

Analyzing The Effects of Corruption on People's Daily Lives in African Countries

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Abstract

In many African countries, corruption has become part of people's culture. People, nations, teams, groups, or companies are part of the traditions that undermine social values and human dignity. Corruption continues to affect almost all dimensions of people's daily lives, from poor public service delivery to poor governmental intervention, redirecting funds to suit private or individual agendas. The effect of corruption is multiple, impacting justice, equity, equality, human rights, trust, socio-economic development, poverty alleviation, and achieving the SDG, AU Agenda 63, and more specifically the NDP in SA. The abuse of high-level power for private gain undermines local, national, and global security and that of individual citizens. Most African countries are experiencing endless and unresolved socio-economic challenges due to several malpractices fueling corruption. Factors like poor accountability, lack of transparency, lack of political and judicial willingness, restrictions on anti-corruption activists, lack of protection for anti-corruption activists, failing to achieve justice, lack of whistleblower safeguards, political interference in anti-corruption institutions; ineffective or weak laws and practices, perceptions of nepotism and clientelism, limited citizen participation, etc., are amongst the issues sustaining deceitful/fraudulent practices (corruption), which are limiting socio-economic transformation in African countries. Various works of literature were reviewed and examined in trying to understand the reason why corruption is not declining in Africa. "If corruption is so rife as a global challenge, the question is: Is enough being done to erode it, or are the corrupt forces too powerful to be destroyed?" The case of South Africa is examined in this paper in trying to explore possible answers to these questions. However, global actions against corruption in Africa may not be an effective approach because of mixed/varied political, economic, and social unbalanced interests of globalization. But the AU, as well as each African country should develop a strong mechanism, efforts, policies, and resources and empower anti-corruption institutions to create and sustain incentive ethical behavior in the management of public dealings. Declining corruption in Africa requires individual or collective awareness, actions, efforts, and commitment to the best practice of social values, policies, and strategic plans based on the fundamentals of transparency, integrity, and honesty in the common interest of better service delivery.

Keywords: Corruption, social values, political and judicial willingness, awareness, and public service delivery.

I. Introduction

Corruption impacts negatively almost all facets of people's daily lives, from poor public service delivery to governmental intervention redirecting funds to suit personal agendas. It can

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involve the mismanagement, wastage, inequity, social decay, and the embezzlement of huge sums of public funds that come along with it. Corruption remains a devastating malpractice or misconduct that affect the economy. It is a mishandling of public office for personal (private/individual) interest. It includes acts that are unacceptable to an organization, and which may cause loss to the organization, its clients, or the general public; and dishonestly putting personal interests above those of the people and ideals one has pledged to serve, as well as the behavior that may involve theft, theft, and misuse of position or authority, etc., (Krishnamurthy, 2011 and Locatelli, 2016). The effect is multiple, impacting justice, equity, equality, human rights, trust, economic development, poverty alleviation, and achieving the SDG, AU Agenda 63, and more specifically the NDP in SA. The abuse of high-level power for private gain undermines local, national, and global security, and that of individual citizens. Therefore, if corruption is so rife as a global challenge, the question is: Is enough being done to erode it, or are the corrupt forces too powerful to be destroyed? To provide clarity to this question, the situation of corruption in South Africa is examined in this paper. While there is an overall perception of corruption diminishing and our ranking improving, this does not warrant an acceptance of the ranking, as the impact on the economy, society, poverty alleviation, etc., are significantly destructive. This paper intends to explore and examine the situation of corruption in the African context, and particularly in South Africa by investigating the following questions:

1. Why is corruption not declining in African countries?
2. What is the role of anti-corruption institutions?
3. What barriers are anti-corruption institutions facing?
4. Has corruption become part of local cultures?
5. What should African countries do to decline corruption?

In attempting to bring intelligibility to these questions, several works of literature were explored and examined. Most authors have described corruption as the mishandling of position for personal interest or for individual or group's benefit to whom one owes allegiance (Manyaka, 2014). Corruption can be also described as the use of one's official position for personal and group benefit that includes unethical actions like misappropriation, misuse or stealing of government property, administrative documents and use of regulation as bureaucratic, patronage, conflict of interest, divided loyalty, influence-peddling, bribery, nepotism, moonlighting, selling of favors, embezzlement, fraud, receiving kickbacks, extortion, phony travel, under- or over-invoicing, and court tempering. capital (Krishnamurthy, 2011). Locatelli (2016) postulated that corruption involves particularly uncommon and large projects where the public sector acts as the main contractor or even as a client/owner. Nwokorie (2018) attested that corruption within society refers to the deficits in integrity and morality of public servants, politicians, and citizens (this situation generates corrupt values in the society). He further indicated that within an organization, corruption refers to the deficiencies of organizational culture, values, and norms because of corrupt values often experienced in the society (Nwokorie, 2018). In addition, within the management of the organization, corruption refers to the deficiencies in professionalism and ethical conduct/behavior of managers, resulting in loss of public trust, cooperation, and support to public sector organizations (Nwokorie, 2018). In general, corruption translates into a situation of ineffectiveness in public organizations, resulting in poor quality and quantity of public service delivery. It is the mishandling of assigned/delegated power for individual benefit. Locatelli (2016) emphasized that corruption remains one of the major concerns for public policies. It continues to remain as one of the critical impediments to the development of emerging countries and to further improving the quality of life in developed countries. Therefore, the trend to eradicate corruption

remains amongst the critical issues/questions that the world faces. According to Locatelli (2016), approaches to eradicate corruption have to include the cultural changes and improvement of education, which might lead to strengthening government capacity of producing policies that can tackle issues like corruption.

Furthermore, Locatelli (2016) stated that government policies can reduce corruption by improving the advantages of being honest, improving the possibility of exposure/detection and penalty (punishment), and improving the sentences (penalties) imposed on those found guilty or caught. It is, therefore, comprehensible that such actions or measures typically require the introduction of more transparency and substantive law reform (Locatelli, 2016). Studies demonstrated that there exists a positive correlation between professional standard, fairness of punishment, transparency, procedural compliance, contractual compliance, and corruption-free indicators (Malito, 2014). Extended views showed that in the construction industry, ethical behaviors are promoted by policies and ethical guidelines of professional bodies and private organizations together with the procurement agencies leadership of public sector (Buys, 2015). Other studies specified that transparency remains a major key to fighting corruption in public procurement (OECD, 2016). Deplorably, the achievement of all these indispensable cultural changes and processes might take years, while development needs to be continuously planned and delivered. Consequently, while the political and sociological communities deal with the long-term problems, such as policy and cultural changes, the development of communities is affected by the issue of corruption that also obstructs public service delivery without further hesitation.

2. Background of Corruption in South Africa Between 1995 - 2020

In South Africa, as well as in many other African countries, anti-corruption institutions have been applying pressure on decision-makers, top officials, and leaders in the public and private sectors to work towards the creation of a corruption-free (South Africa). An essential part of this work consists of ensuring adequate protection and support for whistle-blowers (Corruption Watch Report, 2022). Unfortunately, the corruption watch report indicates that for the past years, the government of South Africa has failed to undertake forceful efforts to fight against the root causes of corruption (Corruption Watch Report, 2022). The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) indicated that South Africa has a CPI of 44/100. This implies that South Africa's record on corruption is higher within its public sector, comparing to the average of sub-Saharan African countries, which reflect an average score of 33 (Corruption Watch Report, 2022). For the years in review, in South Africa, the Corruption Watch Report (2022) reported high levels of maladministration at 18% of all reports, abuse of authority (16%) and procurement corruption (16%). These acts of corruption comprise concerns such as procurement irregularities, compliance issues, kickbacks, and fraudulent activities in state institutions. Therefore, in South Africa, the most common type of corruption includes (Corruption Watch Report, 2022): Employment corruption 8%; Abuse of Authority 16%; Fraud 14%; Maladministration 18%; Procurement corruption 16%; Misappropriation of resources 12%; Dereliction of duty 8%; and Bribery or extortion 8%; etc.

In addition, the Corruption Watch Report (2022) indicated that most corruption matters or other types of wrongful conduct, which are happening in the public sector, include the local government (24%), the provincial government (8%), and the national government (28%). The group emphasized that in South Africa, corruption is mostly due to crisis related to the leadership where administrators and politicians are serving their individual, private and factional benefits, rather than constitutional or people's benefits. Thus, the most prevalent

corruption sectors in South Africa (Corruption Watch Report, 2022) are:

1. Mining 1.2% Maladministration,
2. Licensing 2.3% Bribery and extortion,
3. Housing 3.1% Maladministration,
4. Traffic 2.7% Bribery and extortion,
5. Covid-19 related corruption 3.8% (Maladministration),
6. Health 2.7% Procurement corruption,
7. Police 10.0% Abuse of authority,
8. Schools 5.8% Abuse of authority,
9. Covid-19 related corruption 3.8% Maladministration,
10. Etc.

However, Figure 1 indicates South Africa's Scores on the Corruption Perception Index (1995-2020).

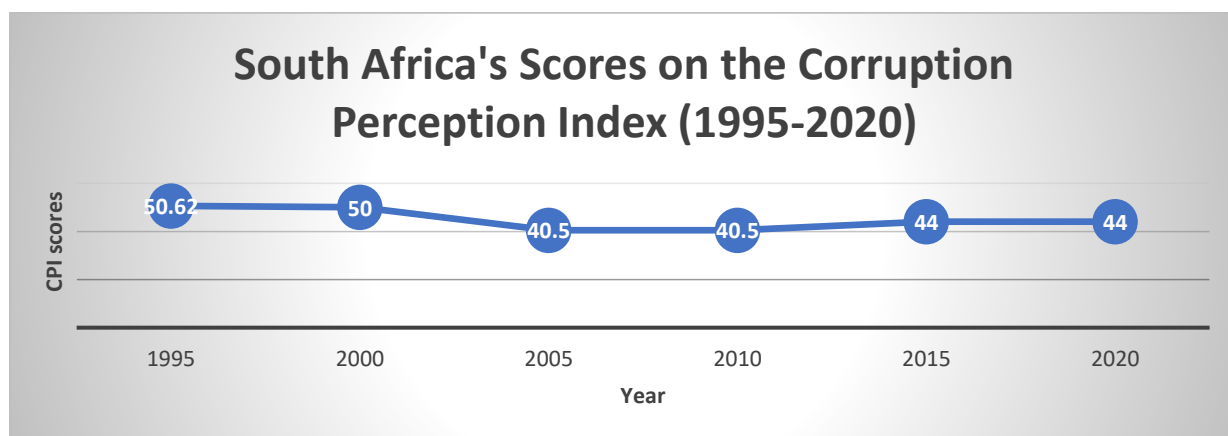


Figure 1. *South Africa's Scores on the Corruption Perception Index (1995-2020)*
Source: South Africa's Scores on the Corruption Perception Index (1995-2020)

Figure 1 shows an overall perception of corruption diminishing and ranking improving in South Africa. Unfortunately, this does warrant an acceptance of the ranking, as the impact on the economy, development, and poverty alleviation are significantly destructive. The next sub-section attempts to discuss the reasons why corruption is not declining in African countries.

3. Review of Literature and Hypothesis

Corruption has different names and appears in different forms such as bribery, theft, tax evasion, fraud, and other illicit financial practice (World Economic Forum, 2019). The literature review discusses the five important questions described in the introduction section of this paper. The first discussion explores the reasons why corruption is not declining in African countries. The attempt to address this concern may be various. This implies that there may not be an exhaustive list justifying or underlying the motives for corruption not declining in Africa. Already, much literature (Freund, 2007; Holdt, 2019; Zulu, 2022, smith, 2010; ...) has indicated that corruption is not declining in African countries due to causes that are linked to the lack of political and judicial will, lack of accountability, lack of whistleblower safeguards, lack of clean audit in procurement processes, (mis)leadership of the emergence of a new Black elite, lack of transparency, restrictions on anti-corruption activists or lack of protection for anti-corruption activists, and failing to achieve justice, etc. This paper does not examine all these issues. In the South African context, this paper discusses only the emergence of a new elite as

well as the lack of whistleblower safeguards as critical devastating issues amongst several others, fueling corruption and slowing the declining process of corruption in the country.

1. Why Is Corruption Not Declining in African Countries

According to Corruption Watch Reports (2022 and 2015), several explanations are justifying or leading to corruption not declining in African countries. One of them is the fear of being victimized as a whistleblower. In most cases, corruption is not declining due to factors that include institutional weaknesses such as in the legislative and judicial systems, which provide fertile ground for growing rent-seeking activities, lack of consistency and accountability, as well as the lack of transparency. Corruption watch Report (2015) reported that one of the significant hindrances confronted in fighting against corruption in African countries is that people are often too intimidated to blow the whistle and speak out on unlawful and corrupt activities they observe occurring in private or the public workplace, even though they might be able to do so (obliged) to in terms of their work conditions. Therefore, specifically, this paper emphasizes on two important causes of corruption not declining in South Africa, including the emergence of a new black elite leadership and a lack of whistleblower safeguards.

The emergence of a new black elite

According to Freund (2007), in a post-apartheid era, the creation of the black elite became a necessity. Therefore, it was uncertain, though, if this new elite could have a sense of leadership in driving the industrialization of the economy. Holdt (2019) articulated that the rise of new classes of elite in South Africa is often a viciously challenged, violent and ugly, affair. Because corruption in South Africa isn't simply a matter of weak law enforcement or bad morals, it is implanted in class formation processes, explicitly, the development of new black elites (Holdt, 2019). This implies that corruption is mostly a problem of shaping the economic model and politics or a wide social model to convey over planned changes. In this context, an informal economic-political system at local, provincial, and national levels started to emerge. The outcome is systems of state ambitious entrepreneurs and officials involved in procurement rigging. However, the key procedure to transform the economy in the post-apartheid era has been the initiative to quicken the development of new black elites (Freund, 2007). But the affirmative action and intervention of institutions, such as black economic empowerment have been insufficient, as white-owned businesses and large corporations continued to dominate the economy, where competition remained high and the demand for public services and goods has been fierce.

According to Zulu (2022), a new elite has undertaken the task of obsessed with gathering power, distorting the truth, or blood spilled, no matter the lives wrecked, the growing black elite applies the jargon or language of liberation to defend its bloodsucking pillage. Furthermore, Zulu (2022) indicates that the growing of black elite leadership is not an integrated megalith. It does not have joint or common voice to speak about issues of concern. Its affiliates/adherents do not originate from one organization or party. Situated in the private sector, state institutions, and government, this emergent class is unified by a motivation of advancing and defending its influence interest. Moreover, Zulu (2022) emphasized that the new Black elite is characterized by a fascinated mendacious desire for power through the following devastating practices:

1. Black elite exploitations of black rage and the endless idolizing of black capitalists.
2. Others search for self-enrichment through fraud, bribery, and all other forms of corruption,
3. For others, power is to be defended by appeasing foreign investment or to be advanced

- through electoral populism, and
4. For some elites, power is gained through their rent-seeking as traditional leaders,

These developments suggest the ambitions of a class unworried about making society work for anyone but themselves. According to Smith (2010), South Africa has been sitting or is even now sitting on a ticking bomb. Those that are poor are by now becoming agitated and impatient. They are tired of reading and watching about whites parading wealth and the black elites a few kilometers away from where they live in squalor. Smith (2010) reported that the more the leadership delays in acting, strongly steered by a new growth path that will end inequalities, poverty, and worsening unemployment, the more the risk that this poor majority will simply walk one day to the suburbs towards demanding the same living lifestyle or standards. No barriers, ramparts or barricades will be high ample to prevent them, and no electronic hedges will be sufficiently powerful to block the overwhelming majority. According to Zulu (2022), the black elite have been considering racial and race inequality as tools to the cloaking and mystification of faces as well as of functions of power. In this light, some authors have accurately described this new elite as a class that sees its own financial, personal, and societal interests and as a Black (mis)leadership class being synonymous with the advancement of black people. He further indicated that this class seeks only its elevation within the existing structures, it does not seek the transformation of society. But (Zulu, 2022) also indicated explicitly that the critique of black elites is not a kind of discourse that attempts to dilute the evils of white domination by comparing it to the inequities of today or a flirtation with colonial and apartheid apologetics. Nor is it a tacit defense of white supremacy in the past or present.

Lack of whistleblower safeguards

Whistleblowing can be described as the action of speaking out about something in confidence to other authorities about wrongdoings (Kleyn et al., 2021). It is the disclosure of whatever kind of 'wrongdoing, referring to the revelation or exposure of information on a harm or threat to the interest of the public. The OECD describes a whistleblower as Legal defense or protection from disciplinary or discriminatory action for workers who release/reveal to the competent authorities in good faith and on acceptable opinions illegal behavior of all kinds, in the context of their work environment. In addition, wrongdoing can be described as an irregular conduct or other activity, an unlawful activity or malpractice within an institution or enterprise (corruption watch, 2015). Diale, (2016) defined whistleblowing as a disagreement in response to an ethical dilemma, in the form of a public accusation against an institution/company. It is a key approach of producing accountability. According to Weiner (2020), in South Africa, whistleblowers are seen as troublemakers. They are not celebrated or applauded, but rather ostracized and othered. They are not raised aloft as heroic citizens rather than pushed to the fringes of society. Thakur (2018) stated that one of the primary reasons that people do not report wrongdoing is the fear of unfair treatment.

According to Botha (2021), in South Africa, several scandals of corruption have been registered in recent years. Therefore, corruption can delay or obstruct a country's economic growth, and destabilize principles of democracy, as well as trust and stability. Therefore, Botha (2021) and Thakur, (2018) emphasized that whistleblowing is considered as the key mechanisms employed to deter corruption in South Africa. It contributes to inspiring high standards of governance in both the public institutions and private sector, as well as of transparency and accountability (Thakur, 2018). Whistleblowers support and assist to preventing and fighting criminal conduct and should consequently be allowed safeguard by the state. Unfortunately, South Africa is experiencing a flawed system. Legislative frameworks may guide whistleblowing, but institutional frameworks are not strong enough to protect

whistleblowers against intimidation, harassment, and criminal networks (Just-Share-Whistleblower-Report, 2022). In addition, Botha (2021) declared that there has been a reasonable number of whistleblowers in South Africa raising the alarm on corruption and irregularities. Unfortunately, according to Thakur (2018), a lot of cases pointed out that individuals don't get the protection they deserve. In South Africa, several examples demonstrate that whistleblowers are not protected. Recently, a case of corruption was exposed in the procurement of COVID-19 personal protective equipment. This resulted in situation where the country was shocked by the murder of a woman (Botha, 2021). Other examples of whistleblowers' lack of protection include the following (Just-Share-Whistleblower-Report, 2022 and Botha, 2021):

1. Dr. Theron was suspended after making the disclosures to parliament of poor health conditions at Pollsmoor Prison in the Western Cape. He battled to get his case heard in the whistle-blowing process; he finally ended up in the Labour Court and he was never reinstated.
2. In addition, the case of Mike Tshishonga who was immediately suspended and subjected to a disciplinary inquiry, because as a civil servant, he made serious allegations to the media regarding a former Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development.
3. Furthermore, the case of Babita Deokaran who exposed corruption within the Gauteng province's health department. She was murdered.
4. Moreover, other cases involved two whistleblowers in their testimonies at the State Capture Inquiry in March 2021. Cases like that involving a former partner at Bain SA, Athol Williams, and former Trillian Management Consulting CEO, Bianca Goodson, who brought the plight of whistleblowers to the attention of not only Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo but also the nation.

Therefore, it shows from these manifest examples that in South Africa, whistle-blowing environment is failing to inspire people to unveil or expose cases of corruption. It requires an enormous courage and sense of civic responsibility to speak out. The situation of corruption in the country was mostly exposed at the judicial commission penetrating allegations of state capture over the past years. What the whistleblowers' personal narratives showed the public consists of to understand that fundamentally, there is need for a cultural shift. There is a requirement for change in the way society considers or cares for whistleblowers, the way they are perceived, and the treatment they get. The concept (whistleblowing) must be perceived in the positive way, instead of being regarded in an overwhelmingly negative light. There must be an indispensable change of culture and a need to promote, encourage, cultivate, or develop a speak-out culture in the fight against corruption. According to Botha (2021), South Africa has the privilege to have several pieces of regulatory policy documents as well as legislation that cover whistleblowing and corruption. The most significant of these include the Protected Disclosures Act 26 of 2000 (Sangweni, 2001 and Just-Share-Whistleblower-Report, 2022). The act intends to support and promote whistleblowing in the place of work. It also aims to establish a culture that easily contributes to disclosing information about irregular and other criminal conduct. In addition, whistleblowing legislative framework is also part of the Labour Relations Act, the Companies Act and the Constitution. They also provide for the protection of whistleblowers.

But unfortunately, it seems that there is no Open Democratic Centre of Advice where the improvement or change of a Code of Good Practice would support to set out a full and well-thought-out guidance to public and private bodies on the application of whistle-blowing

policies, clarifications and explanation of the law, and different mechanisms that can prevent corruption. Additionally, perceptions of high levels of judicial corruption are another deterrent to pursuing reporting on corruption. In South Africa, whistleblowers are not well prepared and rewarded to compromise their personal and family well-being against corporate and government giants who have all the resources. The decision to blow the whistle is a bold Debold ramification that can be overwhelmingly destructive to the individual. While the Protected Disclosures Amendment Act (Act 5 of 2017) (PDA) postulates that workers are protected against occupational detriment (transfer against an employee's will, harassment or intimidation, disciplinary action, dismissal, suspension, or demotion), whistleblowers are targeted, bullied, subjected to emotional abuse, and victimized in any form (Just-Share-Whistleblower-Report, 2022). In light of the above discussion, the next section intends to understand the role of anti-corruption institutions in South Africa.

2. What Is the Role of Anti-Corruption Institutions

According to Annika (2014), anti-corruption agencies are established in agreement with international treaties to combat and prevent corruption through law enforcement. But in most developing countries, people opinions (conviction) regarding corruption rates still remain very low, challenging or discouraging the preventive effect evolving from a high risk of detection. According to OECD (2018), an increase in whistleblower activity and higher levels of cross-jurisdictional cooperation have led to considerable and meaningful growth in the scope and size of Anti-Bribery and Corruption (ABC) implementations in certain countries. But the effects of failing to prevent corruption and bribery and across countries or public and private businesses create a long-term threat to the sustainability of socio-economic activities. The OECD (2014) and the UNCAC (2019) proposed that there is a requirement for such institutions to perform task in agreement with agencies such as Combined Prevention and Law Enforcement Agencies, Law Enforcement Agencies, and Prevention Agencies. According to the Government of South Africa Report on National Anti-Corruption (2020-2030), South Africa has several agencies for anti-corruption. These include:

1. The NPA: National Prosecuting Authority that undertakes criminal proceedings on behalf of the state;
2. The AFU: Asset Forfeiture Unit that freezes and seizes proceeds of crime;
3. The IPID: Independent Police Investigative Directorate that functions as an investigator on maladministration and corruption in the South African Police Service;
4. The SIU: Special Investigating Unit, which investigates corruption at all levels and recovers losses;
5. The SAPS: South African Police Service, which investigates all forms of corruption through legal initiatives;
6. The DPCI: Directorate for Priority Crime Investigations, whose role is to investigate combat and detect offenses that are described as national priority;
7. The PSC: Public Service Commission, which monitors, assesses and evaluates the practices, compliance, state policies, control and the effectiveness of anti-corruption agencies;
8. The OPP: Office of the Public Protector, which play the role of investigating and reporting to the state institutions all related corrupt activities in all spheres of society;
9. The AGSA: Auditor-General of South Africa, who plays the role (is in charge) of investigating (researching) and informing (reporting) compliance through performance and forensic audits of all state-funded entities;
10. National Anti-Corruption Hotline;
11. The National Anti-Corruption Forum

In addition, (the Government of South Africa Report on National Anti-Corruption (2020-2030) confirmed that government anti-corruption organizations also interact with several civil society organizations (CSOs) like:

1. The Good Governance Learning Network,
2. The Social Audit Network (SAN);
3. The Public Service Accountability Monitor; and
4. The Organization Undoing Tax Abuse Corruption Watch;.

Such agencies are supported by the following legislation:

1. The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 2000 (Act 3 of 2000);
2. The Public Financial Management Act, 2003 (Act 56 of 2003);
3. The Protected Disclosures Act, 2000 (Act 26 Of 2000);
4. The Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act 2 of 2000);
5. The Public Service Act 1994 (Act 103 of 1994); and
6. The Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act,2004 (Act 12 of 2004);

A common thread across such agencies or institutions is the prevention of corruption; monitoring and reporting on corrupt behavior; creating awareness and education; providing support to deter corruption; and garnering support from all individuals and institutions to embrace anti-corruption practices (South Africa Report on National Anti-Corruption, 2020-2030). This needs to be reinforced by collaboration with global partners who can work together to analyze what works in law and practice, share evidence regarding anti-corruption, help each other to adapt models to local contexts, and identify ways to motivate people to act against corruption. According to (World Economic Forum, 2019), corruption is global in all its forms, and it is a global problem. Therefore, global engagement is critical, especially when countries' institutions are weak, and they seek assistance to strengthen their anti-corruption capacities. Such organizations (public or private) should also play a critical role in engaging in research-look at ways of improving anti-corruption systems, intend to identify the global best practices and find innovative ways of proffering resources to take sustained action against corrupt activities. Furthermore, it is also the responsibility of public and private organizations to ensure that standards, systems, and laws are enforced. This needs to be applicable in both the public and private sectors. If one goes back to the 2008 global financial crisis, one of the major attributes was corruption by institutions in the global financial system.

Thus, anti-corruption organizations are expected to go beyond ensuring adherence to self-regulation measures for the private sector. Regulators, bankers, investors, and other jurisdictions need to support a financial sector reform agenda; such, organizations must strengthen their anti-corruption efforts not only in the country but also in partnership with other global agencies to end money laundering and stop the flow of corrupt capital. Grand corruption requires international cooperation. While some anti-corruption organizations may not have the cross-border legal right or even in country legal power to prosecute, collaborative action by relevant international bodies and multilateral organizations can engage with judicial authorities, investigative journalists, whistleblowers, and other allies to bring the corrupt to justice and prosecute cross-border criminal activity. Another important role is actioning research by such organizations. For example, Transparency International is recognized for its evidence-based advocacy approach and its research into corruption (OECD, 2016), but anti-corruption agencies around the world take up numerous tools and policy recommendations. There is a plethora of research in this field, but there is a need to change or convert the increasing body of knowledge on corruption into theories, concepts or ideas that can be used to stimulate transformation. This is crucial for a collective and inclusive anti-corruption global

agenda. The section that follows deals with the question that is related to barriers that anti-corruption institutions are facing.

3. What Barriers Are Anti-Corruption Institutions Facing

Christopher et al (2014) indicated that barriers against anti-corruption institutions are real and various. They posited that fighting or combating corruption is becoming increasingly sophisticated and such demands a multi-disciplinary and well-integrated strategy. The fight necessitates one or more of three functions that include awareness and education, well-organized, and resourceful anti-corruption institutions, as well as strong commissions or agencies, which invariably should investigate and enforce corruption prevention. Therefore, Christopher (2014) discussed exogenous and endogenous factors contributing to challenges affecting anti-corruption institutions in Africa. These include unfavorable economic conditions, lack of public trust and confidence, lack of political will, lack of donor initiatives, etc., (exogenous factors) and the lack of independence of Anti-Corruption Institutions in performing its functions, the lack of specificity of its objectives in terms of the context of the country, lack of sufficiency of financial resources, permanence, and staff capacity/ human capital, etc., (endogenous factors). Institutional independence refers to the capacity of an Anti-Corruption Institution to undertake (carry out) its mission without interference of political individuals. But this paper will briefly review barriers such as in-country institutional shortcomings, lack of independence, ineffective or weak laws and practices, perceptions of nepotism and clientelism, the desperation of the masses for public services, and limited citizen participation as the most crucial barriers disturbing the best practice of Anti-Corruption Institutions in Africa, and particularly, in South Africa. The subsections that follow discuss barriers facing anti-corruption in South Africa.

▪ ***In-country institutional shortcomings***

Within the continent, not all African countries have developed Anti-Corruption Authorities, and neither have all African countries ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Without enhanced inter-agency cooperation and collaboration, it is difficult to strengthen efficiency, build mass support, share ideas on resources, and build capacity. Such as stated earlier, in South Africa, there are multiple agencies with overlapping mandates (South Africa Report on National Anti-Corruption Report, 2020-2030). For example, the Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC); the Anti-Corruption Task Team deal with 'high priority corruption'; the National Treasury, the South African Receiver of Revenue; and the Multi-Agency Working Group on Supply Chain Management dealing with corrupt practices related to Supply Chain Management and procurement (MAWG) are key in the situations of fight of anti-corruption. The overlapping mandates of many of these agencies have caused multiple drivers of the same vehicle or no drivers at all. For example, the wide mandate of the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) overlaps with that of both the Asset Forfeiture Unit and the Public Protector. The lack of synergy, coordination, cooperation, resources, and prioritization has diminished the efficiency of such organizations. AGSAs (2020) Covid-19 report revealed that the processes, controls, and the information technology systems used in government were not adequately responsive to react to the changes required in crises. This lack of coordination, monitoring, integration, validation, and sharing of data across government platforms resulted in people (including government officials) obtaining grants and benefits to which they were not authorized. This compromised delivery, transparency, and accountability.

▪ ***Lack of independence***

According to Christopher (2014), often anti-corruption institutions lack total independence from political interference. The section 181 of the Constitution of South Africa

(RSA 1996) defines visibly that anti-corruption agencies must be subjected only to the legal system; they should be impartial and independent; perform and exercise their powers, responsibilities and their duties without prejudice, favor or fear of all other state organs, which must assist and protect them in ensuring their effectiveness, impartiality, integrity, dignity, and the effectiveness of such institutions through regulatory and legislative measures; that state organ or no person interferes with the functions and operations of the agencies. Despite a clear articulation of their function in SA, cases of agency capture by political establishments and appointments of individuals found to be corrupt by courts of law to head such agencies are further evidence of the failure of the principal-agent approach, as the system and principal lack impartiality and independence.

▪ ***Ineffective or weak laws and practices***

According to the Corruption Watch Report (2015), the allocation of the tremendous power of executive political institutions over legislative and judicial agencies also impacts the work of Anti-Corruption Institutions. For example, government officials and members of parliament are required by law to disclose their assets and declare the receipt of gifts, private business interests, and conflicts of interest. However, in practice, these laws are ineffective as they are consistently or rarely implemented and there is a lack of oversight and accountability within the relevant institutions. Since anti-corruption institutions are subordinate to the executive arm of government, their powers invariably are limited. Based on the statistics below, it is questionable that if multiple agencies and legislation are reinforcing anti-corruption activities, then a question should be asked, why is the NPA dealing with so many corrupt government officials? For example, there are long queues at government offices to secure ID documents, driver's licenses, or gain access to higher education institutions. In many cases, desperation for services motivates to bribe, and/or dissatisfaction with low government salaries provides the incentive to accept bribes. In addition, the usage of networks/relationship to enable or allow the delivery of public service is widespread. So, while anti-corruption institutions are trying to curb corruption, desperation for public services and the high levels of frustration/dissatisfaction towards the authorities make people (citizens) think or believe that they are unable to access required public services without the payment of small bribes. They feed on the belief that public servants do not serve the public interest and that they are corruptible. Figure 2 displays the statistics of corruption from the South African National Prosecuting Authority's conviction for corruption.

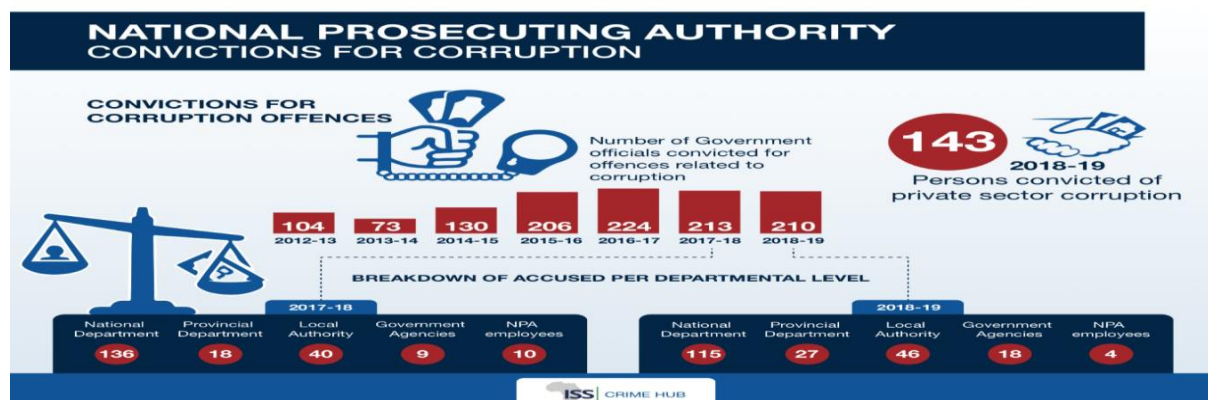


Figure 2. National Prosecuting Authority conviction for corruption

Source: National Prosecuting Authority conviction for corruption Report 2019.

This figure translates convictions for corruption offenses from 2012 to 2019. It indicates the breakdown of accused per departmental level and the number of officials in government, which are convicted for offenses related to corruption. Therefore, it shows that the number of

government officials convicted for offenses related to fraud between 2017 and 2017 attained 2013, all from the National Department, Provincial Department, Local Department, Government Agencies, and NPA employees; while from the same institutions, 2010 was the number of officials in government that are convicted for offenses related to bribery between 2018 and 2019. But the question is: How does one convert those who know that corruption is destructive but use bribery to their advantage? Various reasons may be captured. Amongst these reasons, such as indicted further above, desperation for services and/or dissatisfaction with low government salaries may provide the incentive to accept bribes. The next section deals with the perception of nepotism and clientelism.

▪ ***Perceptions of nepotism and clientelism***

According to Bekesiene (2021), the occurrence of corruption in the economy, business of the country and public sector may undermine the legitimate interests of the state and individuals; compromise the rule of law, reduce the attractiveness of the state to foreign investors and reduce citizens' faith in the values of democracy and democratic government institutions. Current studies showed that corruption may have various forms, such as abuse of power, embezzlement, nepotism, bribery, and clientelism, patronage, and influence peddling, etc., and displays itself in both public sector organizations and private businesses, as well as in public administrations and political organizations (Bekesiene, 2021 and Kawo, 2020). Furthermore, Bekesiene (2021) emphasized that forms of corruption such as clientelism, nepotism, and favoritism are diffuse phenomena and complex; making them to be scientifically very difficult to describe, as well as to evaluate from a societal perception. Favoritism (nepotism), both in public opinion and in the scientific literature can be understood as the abuse of influence, or of a person's position, power in conferring a privilege on his/her relatives. According to Kawo (2020), the concept of nepotism derives from a Latin word for "nephew" of the bishops in medieval times, which means promoting or employing a person because of his/her kinship regardless of his/her knowledge, abilities, success, and educational level). A notion closely associated to nepotism is cronyism, which also indicates the professional career's patronage that is supported or based simply on close associations (i.e., schoolmates or friends, political or common social activities, and the like). Nepotism is predominantly manifest in most activities of the organization when an individual is not promoted or hired based on work experience, and professional competencies (Bekesiene, 2021)

A scientific opinion indicated that clientelism and nepotism are two distinct forms of favoritism. Favoritism is possibly the widest notion that explains patronage that is not based on business or professional interests, but personal or penal relationships interests (Bekesiene, 2021). In the context of South Africa, many believe that nepotism and clientelism are not legal violations. But according to Kawo (2020), nepotism and clientelism can be considered as an integral part of favoritism, which is associated to a family relationship, where managers or corporate owners are more likely to offer privileges to close relatives or spouses in the context of business. Favoritism and nepotism at the local, provincial and national levels can obstruct the efficiency and effectiveness of adequate delivery of public service, damage the perception and diminish public trust that public officials are serving the concerns of their citizens (Bekesiene, 2021). Therefore, preferential support instead of merit, is a form of nepotism based on relationships or families who benefit from favoritism to advance in their careers.

Thus, nepotism is considered to be unlawful or unfair, and irrational, since it focuses on a hiring factor other than merit. In some African countries, the number of relatives working in the same organization is limited by anti-nepotism policies (Kawo, 2020). Therefore, in the workplace, nepotism usually conveys a negative attitude, and becomes a sensitive issue

towards people. It mostly happens during the processes of career development, hiring, recruitment and selection. This dishonest/illegal practice seems to be popular in most African countries, particularly, in South Africa. Unfortunately, high social acceptance of such practices gets excused. When this occurs, the gates are unlocked or widely opened for the misappropriation and theft of public resources as well as the misuse of public positions for personal gain. The World Bank conducted a study, which found that employees reforms such as merit-based recruitment, formalized hiring processes and remuneration can reduce or constraint systems of patronage or nepotism from its different forms (Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, 2019). The recruitment system in the public sector is wrought with many cases of inappropriate appointments, some claiming nepotism and clientelism as political appointments. National, provincial, and local officials are, therefore, recommended to boost transparency in promotion and recruitment procedures by launching clear processes, ensuring fairness and equality, and formalizing or introducing unblemished channels of reporting to recognize and detect probable occurrences of discrimination, nepotism, or conflict of interests. Therefore, in order to mitigate the risk of nepotism, government institutions are required to tackling this malpractice by ensuring that national legislation includes sufficient provisions as well as the best practice of existing laws and regulations (Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, 2019).

▪ ***Limited citizen participation***

Citizen or public participation can be understood as a process that consists of directly engaging the citizen or community (public) in making decision, thereby giving them full attention and consideration to effort/contribution in decision-making (EPA, 2022). Therefore, responsive governments and willingness for inclusive development are required to involve citizens in making decisions. It is essential that people must be allowed and empowered to participate in decision-making through consenting for their voices to be heard and facilitating them to cooperate effectively with the officials (Baum, 2015). Therefore, EPA (2022) postulated that citizen empowerment for participation in public decision-making consists of the following:

1. Empowering citizens by placing final decision-making authority in their hands,
2. Facilitating collaboration with citizens to improve decision alternatives and criteria, and choose or select the preferred solution,
3. Provide credible information to the public by informing them and helping them understand the matters (problems), opportunities, and resolutions,
4. Facilitating regular consultation with citizens in order for them to obtain feedback on decisions or alternatives, and
5. Ensuring the involvement of citizen by ensuring that their concerns are given close attention and consideration throughout the decision process, particularly in the development of decision opinions and criteria.

However, public participation makes use of a variety of techniques and tools. This depends on the form of participation required in order to provide information to the public, facilitate the generation of public input, and, in some cases, to ensure the building of consensus and reaching of an agreement (EPA, 2022). In many African countries, authoritarian regimes have resulted in limited citizen participation or crackdowns on freedom of speech, political dissent, independent media, and civil society organizations (Mbaku, 2020). For example, restrictions on NGOs registering have placed restrictions on their operations as anti-corruption organizations. For many decades, citizen participation translated the meaning that government should involve people in most decision-making and should be formed taking consideration of

people's aspirations, led by people, and with the people. Unfortunately, participation in public decisions in several African countries has have come more and more restricted. In the South African context, Lues (2014) stated that the South African constitution (Act 108 of 1996) promulgated in 1996, provided the basis upon which democratic South Africa would be governed and function. This new form of government, which was praised by many, advocated about the protection of minority rights, while promoting majority rule. Therefore, the constitution had given to all South Africans equal opportunities and access to all that the country had to offer. But, in practice today, corruption in its different forms has had a devastating impact on equal opportunities, citizen participation, or equal access to all public services. Many research questions have been asked to find out: Do citizens feel safe reporting bribery or refuse to pay bribes? Are the channels to which they report corrupt? Are such channels applying principles of privacy and confidentiality? Figure 3 discloses some factors showing limited citizen participation in African countries.

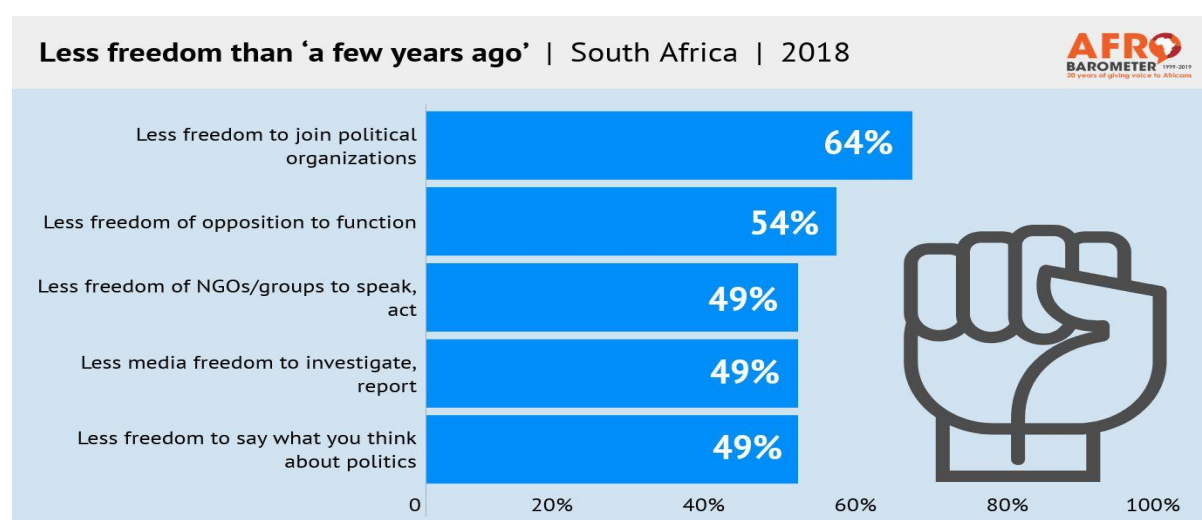


Figure 3. *Limited citizen participation*
Source: Patel (2021)

Figure 3 illustrates factors contributing to citizen participation. These include less freedom to join political organizations, less freedom of opposition to function, less freedom of groups/ NGOs to act and speak, fewer freedom of media to conduct investigation and provide feedback/report, less freedom to say what you think about politics, etc. Another consideration is social accountability and monitoring, whereby pathways citizens should hold officials answerable and responsible beyond the traditional means of formal political accountability. But it seems that the masses are not capacitated enough to engage and get involved in participatory budgeting. Questions that researchers have been asking to know consist of the following: Is there cascading of information, and do citizens in developing economies have the resources to monitor service delivery? Poor service delivery is regarded as normal, and violent protests are used as vehicles to raise attention, but is such action bringing about impactful change? To these concerns, in many African countries, it seems like corruption has become part of local cultures. Therefore, the section that follows discusses the question: Has corruption become part of local cultures?

4. Has Corruption Become Part of Local Cultures

The matter of corruption within a particular country remains an unresolved question. Even with social and legal perceptions of corruption being settled, oversimplification sometimes is a problem. Public/citizens in very different nations and cultures are having a very similar conception of what should count as corruption. An Afro barometer investigation found

that people from Sub-Saharan Africa and Indian regions have been taking a very clear position and displaying a very clear attitude concerning corruption and developed an understanding of the problem (corruption) in the same manner as it is understood by organizations such as Transparency International and the World Bank (Patel, 2021). However, the consideration and acceptance by the public of what is usually understood as corruption differs meaningfully or significantly across cultures. For example, people may condemn corruption but participate in corrupt practices because of what they consider collective action, whereby it makes little sense to be the only one that refrains from accepting or using kickbacks and other form of bribes. It makes little sense to be the only one who fights against the system of patronage which dominates the system of resource allocation in many African states. Another consideration is the role of WASTA in the Arab and Chinese worlds, whereby they build their business relationships based on personal relationships and networks – wasta. In such cultures giving their word is as good as signing an agreement among westerners. Those with the strongest wasta most probably will win the business.

This has been criticized as cultural tradition is seen as an excuse to override corrupt perceptions. However, when societies do distinguish between what is a bribe and what is gifted, then oversimplified definitions of corruption become problematic. In China, social networking preferences and business are grounded on guanxi – the relationships are established following a cultural platform, and it is very imperative to have a good knowledge of the person, before engaging and commencing any activity or business-related communication (Weiner, 2020).

The fraud case with JP Morgan International Bankers in China is an example of guanxi when public officials were bribed by providing their relatives' job opportunities or internships in JP Morgan Bank in Chi into an illicit advantage in form of a new business or expensive gifts (Patel 2021 and Weiner, 2020). Guanxi has deep roots in Chinese traditions, and it is not easy to change people's behavior and ways of thinking. Thus, culture needs to be understood as an environment or the way things are getting done in the team, group, or company and as culture being part of the traditions of a nation. Culture depends on the mentality and traditions of people in every region, relationships and the way business activities are done among individuals, which are created in diverse ways. From the perspective of traditions, the behavior that is developed based on the cultural lifestyle is not easy not (it is hard) to change, and the monitoring principles of anti-corruption must be regulated and modified to discuss the weakest points and ambiguities where practice of bribery is happening. However, organizational culture depends on the managerial setting for all workers, and in this case, it appears to be much simpler to change organizational culture to become ethical principle (Nwokorie, 2018 Manyaka, 2014). In such instances, finding a congruency between personal ethics and public service ethics is critical. Thus, it is personal behavior based on ethics principles that improves or increases the quality-of-service delivery in the general interest of the public. A corrupt culture grows when leadership fails to demonstrate commitment to social value such as integrity and honesty, which should be part of the system based on the interest of better public service delivery (Nwokorie, 2018). Failing to integrate such a commitment with the purpose of the institution builds on corruption. In such instances, lower levels of personal ethics and organizational ethics sow the seeds for corruption festering. Finally, a multi-dimensional analysis of corruption through the lens of traditions, personal ethics, and organizational ethics needed to be considered to find robust arguments for cultural drivers of corruption.

5 What Should African Countries Do to Decline Corruption

Citizens' awareness and usage of their civic rights in fighting corruption are one of the fundamental approaches to declining corruption in African countries. But it requires

international, regional, national, and local collaboration to defeat it. According to UNODC (2020), citizens reporting on corruption to the authority or through the media and supporting training programmes and sensitization campaigns that aim to create a culture of zero tolerance and integrity for corruption is a vital approach to declining corruption in African countries. Furthermore, according to the UNODC (2020), corruption bypasses democratic mechanisms. It is an abuse or violation of democratic inclusion given that it sidesteps the rules and laws that are democratically well-known, recognized and eliminates those who do not taking part in corrupt interactions. Therefore, in a democratic society, the role of people should be better understood in strict observation of social accountability, where the people resist corruption by reporting corruption crimes and misdoings, keeping it in check, critically evaluating the behavior and decisions of office holders, and asking for appropriate countermeasures (UNODC, 2020). According to Transparency International (2021), corruption is obstructive and delaying economic activities, social and political development. Corruption is a major challenge to good governance, economic growth, and basic freedoms, such as freedom to hold governments accountable, as well as freedom of speech and the right of citizens to expose suspicious practice of corruption. Corruption is more devastating than Covid-19.

The Covid-19 pandemic was fought and declined until its eradication. But the fight against corruption has not yet found a sustainable or appropriate inoculation for its eradication. Institutions/organizations, measures, policies, and strategies put in place to decline corruption seem to be weak. They are not strong enough as those put in place to fight Covid-19. Corruption is negatively affecting many countries and many lives. It needs a strong campaign and mobilization of resources, awareness, and efforts from international, regional, and national institutions/organizations. Different approaches to declining corruption are needed in Africa because the causes of corruption are various. But one of the key approaches may consist of exploring and defining the root causes of corruption in the continent. The World Bank Group (2022) disclosed that the causes of corruption are various and always contextual, rooted in a country's bureaucratic traditions, policies, social history, and political development. In many countries, corruption appears to be flourishing because of weak institutions and government policies, which are unable to generate economic rents. In some cases, public sector employees are motivated to work productively, but are also discouraged or undermined by many factors that include declining civil service and low salaries, and unconnected promotions to performance (World Bank Group, 2022). In addition, inadequate supplies and equipment, delays in the release of budget funds, dysfunctional government budgets (including pay), and a loss of organizational purpose contribute to demoralizing staff. Furthermore, the motivation for integrity, honesty and accountability might be further weakened if political leaders and senior officials use public office for private interest or if there is lack of protection for those who resist corruption. According to Ouedraogo (2020) and Sobrinho (2019), approaches to declining corruption in African countries may include the following:

Digitalization: Digitalization involves introducing innovative approaches of restraining or preventing corruption by providing governments with innovative platforms for engaging with entrepreneurs and citizens. It moreover consists of encouraging more accountability and transparency by enabling access to information. Several countries in Africa are required to utilize this opportunity to improve good governance and the delivery of adequate service in a variety of ways. For example, in the area of taxation, digital (electronic) administering and processing of tax submissions create opportunities for facilitating refund payments, and customs declarations, which lowers costs and saves time—as well as reducing corruption occasions. Digitalization also allows expenditure/spending efficiency and improvement. Electronic payment and biometric technologies systems are necessary to help produce fiscal

savings, facilitate the delivery of benefits, cut bureaucratic inefficiencies, and ensure better target of people in need. Digital payments are used for several purposes, including such as reducing corruption by bypassing public officials, as well as to reduce the scope for fraud on school fees. Digitalization can also facilitate more transparency and efficiency on procurement. It may help centralizing procurement operations and allow reducing abuse and conflicts of interest at local, and national levels of government, or at the level of state-owned enterprises.

- **Good governance:** Strengthening good governance will continually remain significant to promoting economic growth and development. The linkage between governance and the growth of the economy seems to be particularly vital on this resource-rich continent, where citizens can gain more economically from limiting corruption than anywhere else in the world.
- **Procurement improvement:** Rebuilding, smuggling, and developing the capacity of critical institutions such as the anti-corruption agency and the revenue authority remain crucial to fighting and declining corruption in African countries.
- **Strengthening laws:** Strengthening laws, improving government effectiveness, and political will are amongst essential measures that can reduce opportunities for corruption (such as lowering trade barriers and cutting red tape), improved fiscal institutions (with controls and greater transparency) and measures to constrain corrupt behavior (such as a strong anti-money laundering framework or an independent judicial system).
- **Empowering employees and building expertise:** Empowering employees and building expertise in organizations are also solutions intended to bridge the gap between public opinion and the court of law, improve prosecution capability and fight corruption in the continent.

Furthermore, according to Hunja (2015), approaches to declining corruption in African countries consist of the following:

1. Understand different types and causes of corruption for smart responses development;
2. Empower people with relevant tools to participate and engage in their governments for them to categorize problems and identify priorities, and find adequate solutions;
3. Working together with the government as well as with non-government groups (formal and informal processes) to monitor progress and change behavior (monitor and evaluate government performance with evidence data): Cut the Red Tape; (working together with public officials to find solutions to community needs and problems)
4. Use digitalization (the power of technology) to develop continuous and dynamic interactions between main participants or stakeholders including, citizens, media, academia business, government, civil society groups, etc.
5. Invest in policy sustainable improvement and institutions' development so that government can provide the delivery of adequate services to people. But individuals in the public sector have to approve workable regulations and guidelines, and ensure practices that tolerate for improvement while applying the best practice of tested legacies and traditions (imported models often do not work);
6. Support anti-corruption actions with social, behavioral and market forces. Approving the standard of integrity as a smart approach in decision-making in the process of doing business, particularly for corporations involved in doing business with governments and other associated partners;
7. Supporting citizen groups that advocate for the community interests and punishing corrupted people (holding corrupt actors accountable) are a vital components of any effective anti-corruption effort;
8. Increase awareness of public programmes and benefits and keep citizens acting or

- engaging against corruption at international, regional, national, local, and even global levels, in link with the scope and scale of corruption. Ensuring the use of the platforms that exist, as well as the architecture that has been developed for engagement;
9. Develop sustainable more ability or capability for people in public services (those in government): Nations that are suffering from violence, conflict, and chronic fragility are also experiencing scarcest or limited funds to tackle corruption. Therefore, it is very important that countries with lower resources to fight corruption should identify approaches to leverage international resources to sustain and support good governance;
 10. Sustaining capacity development programmes at the workplace (encouraging people at the workplace to learning by doing): Any respectable approach, plan, or policy must be constantly evaluated and monitored to ensure that it can be effortlessly improved or adapted as circumstances on the ground change.

Conclusion

This paper examined the effects of corruption on people's daily lives in African countries. It focused particularly on South Africa by exploring questions that relate to the hindrances or possibilities to the decline of corruption in African countries; the role of anti-corruption institutions; barriers that anti-corruption institutions are facing in the continent; and finding out if corruption has become part of local culture. An additional question linked to those above consisted of studying what African countries should do to decline corruption. An attempt to these concerns showed that several obstacles are impacting the fight against corruption in the continent. Many works of literature reviewed disclosed that individuals are often too intimidated to speak out or blow the whistle on corrupt and unlawful activities they observe occurring in the public or private workplace. In general, in African countries, literature revealed that factors hindering the fight against the decline of corruption are mostly aligned to the emergence of a new black elite, the lack of accountability, lack of transparency, lack of political and judicial will, restriction on anti-corruption activists, lack of protection for anti-corruption activists; failing to achieve justice and for holding corrupt actors accountable; lack of whistleblower safeguards; lack of a proper mechanism for monitoring, sanctions, and incentives, etc.

Secondly, the role of anti-corruption institutions in the process of declining corruption in African countries was explored. Therefore, it is perceived that a common strand across anti-corruption institutions is the prevention of corruption; monitoring and reporting on corrupt behavior; creating awareness and education; providing support to deter corruption; and garnering support from all individuals and institutions to embrace anti-corruption practices. Furthermore, anti-corruption organizations also play a critical role in engaging in research-look on ways of improving anti-corruption systems, through global best practices and finding innovative ways of proffering resources to take sustained actions against corrupt activities. It is also perceived that the role of anti-corruption institutions is to ensure that standards, systems, and laws are enforced. But although this significant role of the anti-corruption institutions in Africa, and particularly in South Africa, there are several barriers facing the best practice or administration of these institutions. Efforts are needed to reinforce collaboration with global partners who can work together to share evidence regarding anti-corruption, analyze what works in law and practice, help each other to adapt models to local contexts, and identify ways to motivate people to act against corruption. Global, regional, national, and local engagement/commitment are critical, especially when country institutions are weak, and when they seek assistance to strengthen their anti-corruption capacities.

Thirdly, this paper examined barriers that anti-corruption institutions are facing in the

continent and South Africa. It is important to notice that barriers affecting anti-corruption institutions are the same in all African countries. The literature revealed that anti-corruption institutions in the continent are lacking total independence from political interference and are experiencing ineffective or weak laws and practices. In practice, these laws are ineffective as they are not consistently and frequently enforced, and there is a lack of oversight and accountability within the relevant institutions. So, while anti-corruption institutions are trying to curb corruption, the high levels of disillusionment and desperation for public services regarding the officials make the public to have the impression that they can only access required public services by paying small bribes. This paper also noticed that other critical barriers facing or affecting anti-corruption institutions in African countries are linked to the perceptions of nepotism and clientelism, limited citizen participation, and poor service delivery, which is regarded as the normal drive leading to bribes to access public services.

Fourthly, this paper intended to explore and find out if corruption has become part of local culture. The examination of the question related to corruption showed that there are different forms or appellations of the concept of corruption. For example, corruption can also be called nepotism, administrative documents and use of regulation as bureaucratic capital, misuse or stealing of government property, embezzlement, influence-peddling, fraud, extortion, moonlighting, bribery, patronage, conflict of interest, receiving kickbacks, divided loyalty, selling of favors, misappropriation, under- or over-invoicing, court tempering, phony travel, etc. This translates to a culture that already exists in different world regions and countries on how corruption can be identified. Culture is part of the traditions of a nation, team, group, or company. Depending on the mentality and traditions of individuals in every region, the relationships among people and the business practices are created in various ways. From the perspective of corruption traditions, behavior developed and perpetually practiced based on certain culture is very complex (not very simple) to change, and approaches to monitoring principles of anti-corruption must be changed or adjusted to tackling the loopholes and weakest points where bribery can occur. A corrupt culture often grows when leadership fails to demonstrate a commitment to a value system based on the fundamentals of integrity and honesty in the interest of better service delivery. In such instances, lower levels of personal ethics and institutional ethics sow the seeds for corruption. Therefore, only good ethical practices can change the culture or increase the adequate delivery of services in the broader interest of the public. Thus, what African countries should do to decline corruption? There is not a unique approach to solving the issue of corruption in African countries. Different approaches were discussed in the paper. But more citizens' commitments are needed to modernize, coordinate, and resource governments' efforts to better fight corruption in African countries; efforts are required to curb illicit finance and hold corrupt actors accountable; anti-corruption institutions need to be preserved and strengthened, and more resources should be engaged to improve international, regional, national, and local policies in line with the prevention and fight against corruption. Finally, citizens' awareness and usage of civic rights in fighting corruption should be prioritized as one of the fundamental approaches to declining corruption in African countries. Citizens reporting on corruption through the media or to the authority should develop and produce a culture of zero tolerance and integrity for declining corruption in African countries.

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