

Political Elites, Bureaucrats, Ethnocorruptive Practices and Malgovernance in Africa

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Abstract: This work aims to examine a malgovernance issue that is currently being felt in African countries, involving the indulgence of bureaucrats, politicians and ethnocorruptive practices. The principal-agency theory will be used to underpin this work. A literature data search was done to gather publicly accessible documents, including literary works, on African governance. The mal-governance acts were analyzed through content analysis on the detrimental problems that bureaucrats and political elites continue to promote through ethnocorruptive behaviors that lead to malgovernance. Most cases of malgovernance in Africa are caused by political elites and bureaucrats who are either practitioners or supporters of ethnocorruptive behaviors, as the secondary sources demonstrate. Additionally, the analysis suggests various factors, including personalism and leadership cults, elite dominance and state capture, unresolved historical traumas and grievances, clientelism and patronage, a lack of accountability and transparency, unresolved conflicts and historical issues, increase the susceptibility to malgovernance acts in their destructive forms. This is a theoretical investigation, but an empirical one could provide additional light on the ethnocorruptive practices that prolong malgovernance in Africa, which are the results of political elites and bureaucrats. To the best of my knowledge, this work is the first to use principal-agency theory to analyze malgovernance, specifically by considering the roles played by political elites and bureaucrats in the interaction between ethnocorruption and malgovernance.

Keywords: *Africa, bureaucrats, ethnocorruption, malgovernance, political elite,*

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1. Introduction

In Africa, malgovernance is endemic. Scholars claim colonialism and its aftermath are largely to blame for Africa's governance issues (Mapuva & Chari, 2010). Paldam (1999) argues that the major significant factors of the extremely low quality of accountability in government are the colonial history and the lack of a fully-fledged democratic system. But simply because of this, the colonial origins of malgovernance might be minimized after Africa gained its independence, and a bureaucratic government

emerged, which resulted in institutional instability, patrimonial economic management and the commodification of the state. In light of Hope's (1997) assertion, these procedures prioritized political, personal and obedient loyalty over merit. Ethnocorruptive practices flourished in the absence of strict oversight of government acts and cronyism and favoritism undermined the core basis of governmental power by failing to meet civic expectations of accountability and transparency, among other things. The study conducted by Desta (2019)

revealed that politicization of the civil service, low pay, inadequate accountability and transparency in public organizations, lax enforcement mechanisms, absence of merit-based career advancement and burdensome and unclear regulations are the primary causes of civil service corruption in developing countries. The research presented in this article indicates that there is a great deal of corruption in politics, the economy and society at large, which has the detrimental effect of impeding economic growth, undermining social justice and fueling governance instability.

In post-colonial Africa, Mbaku (1998) argues that the ruling class has exploited state power to pillage the economy for personal benefit, rather than enhancing the welfare of the previously marginalized people. These activities have mostly produced into the indigenous elite's capture of the governance institutions. The primary cause of institutional flaws in governance- that is, the capacity to supervise society via the application of legal, social, political and economic checks and balances- is the primary source of ethnocorrupt practices. It becomes more challenging to adopt and implement laws and regulations that ensure transparency and accountability when these formal and informal systems fail. While bureaucrats are more deeply involved in ethnocorrupt practices, Africans continue to focus on politicians and other political office holders as the conduits through which governance dishonesty is envisaged. But that is far from it as Imenda (2018) attests the malgovernance seen all over Africa has a lifeblood in the actions of political elites and bureaucrats. These twin devils are the ones who organize, create and carry out ethnocorrupt activities to further their own and their families' interests. Beiser-McGrath et al., (2020) examined how African countries bestow ethnic privileges in their research. They argue that the ethnic composition of the community has an impact on governance decisions to provide non-excludable public goods or more precisely targeted freebies. Onyango (2024)

made a meek attempt to comprehend how causes result in bureaucratic grey spaces that institutionalize and rationalize corruption and cartel activities by using a multi-dimensional approach to administrative rituals. The end effect is the emergence of isolated corrupt practices and mafia-like white-collar corruption syndicates (cartels) at all levels and sectors to enforce corruption and defraud citizens through shady bureaucratic procedures. To accomplish their objectives, these cartels use a variety of enforcement techniques, including official probes, bribery, kickbacks, threats and murder.

The issue at hand pertains to the bureaucracy's inability to operate efficiently in the given context of corrupt indulgence by bureaucrats and political elites, which consequently hinders its ability to act as a catalyst for change within the current political system. Official norms and regulations are complemented by unofficial guidelines and precepts inside the bureaucracy. Working within the complex web of patronage-ethnocorrupt networks, the bureaucracy and many sets of rules, political elites and the bureaucrats must balance competing claims and duties to preserve their selfish-dom standing. Illegal homogeneity is the most apt description for these networks and interplay of several sets of absence of regulations within the bureaucracy. Anti-ethnocorrupt practices measures do not work in a vacuum; instead, they tend to lose their impact as political elites and bureaucrats develop new ways to extract rent. Yet, Africa's anti-ethnocorrupt practices efforts have only been effective in stopping specific forms of small-scale ethnocorrupt activities (Asiimwe, 2009). Additionally, a culture of ethnocorrupt practices gave rise to a tolerance for non-financial forms of dereliction, including bureaucratic absenteeism, inefficiency and resource mismanagement.

The ethnocorrupt practices of political elites and bureaucrats have become somewhat uncontrollable due to several circumstances,

including income inequality, low remuneration for employees, and government procrastination on timely payment of retirees' pensions and gratuities. Given the conditions and the differences between what is expected and what is accomplished, the performance of Africa's governance has drawn a lot of criticism and inquiries. There are too many of them. The scope of fraud and corruption in Cameroon's corporate sector is examined and the effectiveness of government anti-corruption initiatives in combating this threat is assessed by Kingsley et al., (2015), who apply the agency theory. Data were collected for the study using the research approach. The majority of the public sector in Cameroon is classified as extremely corrupt with the police, customs and tax administration being the most corrupt agencies, based on the study. Relatedly, Imiera (2020) examined the corruption crisis in Africa through a comparative analysis, highlighting South Africa and Nigeria as the continent's biggest corrupt nations in addition to Somalia, South Sudan and Madagascar. While the extent and impacts of corruption vary throughout African nations, it has been brought into and/or integrated into the continent's political landscape. Corruption is evident throughout Africa, with many high-profile incidents standing out as examples.

Isaksson (2013) investigated whether and to what extent membership in an ethnic group influences an individual's sense of corruption. It examined the impact of being a member of powerful ethnic groups in further detail. It is suggested by empirical results based on data from over 23,000 respondents in 17 African countries that the experiences of corruption differ systematically according to ethnicity. A higher likelihood of experiencing corruption is linked to membership in powerful ethnic groups, either in terms of relative group size or relative economic and political standing. Yet the outcomes of such ethnocorrupt practices are devastating as revealed in a study by Kehinde et al., (2015) who investigated the problems with sustainable development and good governance in the

Nigerian public sector. The article employed a qualitative methodology to evaluate the problems by using secondary data from sources like newspapers, journals and textbooks among others. The article notes that Nigeria faces a wide range of challenges. Among the many issues that corruption is blamed for include poverty, insecurity, kidnapping, ethno-religious conflict, poor government and many others.

The political establishment in Uganda views the fight against corruption as a means of bringing about its destruction since it profits from corruption. Mwenda stated that "President Museveni builds bridges between himself and their followers by coopting powerful elites from Uganda's various religious and ethnic factions and giving them positions of power, privilege and influence in government." In this manner, Museveni has established a "more personal, patronage-based, executive centered and military reliant regime" (International Crisis Group, 2012) by utilizing his unrestricted powers. Therefore, to maintain its unexpected, unabated hold on power, the regime engages in and tolerates corruption in all forms, including bureaucratic corruption. The International Crisis Group's Africa Report No. 187 claims that by shielding individuals connected to it, the central government significantly affects the operations of the many anti-corruption organizations through patronage. In line with the Global Integrity (2011) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (2009), this prevents the IGG, for example, from bringing charges against individuals who have ties to the national government, especially the ethnicists. Ethnicists are never prosecuted in corruption cases involving them; in fact, they are either promoted to a higher position or kept in office despite clear evidence against them, such as when one of them admits to using large sums of money to bribe their way into a position of authority. Essentially, the only people that these anti-corruption organizations will look into are those who are uninteresting to the regime. Consequently, the establishment has forfeited its legitimacy and the confidence of

the general public to effectively combat corruption (Pyeong & Mbabazi, 2015).

Okpanachi (2022) delves into the everyday experience of Nigerians with governance when they interact with officials implementing public policies in their community. Additionally, the study highlights the negative and problematic aspects of governance and leadership, such as the conduct of the leaders and the aftermath of corruption. The main reason corruption hurts Nigeria is that a large portion of funds meant for the country's growth end up in the pockets of public servants and politicians. The extent of corruption in Nigeria can be attributed to malgovernance. The study suggests that barriers to the national growth and development of the Nigerian economy include the problems of corruption, poor leadership and weak governance. This seems to put the corruption that the elites and their bureaucrat counterparts perpetuate against the issue of governance.

Agbibo (2011) surmises unchecked corruption exacerbates ethnoreligious divisions and animosities, diminishes the legitimacy of the state, undermines the credibility of political leaders, substitutes hard work and merit for strong and convoluted patron-client relationships, highlights inefficiencies, ineffectiveness and general disorder in the bureaucratic apparatuses and ultimately results in waste, mismanagement and economic crisis. It would appear, then, that ethnic prejudice exacerbates corruption in Africa. Franch and Rainer (2022) re-examined the significance of ethnic favoritism in Sub-Saharan Africa. Using data from eighteen African countries, they looked at how changes in the ethnic composition of the leaders of those countries over the preceding fifty years affected the rates of basic education and infant mortality for different ethnic groups. The results demonstrate the serious and widespread effects of ethnic favoritism, which supports ideas of Africa's underdevelopment based on ethnicity. The research suggests that because African leaders had more financial

resources, they may have been able to give more ethnic favors. When monopolistic or oligopolistic access to markets is maintained through payments to government officials, collusion occurs when there is no strong economic justification for the restrictions in place. When people pay government officials to circumvent official regulations or sanctions, that is considered collusive corruption.

To bring the people of Africa the advantages of transparent and responsible governance, since the 1980s, Africans have been pushing for changes to governance (Lamidi et al., 2016). The changes were supposed to stop public bureaucracy on the continent from failing (Wimpy, 2012). These reforms were expected to be made to the public service to make it more effective and responsive to the concerns brought up by the internal and domestic environments. In the midst though, all public agents be they political elites or bureaucrats are expected to practice and promote smooth, effective and efficient governance in their countries. All across Africa, however, the opposite is apparent. The efforts of African governments have been largely fruitless due to the menace of enthnocorrupt practices that have seeped so deeply into the fabric of African society. For instance, a dishonest bureaucracy can lower the caliber of goods and services provided by the government with officials who are members of the political elites and bureaucrats. Many questions have been raised over what is destroyed and what more can be expected of governance in Africa, which has been heavily criticized for its performance. There is a significant void in research that addresses the role played by political elites, bureaucrats and enthnocorrupt practices in fostering malgovernance in Africa, leaving many unresolved problems in this area. Understandably, it is intriguing to learn the solutions to the query "Are the political elites, bureaucrats and enthnocorrupt practices responsible for malgovernance in Africa?" That is precisely the question this work attempts to answer.

Five sections make up the structure of this work. An overview, the goal of the study, and the research question are given in this first section. The approach used to carry out the investigation is covered in the second section. It goes over my approach to performing the content analysis and data search. As the theoretical foundation for the study, the third section by the standard scholarly practice on conceptualization, this part covers the concepts of political elites, bureaucrats, ethnocorrupt practices and malgovernance. It also offers a survey of the literature on....theory to interpret the results in light of a more thorough comprehension of the fundamental causes of malgovernance in Africa. In the fourth section is where my results are presented and their implications for theory and practice are discussed in this section. My work is brought to a close in the last section, with recommendations and which also suggest areas for more study.

2. Methodology

To shed light on the nature and traits of political elites, bureaucrats and ethnocorrupt practices in malgovernance, this paper used a qualitative research design and descriptive methodologies. The paper aims to investigate the relationship between political elites, bureaucrats, ethnocorrupt practices and malgovernance, which makes it investigate as well. A fair and professional examination, comprehension and testing of the pertinent sources were then conducted to ensure that they met the study objectives and were consistent with the body of literature. This entailed, among other things, summarizing concepts, reading critically and comprehensively and scanning text. During a desktop investigation, reputable academic sources were checked. Finding pertinent papers and using them in the study was the goal.

3. Conceptual and Theoretical Synopsis

I start my synopsis by talking about political elites, bureaucrats, ethnocorrupt practices and malgovernance- the four widely used

concepts in governance that form the basis of this work. Their ideas center on issues that negatively impact governance. I also talk about the hypotheses that guide my investigation. I go into great detail on principal-agent theory and how it relates to four concepts. I address previous study findings and how they apply to my investigation driven by bureaucrats and members of the political elites who engage in ethnocorrupt practices, creating an environment conducive to the growth of malgovernance.

3.1 Conceptual Appraisal

Since these concepts-political elites, bureaucrats, ethnocorrupt practices and malgovernance have been given varying meanings and interpretations, particularly among social scientists, this section explains the main theoretical and conceptual foundation of this work.

3.1.1 Political Elites

Within the government or society, political elites are a select few wealthy and influential people who wield a disproportionate amount of power and influence. These people and organizations include powerful advisors and consultants, powerful politicians, lawmakers, high-ranking government officials, think tank leaders, media moguls and owners, lobbyists special interest groups and leaders of political parties. Plus, they include wealthy donors and financiers. Very frequently policies are shaped, important choices are made and information and resource access is restricted by political elites. They could also have a large amount of economic power and have an impact on social and cultural standards. If their interests collide with those of the general public, they could be problematic even if they could be required for efficient governance.

3.1.2 Bureaucrats

The term “bureaucrat” has Greek origins, as it combines the words “kratos” (rule or political power) and “bureau,” which refers to a desk or office. It is reasonable to suppose that

bureaucrats are self-serving utility maximizers, just like everyone else. Max Weber believed that power was a bureaucrat's inherent goal. On an instinctive level, "power" refers to the capability or aptitude to act. However, "something" can refer to many different things, each of which results in a distinct form of power. Applying force is the definition of physical power. The ability to buy products is the definition of economic power. The capacity to accomplish goals through a political process is known as a political power. Some players must have competing interests to witness the use of political power (Lierean & Brátucu, 2009).

Power is the goal of the bureaucratic clerk. The theories of power in politics and economics are closely related to one another. Because uncertainty exists, power and profit both accrue to those who possess information. The managers of a modern organization are the ones who collect and process information. They hold the positions of authority. Corporations are owned by their investors legally, and it is customary for them to receive the full distribution of company profits. As a result, managers cannot keep all of the earnings they generate. They must make claims to company profits that are less obvious than pay and bonuses in cash. A plethora of alternative objectives have surfaced, including consumption while working, surplus personnel and pay, and various unpaid objectives.

3.1.3 *Ethnocorruptive practices*

Ethnocorruptive practices refer to corrupt behaviors that are accepted, allowed or justified within a specific ethnic or cultural group. These behaviors are frequently caused by common norms, values or allegiances. Examples of such behaviors include nepotism, cronyism, bribery, embezzlement, fraud, kickbacks, conflict of interest, clientelism and patronage. These practices have the potential to worsen social and economic inequality, undermine institutions and sustain power, control or status within the group. They are worldwide catastrophes rather than localized

disasters. Because they are not practiced by intruders or outsiders, curbing ethnocorruptive practices is extremely difficult. Rather, ethnocorruptive practices are frequently institutionalized within government organizations, ensuring that the practices persist and are strengthened. The system is difficult for well-meaning people to overturn (Asea, 2018). Majorly, such practices involve at least two forms of taking advantage of one's own ethnic or national affiliation in the vocabulary of sociological concepts (Lavič, 2014). Igwe (2012) submits that a small percentage of the political elites, who come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, engage in ethnocorruption when they exploit and misuse the nation's resources and wealth for their selfish gain. These characteristics bear resemblance to national egoism and play a role in converting it into national extremism (Shamanskiy, 2023).

Meza and Perez-Chiques (2020) contend that in the short term framing affects bureaucrats' attitudes about recognizing, tolerating and reporting misconduct. Over time, though, it becomes increasingly important in the consolidation of corruption. Justice obstruction is the result of the natural justice or fairness system being twisted to the advantage of a select few powerful, well-connected and rich individuals or groups at the expense of the general populace. One example would be the selective application of the law. People who are wealthy and have strong connections to influential government figures often escape justice or punishment for grave legal transgressions in developing countries.

3.1.4 *Malgovernance*

The phrases "mal" and "governance" have been combined to form the term "malgovernance". "Mal", which means "bad" or "wrong" is derived from the Latin word *malus*. When used as a prefix, it denotes something unfavorable. The process of directing, governing or regulating a system, organization or society is referred to as governance. Thus, malgovernance is the

collective term for the incompetent, ineffective or dishonest management of a system, institution or community that frequently has unfavorable effects. In essence, it is a state of inadequate, dishonest or unethical management, administration or governance. It entails the abuse of authority, resources or influence that results in negative, ineffective or unfair outcomes. When ordinary Nigerians interact with officials implementing public policies in their community, Okpanachi (2022) investigated how they perceive governance. Additionally, the study focused on the negative and problematic aspects of governance, such as the actions of the leaders and the fallout from corruption. As per his findings, Nigeria's level of corruption is caused by mal-governance. A large portion of funds that ought to be used for national development instead end up in the pockets of politicians and service providers, which is one reason why corruption has a negative influence on Nigeria.

3.2 Theoretical Reinforcement

Principal-agent theory served as the study's compass. The principal-agent relationship between organizations or individuals was explained by the principal-agent theory, which was put forth by European Economists in the 1960s (Kharel et al., 2019; Eisenhardt, 1999). The principal-agent theory, according to Kumalasari and Sudarma (2013), focuses a lot on the agent-principal connection in which the agents are answerable to the principal. In the governance arena, principals, who supervise political elites and bureaucrats, assign power and authority to those who report to the public, according to Bovine (2006) and Hughes (2003).

Governments receive power and authority from citizens to act on their behalf and political elites and bureaucrats receive power and authority from the government. In governance, the concept of "hierarchical accountability" governs the power and authority of political elites and bureaucrats acting on behalf of the people. These

individuals are held accountable for their performance deeds.

In the eye of principal-agent theory, malgovernance arises from a misalignment of the interests of the agents (the political elites and bureaucrats) and the principal (the people). When an agent acts against the best interest of the principal, malgovernance results. The agent is intended to act on behalf of the principal. Because of its contribution to the principal-agent relationship- one of the primary theories of malgovernance promoted by political elites and government bureaucrats who answer directly to the people- this theory served as the study's guidance.

To understand how collectivism affects principal-agent relationships in situations of "corruption", Bukuluki (2013) studied the attitudes and behaviors that collectivism fosters in Uganda. The study demonstrates how, in some Ugandan societies, thievery or even corruption may be tolerated if it is thought to benefit the society, clan or family. The study makes the case that collectivist practices and ideas are necessary to comprehend the causes and effects of corruption in Uganda.

4. Malgovernance – political elites, bureaucrats pro ethnocorrupt practices?

Tribalism, nepotism, favoritism and cronyism have a significant negative impact on Africa's socioeconomic and political development (Tytko et al., 2020). The political progress and economic prosperity were stalled by tribalism alone. It was successful in tearing apart the citizen's sense of national identity and left them with the idea that public offices did not require the best candidates, nor did they require the ability to solve problems facing the country. The idea that "our brother is in charge" was crucial. Unfortunately, the only people who profit from this arrangement are the corrupt elites. The political elite's misuse of public resources and power creates a climate of ethnocorrupt practices, normalizing corrupt practices to the point where embezzling public funds is no longer a

cause for alarm. Bayart (2009, p.239), who called this “our time to eat,” claimed that “it is easier to get rich from a position of power than from a position of dependency and penury” and that “within these sorts of context, the social struggle is a zero-sum game where the only price is the accumulation of power.” In addition, Bayart (2009, p.239) contends that “A man of power who can amass and redistribute wealth becomes a man of honor” in certain cultural contexts. Political elites and bureaucrats are therefore likely to participate in ethnocorrupt practices to appease their ethnic allies if government appointments are not made based on merit. It has been shown that the influence of ethnicity can also foster ethno-bureaucratic corruption.

Public servants in Sub-Saharan Africa are perceived by Sylla (2014) as being under pressure from members of their ethnic groups to grant access to public services and, in most circumstances, to use government services at no cost. Moreover, Sylla states that public servants run the risk of reprisals or exclusion from their ethnic groupings when they fail to assist members of those groups. The possibility of severe ethnic humiliation is another concern for many public officials. Public officials are more inclined to accept illegal disregard for bureaucratic procedures—even when faced with obvious instances of corruption—when they are portrayed as a means of resource redistribution, institutional flexibility and organizational efficacy rather than as a financial trade. Biased decision-making results from the prioritization of personal gain over the establishment of universal rights. Public expenditure becomes inefficient due to ethnocorrupt practices, which occur when resources and policy decisions are transferred to susceptible areas. Bureaucrats may worry about their standing with their superiors because of the possible effect that their supervisors have on their careers. Poor performance of institutions is one of the primary, if not the primary, causes contributing to public mistrust of these establishments. To boot, incumbents use

cleanup efforts to keep their grip on power and their exclusive right to write laws and distribute funding. An incumbent leader may begin a campaign to remove corruption from the administration to divert attention from ongoing problems and the government’s inability or unwillingness to provide substantive solutions when faced with challenges from opposition parties or groups as well as the worsening economic and social conditions.

A crucial topic raised by Hellmann (2017) has gotten comparatively little attention: how may the institutionalization of corruption differ throughout developing countries? In this paper, seven East Asian developing and newly industrialized countries are systematically compared to answer this question. The analysis suggests that historical sequencing was important: countries where the “political marketplace” underwent a concentration process before the introduction of universal suffrage today exhibit less harmful forms of corruption than countries where the implementation of mass voting rights occurred within a context of fragmented political marketplaces. Otusanya (2011) investigated the detrimental impact of corruption in developing nations and a societal barrier to development. The study examined the pertinent literature as well as the many approaches that have been created and used to look into corruption in emerging nations. The study demonstrated that the political and economic elite participated in corrupt activities using data that is readily available to the public. Based on the study, it is evident that the corrupt activities of the local and international political and economic elite have weakened government revenue streams, benefitting a select few at the expense of the majority.

Using the idea of self-reinforcing corruption, Gök et al., (2021) estimated the degree of corruption in Africa. This theory holds that strategic complementarity makes previous levels of corruption a significant predictor of current levels of corruption. Regarding the

institutional factors, the study discovered that Sub-Saharan Africa has lower levels of corruption when there is an increase in political stability, improved regulatory quality and a higher degree of democracy. Regarding the economic determinants, the study discovered that the degree of corruption in Sub-Saharan Africa is inversely correlated with trade integration and development, and positively correlated with government spending and the availability of natural resources. In terms of the sociodemographic factors, the study discovered that while better levels of infrastructure in Sub-Saharan Africa reduce corruption, higher rates of female labor force participation, higher population densities and higher degrees of urbanization do the opposite.

The theoretical justification of the family of anti-corruption strategies was called into question by Uberti (2015). The article provides an explanation of the connection between corruption, cultural norms and patron-client politics in developing countries by drawing on ideas from economic sociology and anthropology. This narrative demonstrates how corruption is ingrained in sociocultural institutions that are intrinsic to the process of moving from traditional capitalism to industrial capitalism, a process that all emerging countries are presumably going through, however slowly. The fight against corruption is typically operationalized through independent anti-corruption agencies, according to Mazhar & Iftikhar (2021). However, since people in positions of authority have every reason to fabricate allegations against their opponents to undermine their political standing and reputations, it is challenging to distinguish between good and bad intentions in these campaigns. Steenberg (n.d) contends that the powerful frequently used national and international discourses criticizing corruption to marginalize and colonize marginalized groups. These groups depend on communities and networks for their subsistence since they are marginalized or taken advantage of within formal structures. The author concludes that

anti-corruption efforts serve as a tool of the powerful against the weak, continuing a long-standing colonial legacy of subjugation and demonization of those who are not yet “civilized.” To prevent the misuse of corruption, Junadi (2020) explains how the idea of piercing the governance veil can support the realization of good governance and clean governance. The study concludes that the governance veil principle can restrict or stop the government and its employees from engaging in unlawful activity for their benefit or to enrich themselves or their allies.

In Africa, today’s anti-corruption enforcement agencies indirectly support the political apparatus of the state, much like they did during the colonial era when institutions served the interests of the British colonial administration. As a result, cases involving low-ranking bureaucrats with no political connections accounted for the majority of these convictions (31.2%) in 2011 (Mbabazi & Pyeong, 2015). The inability to muster political will has frequently been cited as the reason why anti-corruption initiatives fail (Persson et al., 2010; Johnston, 2005; Brinkerhoff, 2000; Kpundeh, 1998). Even though the president has been waging multiple wars against corruption, his rhetoric has not been backed up by credible action, making the fight against corruption impossible (Mbabazi & Pyeong, 2015). The sick nature of institutions has allowed corrupt bureaucrats to instead hide behind these same institutions. In this light, Johnston contends that “weak institutions not only create incentives for more corruption as people seek protection in an uncertain environment but also allow citizens and officials to seek illicit gains, at times with impunity.” (Johnston, 2005, p.38).

In a relational and communication process, companies and solicitors who want public officials to misbehave try to hide their demands by using rationalizing language, which leads to ethnocorrupt misbehavior. Studying the historical and anthropological foundations of corruption is recommended by

Zaloznaya (2015). Two theoretical claims on corruption in autocracies are reexamined, with a focus on the informal economies of Belarusian universities. In the first, it is said that bureaucracy corrupts authority; in the second, it is said that in exchange for political acquiescence, autocrats allow disloyal subjects to become corrupt. The author utilizes qualitative data to establish both positive and negative preconditions for bureaucratic corruption. It is concluded that hierarchical corruption thrives in an environment of lax autocracy, which is marked by organizational disconnection.

The main causes of civil service corruption in developing countries, as stated by a study by Desta (2019), are the politicization of the civil service, low pay, a lack of accountability and transparency in public organizations, slack enforcement mechanisms, the absence of career advancement based on merit and onerous and ambiguous regulations. Political instability, social injustice and approaching economic growth are all negatively impacted by the widespread corruption in politics, the economy and society at large, as per the studies discussed in this article. As stated by Soldatos (2016) a straightforward game-theoretic exchange between two companies vying for a public project and the potential for moral hazard on the part of public officials overseeing the project led to the conclusion that corruption cannot occur unless the public officials explicitly indicate it can. As a result, the products and services provided by public initiatives are provided in smaller quantities and of worse quality.

Moeketsi (2020) primarily employs content analysis and secondary data to uncover the reasons behind the underwhelming performance of the country's bureaucracy. It was discovered that the rent-seeking attitude of elected public officials taints the bureaucracy's virtues, leading academics to feel bureaucracy is broken. Lesotho's political officeholder's actions show that they are committed to intimidating technocrats who interfere with their interests. The advantages

of bureaucracy are overshadowed by such actions. For political advantage, the country's most powerful politicians favor using underqualified civil personnel to infiltrate the bureaucracy. To further their ability to control public administration without repercussions, they have taken control of judges.

Shamanskiy, (2023) examines the issues and trends in the development of national egoism. He draws attention to how radical ideas and beliefs are shaped by national egoism and its more perilous manifestations, such as nationalism, racism and chauvinism. The study also discusses the connection between national egoism and ethnocorruption, two powerful instruments of geopolitical control. He demonstrates that national egoism emerges with a political and socioeconomic framework devoid of national ideology, internationalism concepts and social or state condemnation of egoism. Additionally, national egoism is a defensive response to different types of discrimination based on nationality. He believes that national egoism and ethnocorruption have similarities and that ethnocorruption traits help turn national egoism into national extremism.

Kgobe and Mamokhere (2023) investigated the general issues facing Africa, such as electoral difficulties and the consolidation of power and the third term, sociocultural, social and economic governance and the decline of ethics. Based on Asante's Afrocentricity theory, which offers educational thinking about power, domination, racism and the urge to escape victimization, this desktop study- also known as a conceptual study- was conducted. The conclusions of the article show that bad governance and mismanagement pose serious problems for several African countries, including South Africa, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Nigeria.

In the South African (National) Public Service, Pillay (2004) discussed issues of corruption and good governance. He concluded that the intricate political structure of South Africa plays a role in the growth of corruption, which hurts confidence and stability as well

as the spirit of democratic ideals. While the South African government has played a significant role in establishing mechanisms to combat corruption, real-world issues have grown more prevalent over time. The main issues are inadequate coordination of anti-corruption efforts within the South African public service and across different societal sectors; inadequate knowledge regarding corruption and the consequences of anti-corruption policies and organizations; and the influence of corruption on effective governance.

Pring and Vrushi (2018) certify that the region's political systems are all affected differently by corruption. They also mention that the state institutions and oversight bodies are compromised in democratic states by corruption. They opine that as dishonest leaders utilize dubious means to cling to power and avoid accountability, it impedes democracy in weak democracies and autocratic regimes. These strategies, according to them include election tampering and changing legislation to increase the duration of government. Furthermore, they dispute when state institutions are taken over politically, the corrupt elite uses them as repressive instruments. Le Billion (2008) indicates that in fragile or conflict-affected states, corruption hinders efforts at peacebuilding and fuels recurrent cycles of violence. Under these conditions, everyone exploits the situation for their gain, fostering ethnocorruption in the process, which Igwe (2021) claims is the practice of a small percentage of the country's political leaders, who come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, of exploiting and squandering its resources and wealth for their own political, tribal, and personal gain.

As stated by Saidu et al., (2016), due to widespread corruption, which includes stata administrators and fictional bureaucracy characters, the development process in many African countries is currently bewildered by numerous problems. To the extent that many individual partners have come to believe that

corrupt acts are a part of African social norms and customs, corruption has essentially destroyed many aspects of African culture. Alike, Yeboah-Assiamah et al., (2014) investigate how corruption undermines African development efforts and offers a complete framework that may be implemented to stop the spread of corruption on the continent. The study used a qualitative approach and the content analysis technique. One of the study's findings is that corruption is a two-way street that shows up as a supply-and-demand situation. Additionally, it was shown that the predominance of inadequate bureaucratic structures and systems (context) and how transactions are carried out (process) all support corruption in developing African countries.

Through a conceptual-analytical investigation of pertinent secondary data, Malipula (2024) examined the connection between political and bureaucratic corruption in Tanzania. This paper clarifies the causes of Tanzania's susceptibility to political-bureaucratic corruption, highlights its effects and suggests countermeasures. The analysis in question demonstrated that the weakness of political and bureaucratic institutions, as well as the ineffectiveness of institutional measures designed to prevent corruption and its associated detrimental effects, contribute to the aggravation of political-bureaucratic corruption. The analysis unequivocally confirms that political-bureaucratic corruption has serious negative effects, including a decline in development efforts, a widening socioeconomic divide and a diminished level of trust in governmental institutions.

Ijewereme (2015) explores the idealistic, low-risk-high benefit, resource curse, two public, low-risk-high benefit and anomie theories. As a result, he employs the resource curse, low risk-high benefit theories to explain why corruption occurs in Nigeria. Additionally, data from Transparency International and some personal observations are used to describe corrupt activities in Nigeria. It is found that, among other things, low risk/high

reward associated with corruption, tribalism, nepotism and social pressure all contribute to corruption in the Nigerian public sector. Analogously, Adelabu (2021) draws attention to the ways that grand corruption appears in Nigeria and the implications this has for the country's progress. The explanation for the manifestation of great corruption in Nigeria is based on the neo-patrimonial hypothesis. The study used qualitative techniques to examine data from empirical and secondary sources. It contends that despite Nigeria's democratic transition, numerous governments have reported big corruption cases. Devastating effects have been felt throughout the nation as a result, including a slow rate of economic growth, widespread poverty, unemployment, political and social instability, a resurrected culture of corruption, a decline in the stature of the nation and the loss of national assets and government legitimacy.

Obuah (2010) investigates Nigerian corruption's political economy. The study points out that several rent-seeking practices lead to corruption in Nigeria, including the competitive nature of bureaucrats' relationship with their superiors, the opaque nature of financial institutions, the government's substantial role in the supply of goods and services, the privatization trend of the 1980s and 1990s and the inclination of private companies to eschew the expenses associated with enforcing regulations. Along the same line, utilizing information from a poll of 530 Ghanaian university students, Tankebe et al., (2019) investigate factors that may indicate future elites' propensity for corruption. It has been shown that dispositions that are suggestive of self-worth are predictive of intents to partake in corrupt transactions in a variety of contexts and agencies, including government procurement, police and power abuse, as well as in bribery and nepotism. As opposed to this, integrity is motivated by civic pride and self-worth in all forms of corrupt trade. No effect was found for stigma and the intention to engage in nepotism was more consistently negatively

impacted by deterrence in terms of certainty than accepting and paying a bribe.

In Ghana, the Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) face challenges in delivering infrastructure due to bureaucratic constraints that were investigated by Hackman et al., (2021). 121 construction professionals working in the Departments of Works (DoWs) of the MMDAs participated in a questionnaire study. Six (6) main bureaucratic reasons were identified by the results as impeding the implementation of infrastructure at the MMDAs: central government bureaucracy, little authority over MMDAs; political sway; financing for MMDA projects; inadequacy of MMDAs and political meddling.

Onyango (2021) examined how administrative culture affects the connection between whistleblowing practices and the application of anti-corruption measures in Kenyan public administration. It demonstrates how bureaucratic corruption oversight mechanisms, such as ethical rules and internal auditing procedures, typically work poorly in administrative contexts that are primarily characterized by centralized decision-making processes, autocratic bureaucratic authority and parochial managerial styles. Also, the variables that cause procurement corruption in Kenyan public institutions to go awry are examined by Basweti (2013). The study discovered that the procurement process for public health supplies in Kenyan government ministries was influenced by several factors, including accountability, which had a significant impact and justification of outcomes to internal or external monitors, which had a modest impact. By granting licenses and accreditation to establishments, suppliers, services and goods at their discretion, government-created representatives created the possibility of abusing their authority and allocating resources. High levels of discretion in the absence of sufficient safeguards could lead to corruption.

As declared by Brodick and Okorodudu (2020) public and civil servants who carry out government directives are the ones who commit bureaucratic corruption. Ministry, Department and Agency staff are involved in this. The worst kind of corruption occurs here because employees are in charge of allocating and using funds, making proposals, submitting the money needed to complete projects or units, and transferring and making payments. Bureaucrats are entrusted with greater authority to carry out their duties, and as such, they enjoy a position of trust and confidence in the communities they serve. However, any overuse of this authority, misuse of power, or inability to perform their duties can damage or eliminate public confidence in them.

Awofesi and Odeyemi (2014) discovered an interdependent relationship between political leadership and development. They concluded that it is impossible to overstate the multifaceted effects that corrupt practices have on a country's socio-political and economic development. These effects, they declare are felt in almost every area of the nation, including politics, education, health, agriculture and technology. They make pronouncements that the resultant effects can be severe poverty, high rates of illiteracy, economic dependency, technological backwardness, political instability and more. Under such circumstances, ethnocentric grouping would be useful for many.

Yeboah-Assiamah et al., (2016) studied public sector corruption in African countries by evaluating the interplay between culturally acceptable standards and professional expectations of public officials. The paper employs Riggs' prismatic-sala model and analyses the case of Ghana and traditional proverbs to describe the cultural framework within which Ghanaian public officials ought to function. The public official, by two unique demands, tends to walk on a tight line which often leads to ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interest.

Zafarullah and Siddiquee (2001) presented an overview of the corruption problem in Bangladesh and looked at the institutional mechanisms that may be used to fight it, rather than trying to conceptualize corruption. More precisely, it looks to assess these processes' efficacy in the public sector through critical examination and analysis. It discovered that a lack of commitment on the part of the political leadership, a bling bureaucracy, shoddy accountability systems and fruitless legislative labors render the various institutional tools to prevent administrative wrongdoing ineffectual. The official entity tasked with combating corruption is linked to numerous unethical acts and handles its business in a most unprofessional manner.

In light of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Lima and Da Costa (2022) analyze the Bolsonaro administration and find a mix of malgovernance and misgovernance, where violations are deliberate. It shows how far the country has moved to the right in the latter part of the 2010s. It resulted in less environmental protection and inclusivity, among other things. The involvement of civil society was significantly curtailed and environmental programs that had previously resulted in notable progress- most notably in lowering the amount of deforestation on Amazon- began to be methodically undermined.

Ferraz et al., (2022) examine how shifts in the distribution of political power impact long-term development. Specifically, they examined Brazil's military dictatorship, whose ascent to power significantly changed the power dynamics of local political elites. They record that municipalities that were more politically concentrated before the dictatorship in the 1960s were comparatively richer in 2000, despite their initial relative poverty. The evidence suggests that this reversal of fortune was the consequence of military policies aimed at undermining the power of traditional elites. These policies increased political competition locally, which

eventually led to better governance, more public goods and higher income levels.

Buntaine and Daniels (2020) examined whether providing high-level bureaucrats in charge of project oversight with routine, officially recognized reports outlining particular issues with the execution of public projects and derived from citizen monitoring enhanced the projects' delivery in Uganda. The investigation could not uncover any proof that this intervention enhanced the execution of government programs. Subsequent interviews disclosed that the targeted authorities appeared to be trying to keep the surveillance a secret, maybe to avoid accepting the associated responsibilities. Notwithstanding all of this, the question of what steps are most effective to prevent the evil of malgovernance in Africa remains.

Proposals

Comprehending all the foregoing, governments in Africa a necessity exists to facilitate the development of focused interventions by policymakers, anti-corruption agencies and civil society organizations aimed at enhancing accountability, openness and integrity in governance procedures. By comprehending how deficiencies in internal controls and contractual procedures may make an organization more susceptible to fraudulent activity, public agencies can improve their efforts to detect and discourage fraud. Siddiquee (2010) examines the issues and constraints of the existing strategy for combating corruption and upholding integrity in society while providing a critical assessment of the anti-corruption tactics used in Malaysia. Evidence reveals that corruption has persisted in being severe, and pervasive and has even gotten worse recently, despite official efforts and activities.

The recommendations made by Akpan and Onya (2018) include bolstering the anti-corruption agencies, establishing accountability and transparency as fundamental principles, tackling the issues of

salaries and wages, conducting comprehensive investigations and prosecuting dishonest public officials, and reorienting Nigerians toward the need to abstain from corrupt practices. Conversely, Tidey (2013) investigated the unexpected and unintended effects of anticorruption methods on a 2008 tender held at the Department of Public Works in Kupang, Eastern Indonesia. He demonstrates how anticorruption initiatives are distorted locally and loses their original meaning, which causes a fixation with following the anticorruption discourse's format, which is against its spirit and makes the anticorruption movement weaker by creating more opportunities for corruption.

Chi Jnr et al., (2020) used descriptive analysis from secondary data to examine the incompetence leadership conundrum, covering topics such as underdeveloped personal capacity, social psychology, value deficits and misconceptions that must be cleared up for African to be politically repositioned. The article notes that for African to solve its problems with governance and leadership, people tasked with exercising leadership must recognize their obligations, duties and responsibilities as well as the challenges of doing so. As well, Andhika (2017) drew on a variety of scientific literature to focus on developing solutions to halt the bureaucracy's pathology. The study employs a systematic review approach to locate all published literature about the research topics. The study's conclusions suggest that we should work to stop bureaucracy's pathology if we want it to operate effectively. Introducing bureaucratic innovations, such as adjustments to structures, practices and cultures, is one way to do this.

Ntoyanto (2019) argues that dealing with public sector corruption in South Africa necessitates the creation of a single, all-encompassing entity with autonomy, power and authority, based on a review of the literature and the desktop method. The study adopts the 'Rational Organizational Model' as its theoretical foundation and makes the case

that having a single organization will avoid job duplication and overlap. It is difficult to monitor progress and efficacy due to the frequent formation of task forces, commissions of inquiry and inquiry units. Irrespective of the number of the anti-corruption agencies, the government, or any powerful person or group in the community, should not interfere with any of the anti-corruption agencies that investigate ethnocorruptic practices. These agencies should be allowed to operate independently and be granted additional authority. The government should not engage in witch-hunts against any people or groups using these anti-corruption agencies. The government must refrain from using these anti-corruption agencies to persecute any person or group. Klitgaard (1988) stated in his book "Controlling Corruption" that "just as disease, corruption will always exist, but this unfortunate fact does not stop us from attempting to reduce the disease, nor should it paralyze efforts to reduce corruption."

A study conducted by Bali (2018) examines the key technological instruments and methods implemented in certain organizations. According to the research, communication tools can aid in the fight against corruption and greatly improve administrative services. It is important to promote speech freedom. Free speech should not be restricted, especially when it comes to the press, media and social media in general. Individuals should be free to express their opinions about unethical behavior in any media, including print and electronic. To discourage the younger generation, it is important to teach the causes, effects and consequences of ethnocorruptic in educational institutions. Government representatives should be held accountable for and transparently record financial transactions. Transparency will enable civil society organizations to effectively tackle the problems caused by ethnocorruptic practices. An ethnocorruptic practices prevention plan tailored to the offender would ensure that they were ensnared by laws and regulations, making it impossible for them to meddle in

official affairs. In a similar vein, laws and regulations must be strictly enforced when conducting governance business. Because personal gain trumps the establishment of universal rights, it leads to biased decision-making. By shifting funds and policy decisions to easily corrupted sectors, ethnocorruptic practices result in inefficiencies in governance.

In most African traditional institutions, there were institutional and informal processes of dissent, balances and corrections. Greed, selfishness, fraudulent accumulation and unfair maneuvering indicated unacceptable and contestable deviance was unwelcome in African culture. But in modern times, this is no longer the case throughout Africa. As an example, people who have mistrusted public institutions because of these institutions' shortcomings may become afraid to expose ethnocorruptic practices or may even be forced to do so by public officials to obtain government services. Furthermore, there may be no consequences for public servants who commit bureaucratic corruption due to weak institutions. Lekubu and Sibanda (2021) investigated the connection between public administration, corruption, ethics and morals. The claim made is that morality and ethics can combat bureaucratic corruption in public administration and service.

The relationship between e-governance and bureaucratic corruption in Nigeria was evaluated by Adelana (2020). According to the paper, there is a lot of visible and widespread bureaucratic corruption in Nigeria and many people believe that e-governance can help reduce this kind of corruption. The findings imply that should e-governance initiatives be implemented with sincerity, bureaucratic corruption in the Nigerian public sector will decline. Society will benefit from improved governance and societal harmony as a result of this decrease in bureaucratic corruption. Alike, based on fieldwork, including 91 in-depth interviews with current and past customs officers, importers, clearing agents, banks, regulators and other

stakeholders, Addo (2021) draws a case study of the 30-year digitization initiative at Ghana's customs department. Based on his findings, it appears that information technology (IT) can help regulate corruption over time by lowering the potential for corruption through sociotechnical reconfiguration of organizational structures and work patterns. Correspondingly, Shava and Mhlanga (2023) used a systematic literature review analysis to understand how blockchain can help reduce inefficiencies in African bureaucracy. Documents from a variety of databases, including Scopus, Web of Science and Google Scholar, were systematically sampled based on how they offer meaningful data concerning blockchain implementation. The study found that blockchain might enhance taxation in African bureaucracies and minimize data alteration and errors while optimizing efficiency by instituting enabling technology policies in government.

Bangura (2023) looked at the political and public administration landscape in Sierra Leone throughout history, clarified the problems caused by political meddling, assessed the fallout for professionalism and service delivery and suggested ways to lessen the negative impacts. The research findings indicate that public administrators encounter numerous obstacles in carrying out their duties as a result of party politics. These challenges include poor governance and maladministration, partisan appointments, subpar service delivery, corruption and a lack of accountability, as well as improper and non-compliant use of resources. A neutral, effective public bureaucracy is necessary for an effective public bureaucracy to function in a democratic government. Public bureaucracy is essential to the administration of government because it ensures fairness in the allocation of goods and services.

5. Conclusion

Weak institutions and a lack of checks and balances, cronyism and corruption, a lack of accountability and transparency, insufficient

involvement and engagement, ineffective bureaucracy and red tape, authoritarianism and personalism, a lack of access to information and education and social and economic inequality are the main causes of malgovernance acts. Human rights violations, economic stagnation and poverty, eroding public trust and disillusionment, institutional decay and corruption, undevelopment and lack of progress, brain drain and talent flight, humanitarian crises and disasters, a lack of credibility and legitimacy, infrastructure neglect and decay, an increase in crime and insecurity and a decline in quality of life and well-being were all associated with the majority of malpractice cases. Ultimately, this paper suggests that Africa adopt best practices for observing the diversity character principle, including accountability, discipline, professionalism, adherence to competence and meritocracy, impartiality, patriotism and discipline.

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