ricochets throughout society with a major boomerang on engendering posterity. Sacks (2005) quoted by Ramphela (2009) stated that '...the world will not get better of its own accord. Nor will we make it a more humane place by leaving it to others – politicians, columnists, protesters, campaigners'. Apparently, these groups of people have failed in their various responsibilities making the monster, corruption, an endemic, potent thread that runs through the fabric of numerous African societies having eroded the contexts and values on which relationships, governance, etc. were initially based in the pre-colonial era. Now, it determines the quality of life by undermining political and socio-economic stability and development.

Gathambiri (2016) noted that the home-grown ideas for remedying the 'ballooning' levels of corruption, abject poverty, ignorance, sycophancy and other societal diseases will be better developed by tapping into our indigenous human and material resources. This truth further heightens the need for an awakening of the consciousness of individuals to their responsibilities to society and for posterity as individuals; a responsibility which recognizes the potency of decision-making and action-taking that borders on 'rightness' and 'wrongness' with regard to the consequences for one and all.

### **Recommendations**

In African countries, responsibility for national growth and socio-economic development lies with the central governments as a result of their status as developing countries and so the importance of functional civil services in these countries cannot be downplayed. The overarching recommendation of this paper is that corrupt practices with dire consequences for quality of life and human security should be matched with equally retributive sanctions to ensure their curtailment. Unarguably, the threats of an international outcry, sanctions and possible excommunication by the international community would very readily discourage the average African nation from adopting extreme measures like the death penalty for corrupt practices in the face of the overdependence of these nations on the more developed nations for aid and assistance.

Anti-corruption strategies in Africa must therefore adopt a procedural approach as a prerequisite for tackling it through processes that are reflective of steps directed at making tangible impact. This is imbibed as a social value through 'a re-learning process' of the responsibilities, duties and obligations of the citizens that stresses the virtues of patriotism, selflessness and the determination to put others and country above self. The expectation is that financial corruption as the core of all corrupt practices will naturally fizzle out. One major example of the success of this strategy is the death penalty for drug trafficking in Asian countries like Indonesia and China. This has resulted



in a notable decline in the number of citizens of these nations engaged in such practices. Another example is the law developed for the punishment and curtailing of reckless driving in Thailand which has the second highest road death rate in the world. The law states that culprits apprehended for reckless and drunk driving will be required to engage in community service in a morgue for at least a week (Sherwell, 2016).

Anti-corruption strategies in Africa should be facilitated by the return to the standards of respect for right and the abhorrence of wrong that are to a considerable extent, obtainable in the rural areas where the last vestiges of morality and other humane values still appear to exist, uncorrupted by modernity. On this premise, these strategies may relate but not be limited to the following:

- Governments should re-establish ownership of key, sensitive profit-making sectors of their economies in the spirit of redistributive policies. This is only conscionable in the light of the responsibility of governments for national development strategies particularly in developing countries. The oil sector in Nigeria for instance, is administered by mainly expatriate companies while the oil blocs are in the hands of individuals who keep the gains (royalties) to themselves while the government is left with just revenue from corporate taxes, etc. A change in policy-direction will bring about a corresponding change in the status quo and ensure that the volume of revenue accruing from the investments is properly redistributed by the governments across all groups in the spirit of social justice rather than being accumulated in the coffers of a handful of individuals.
- Constitutional restrictions on the tenures of individuals to checkmate their rotation and that of their cronies, families and the cabals to which they belong to prevent political grooming, self-serving desires for perpetuation, nepotism, etc. Also, where wrongs or criminal acts are perpetrated by public officers or members of their family, they should be made to feel the full weight of the law.
- Government and political appointments should be made unattractive and should not be removed from the people whom they are expected to serve. Responsibility or the lack of it in the offices to which individuals are assigned or elected should be rewarded with honours or punished accordingly even with public shaming where necessary. There must be regard for equity and fairness in that there should be no sacred cows. Stiffer sanctions must be instituted for corrupt practices with cases seen to be prosecuted to logical conclusions without fear or favour.
- There should be effective monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects with more emphases on direct oversight by the relevant ministries, agencies or departments that are direct beneficiaries of the exercise. This will engender quality assurance in project execution, enhance accountability and responsibility by reducing the chain of offices between the service providers or contractors and the receivers or beneficiaries thereby reducing the loopholes that allow corrupt practices to thrive.

Examples of efforts at ensuring this kind of efficiency in service provision exist in Nigeria's telecommunication and banking sectors where individuals are provided numbers through which they can make recorded calls to the service providers to get their issues resolved. This consciousness that the calls are recorded brings a commitment on the part of the service providers, to resolving the issues in the most amicable way possible.

The public sector as the bane of corruption in most African countries must take cues from the private sectors of their countries. The concern for profit and sustainability drives efficiency in the private sector which hardly offers a hiding place for unproductive staff or actions that are inimical to the existence of these companies. This way the staff of the public sector can no longer engage in business as usual.

Ethics centres emulating the practices of in the private sector should be set up in the public sectors of the African countries and strengthened to either support or replace the existing 'due process' offices and consumer protection agencies. They should be equipped to function as the 'customer care centres' of the public sectors and should exist at all levels in all the offices and parastatals of the governments throughout the countries. Every report tendered, complaint lodged and calls made must be accorded full and thorough investigation and errant public servants punished to ensure that the confidence of the people in ethics as an anti-corruption strategy is built and its prospects further developed.

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