



Original Article

## Corruption and Good Governance in Africa: A Hermeneutical Analysis

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Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajle.7.1.1894>

### Date Published: ABSTRACT

30 April 2024

#### Keywords:

Corruption,  
Good  
Governance,  
Africa,  
Hermeneutics,  
Critical Analysis.

Human beings are social and communal animals and cannot but live in an ordered society and have interactive relationships, hence good governance, which is essential for their well-being and development. This fact grounds their forming governmental apparatus to coordinate the things that are common to them; otherwise, violence and warfare may continue unabated. Good governance does not just happen. Those elected or appointed into positions of governance need to be effective, efficient and exhibit an ethical character to ensure that the good life constitutive of the promotion of human rights, provision of social facilities, and all that provide a better life for the people are in place. In the African continent, many of those in governance, instead of working for the public good to ensure a better life for their citizens, serve their private and parochial interests to the detriment of the welfare of the people by engaging in massive corruption. Corruption, especially political and public, has grave effects on the economy and the lives of the people all over the continent. Massive corruption has siphoned public funds for development projects and lodged them in foreign banks. This has led to poverty and underdevelopment, weakened sustainable development goals, caused youth restiveness, led to forced migration, poor environmental growth, and loss of millions of lives. Problematized in this paper is a continent endowed and blessed with natural and human resources but remains the poorest, most undeveloped continent in the world because of corruption. The paper used hermeneutics and critical analytic methods to examine corruption as an impediment to good governance in Africa. The hermeneutics method was used to interpret, decipher, and highlight the importance of this work's principal concepts. The critical-analytic method was used to rationalize the arguments. The paper found that massive corruption is decimating the continent and that there is a need to combat it to ensure good governance. It concluded that combating corruption will help create a better continent where people enjoy a good life and democratic entitlements.

#### APA CITATION

Ikeke, M. O. (2024). Corruption and Good Governance in Africa: A Hermeneutical Analysis. *East African Journal of Law and Ethics*, 7(1), 29-41. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajle.7.1.1894>

#### CHICAGO CITATION

Ikeke, Mark Omorovie. 2024. "Corruption and Good Governance in Africa: A Hermeneutical Analysis." *East African Journal of Law and Ethics* 7 (1), 29-41. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajle.7.1.1894>.

#### HARVARD CITATION

Ikeke, M. O. (2024) "Corruption and Good Governance in Africa: A Hermeneutical Analysis.", *East African Journal of Law and Ethics*, 7(1), pp. 29-41. doi: 10.37284/eajle.7.1.1894.

**IEEE CITATION**

M. O., Ikeke. "Corruption and Good Governance in Africa: A Hermeneutical Analysis.", *EAJLE*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 29-41, Apr. 2024.

**MLA CITATION**

Ikeke, Mark Omorovie. "Corruption and Good Governance in Africa: A Hermeneutical Analysis." *East African Journal of Law and Ethics*, Vol. 7, no. 1, Apr. 2024, pp. 29-41, doi:10.37284/eajle.7.1.1894.

**INTRODUCTION**

Kieh (2008), Areo (2014), Arinze (2014), and Igwe (2010) have indicated that corruption is a major impediment to good governance in Africa. Transparency International (2019) shows that the Sub-Saharan region was the lowest-scoring region in Africa, averaging 32 out of 110 on the international transparency index. This implies governments have taken poor or little action against corruption in the continent. The government has a great role to play in combating corruption. Mbaog and Komboni (2008), Asefa and Haung (2015), and Acemoglu and Robinson (2013) state that corruption makes it difficult for governments to fulfill their obligations of providing welfare for their citizens. Corruption can be combated through good governance that is responsive and meets the needs of the people. However, as Asefa and Haung (2015) noted that, good governance is often lacking in many African countries. Meredith (2011) avers concerning Africa that:

*...its potential for economic development has been disrupted by the predictor policies of ruling elites seeking personal gain...After decades of mismanagement and corruption, most African states have become hollowed out. They are no longer instruments capable of serving the public good. Indeed, far from being able to provide aid and protection to their citizens, African governments and the vampire-like politicians who run them are regarded by the populations they rule as yet another burden they have to bear in the struggle for survival (p. 704).*

Lawal (2007) and Momoh (2015) state that corruption is an endemic problem in Africa. Many of those in governance in Africa have either been corrupt or have allowed their lifestyles to impede the ending of corruption. Africa's most populous country, Nigeria was in 2019 rated the world's poverty capital. Amuwo (2015) writes that the country has enormous wealth from oil and gas

resources. However, some politicians looted public coffers into endless insecurity, militancy, youth restiveness, and dilapidated social infrastructures. Instead of many of those in power to govern for the common good, they are interested in their private pockets. Corruption is venal and deep in Nigeria, undermining developmental efforts, ignoring accountability, precipitating violence against the state and individuals, and ignoring laws and regulations. One of Nigeria's former leaders looted so much from the national treasury that as Cable (2023) notes, from 1999 up till 2023, Nigeria was recovering money he lodged in foreign bank accounts. Lacey (2003) writes that from one part of the continent to different African countries such as Kenya, Ghana, Zambia, Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo), and Liberia are searching in foreign countries for looted funds stolen by some of their past leaders.

Abagen (2010), Amuwo (2015), and Kaba (2016) argue that good governance requires that those in government work for the well-being and welfare of the people, provide adequate security, provide social infrastructure and safeguard the enjoyment of democratic and fundamental human rights. To put it briefly, the government should promote a good life for citizens. While it is true that some African leaders are making remarkable progress, by and large, many African governments are weak and inefficient in the provision of the good life. Africa is one of the areas that have experienced bad and inefficient governments. Almost in all African countries, citizens are in pain and suffering. Chuta (2004) and Akanbi (2005) noted that bad governance breeds social problems such as terrorism, forced migration, brain drain, poverty, xenophobic attacks, civil wars, youth restiveness, kidnapping, armed robbery, and banditry, human trafficking, hunger and malnutrition, smuggling of arms, and ethnic violence. Indeed, bad governance is not the

only factor responsible for the problems listed above. But bad governance is a major factor. When government fails or is failing, then social issues multiply in bounds. A principal failure of most African governments has to do with corruption. Public financial resources are deliberately and wilfully mismanaged and used for the personal, selfish interests of many in power. As a result, public funds that should be used to develop social infrastructure for the good of the people are not available for that purpose.

This paper concerns corruption as a major impediment to good governance in Africa. While it is true that in many African countries, there are anti-corruption laws, rules, and regulations, they are often either never implemented or poorly enforced due to a lack of political will and poor institutional frameworks. The paper proceeds by doing a hermeneutics of concepts, examining corruption as a major impediment to good governance in Africa. It also looks at the causes, consequences, and solutions to corruption.

## CONCEPTUAL EXPLICATIONS

Corruption and good governance are key concepts that deserve explanation and clarification in this paper. The term “corruption” has no univocal definition. Mbaku (2008) states that corruption is an ancient and universal problem, though it seems more predominant in developing societies. According to Transparency International (2020), corruption is when those entrusted with power abuse/misuse it for private gain. Bayley (1966) avers that: “corruption, while being tied particularly to the act of bribery, is a general term covering misuse of authority as a result of consideration of personal gain, which need not be monetary.” (p. 720). Corruption takes many forms, such as embezzlement of public funds, demanding money for public services, breach of procedures and due process, kickbacks for awarding contracts, diversion of public funds for personal use, perversion of justice in the law courts, nepotism, fraud, extortion, peddling of influence, and favoritism of friends and relatives even when they are not qualified, etc. The reality is that public or political corruption that this paper

is concerned with is essentially those who are saddled with the responsibility of governance or public administrators who commit these acts of corruption. Owolabi (2007) states that: corruption includes graft, embezzlement, giving and taking bribes.

The next concept that is crucial to define is “good governance.” To understand governance, it is important to understand what government is all about. Igwe (2005) writes that: “Government is a systematically organized power, exercised by certain people purportedly on behalf of the generality” (p. 179). Akinbade (2008) distinguishes between government as an institution of the state, the process or art of governing, and as an academic study. As an institution of the state, it carries out the executive, legislative, and judicial functions in an organized and regulated manner. While the legislative arm of government makes the laws, the executive implements and enforces the laws, and the judiciary interprets the laws of the land. As a process or art, it refers to the carrying out of public business to ensure that government functions are undertaken for the betterment of the people. Government is equally an academic field of study in educational institutions. Appadorai (2004) rightly states that: “Government may be defined as the agency or machinery through which the will of the State is formulated, expressed and realized” and includes “...the total of the legislative, executive and judicial bodies in the State, whether of the central or local government or all those who are engaged in making, administering and interpreting the law” (p. 12). The government comprises a body of persons and not just materials and things. It is these persons who organize and carry out the functions of the government. Without these persons, there is no government. It is these persons who carry out the art of governance.

What is the purpose of government? Why is there governance? The fact is that government is an instrument and institution of the state to carry out the functions of the state. The purpose of the state becomes the purpose that government should

serve. Many political thinkers have theorized about the purpose of the state. A few mentions of some will suffice. For Plato (1941), the state exists to promote justice, which essentially is harmony among the various classes of guardians, soldiers, and the producers of society. For Aristotle (1984), the state exists to provide a good life, helping people find happiness. Aquinas (2002) sees the state's goal as promoting citizens' happiness by just laws. To Locke (1988), it is for the preservation of property, which includes the people's liberties, lives, and estates.

Smith (1776) opines that the purpose of government is to protect society from external violence and injustice within the state and to maintain public works and institutions. Spencer (1843) states that government exists to protect the rights of citizens. For Marx (1977), government is simply an instrument of the ruling class to control the state for the benefit of the bourgeoisie. Outside the Marxist-oriented viewpoint that perceives the state as an instrument of the ruling class, Aristotle, Smith, Locke, and some other thinkers affirm that the state or government exists to provide a better life for the people. This is the viewpoint adopted in this paper. Government exists for the common good of society. This does not mean that all those in government act for the good. This is why this paper is arguing for good governance.

For the functions of government, Igwe (2005) writes further that the government delivers collective goods, renders social services, maintains law and order, secures lives and people's property, plans and guides economic development, provides jobs and health facilities, administers justice, and promotes human rights. Governance is the process and the daily affairs involved in the implementation of these functions of government. Another important function of government is its external relations with other governments or states. Most modern governments have a police force to enforce the laws and a military to defend the state against external aggression or even combat internal insurgencies when necessary.

About governance, Abonyi (2005) states, "can be defined as a method through which government performs its functions. It is measured by the relationship between the governor and the governed" (p. 142). From this viewpoint, governance is essentially relational and deals with how government members relate to the governed. Mbaio and Komboni (2008) state that governance refers to the state's public affairs administration, private sector regulation, national resource management, and inter-state affairs. Good governance is when the functions and duties of government are effectively and efficiently carried out for the well-being and welfare of the people. A government is irresponsible when, instead of carrying out these functions and duties of government effectively, it either abuses power or mismanages the governmental process. A rampant sign of irresponsible governance is corruption in its various manifestations. Adeyeye and Fasakin (2015) state that "governance is not about the exercise of governmental authority but the use of state power goodly, often referred to as good governance, thus creating a nexus between political structure and development in developing countries." (p. 110). Good governance is responsible governance. The United Nations (2009) considers the following features of good governance: consensus, observance of the rule of law, accountability, transparency, popular participation, responsibility, inclusiveness, equitability, efficiency, and effectiveness. Good governance abates and can prevent corruption. On the other hand, corruption is an obstacle to good governance and development.

## **CORRUPTION AS A MAJOR IMPEDIMENT TO GOOD GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA**

### **Causes of Corruption**

Many reasons or factors have been adduced for corruption in Africa. It is reasonable to name and explain a few of them here. Following the position of Alavi (1972), a foreign imperial bourgeoisie created the post-colonial state, and the ruling class that emerged out of the process were not owners of modes of production like Western capitalists.

So, in their coming to power, they exhibited and began to struggle for the state's material resources in a primitive manner, thus enabling various forms of corruption. Many African leaders came into political power not to better many people but to selfishly acquire to enrich themselves and sometimes their townsmen and women. As Ake and Onoge (1995) have highlighted, political power in Africa is often for parochial gain to take public resources in a corrupt manner for private interests. For Kieh (2008), the neo-colonial State, like her predecessor colonial progenitor, is most often predatory and anti-people as the ruling class feels no commitment to the people. Rather, they are in power for private capital accumulation to benefit themselves and their families.

Another factor that indirectly inspires corruption is a permissive and *liaise-faire* attitude to the problem. As explained by Kieh and Agbese (2008), this attitude erroneously sees political corruption as inevitable and those in power as bound to enrich themselves from state resources. And so, it is better to keep electing those in power as it is perceived that they have stolen much already compared with new entrants who will start to steal afresh. This is a gravely dangerous attitude. This is one of the reasons there is so much apathy regarding corruption in Africa. Africa's vast, enormous natural endowments and financial resources are stolen and wasted by her sons and daughters in power, and many Africans feel no concern or hopelessness. Aluko (2006) corroborates this fact of apathy, saying that people's nonchalant attitude, complacency, and their feeling of let us leave it to God to judge corrupt politicians inspire more corruption.

Related to this permissive attitude, some falsely link corruption in the post-colonial African State to African traditional roots of presenting kola nuts to visitors as a sign of hospitality. On this point, Kieh and Agbese (2008) forcefully argue that:

*In the first place, the kola nut offered to the benefactor is merely a token. It has no economic value relative to the largess. The kola-nut was not a percentage of the commodity given to the beneficiary. In the second place, the logic and rationale for the*

*gift of kola nuts were completely different from the logic and rationale, which inform modern bribery and corruption in Africa. Third, today, bribery and corruption are not incidental to the performance of the political leaders, or bureaucrats' jobs. They are the principal reasons behind their jobs (p. 25).*

Africa is suffering from a pervasive attitude of many who seem unconcerned about corruption and its negative effects on the people. There is a weak sense of public interest and a desire to enhance the common good. Mbaku (2008) notes that many in the civil service and public administration in African countries see civil service as an opportunity to enrich themselves; after all, they will tell you that those at the very top are equally stealing, and also the ruling elites make policies or implement projects not for the public good but for those that will easily give them opening to loot public fund. A great proportion of civil servants and appointees in government offices are inefficient and lack adequate education and professional skills. They have no concern about stopping corruption. Those in power simply fill public offices with their family members. They see themselves as responsible to those who appointed them and not to the common good.

Many African countries lack an adequate and efficient social welfare sector for the citizens while they are active in the civil service and when they retire. Pensions and retirement funds meant for workers after retirement are often looted by those appointed to manage them. Agbakwuru (2022) writes that up-coming retirees fearing for their futures, primitively accumulate in an attempt to secure their future.

Another factor that facilitates corrupt practices is the fact that too many discretionary powers are embedded in the offices of persons in power in Africa. In some African states like Nigeria and others, the president and governors have security votes, which are unknown and unaccounted for (Dada, 2015). They cannot be questioned on their use of security votes. The money taken away in the name of security vote runs into billions, yet there is so much insecurity in the land. One wonders what some of those in power do with all

the money they have accumulated in the name of security vote. Ibaba and Ebiede (2008) have opined that arbitrary discretion should not be allowed for government officials; rather, their activities should be rule-based, which will curtail unnecessary spending among those in power. Dipholo and Molebatsi (2017) state that in Botswana, under the reign of Seretse Khama, the government policy process became personalized depending on his personal opinion, thereby giving room to nepotism and favoritism. You can imagine that policies were dictated simply by what the president wanted in a whole state. This is one of the highest forms of corruption and impedes the active participation of the people in governance.

Also, the question of leadership is not overlooked in examining the factors responsible for corruption. Corruption is caused or perpetrated by human beings. Writing on how corruption has affected sustainable development in Africa, Mbaku (2008) opines that many African countries lack ethical leaders committed to good governance; rather, they are opportunistic and kleptomaniac. Many scholars like Abagen (2010), Ukaegbu (2010), Nwuzor (2014), Arinze (2014), and Igwe (2010) have all highlighted the failure of leadership that is responsible for corruption and African developmental problems.

None of the reasons given above should justify corruption. Corruption is a social and moral evil. Citizens should have a strong moral character and even bear the pain for the common good instead of joining to damage their nations. It is tragic to note that there are persons such as presidents, governors and senators who are well-paid and enjoy good pensions in some African countries, yet they are still corrupt.

### **Consequences of Corruption**

Political corruption has dire consequences for political institutions in African countries. Aiyede (2006) writes that (1) it subverts political processes, thus weakening responsible governance and democratic values; (2) it has led to state capture due to the monetization of

electoral processes; (3) it has resulted in the hijacking of the policy-making process by political godfathers; (4) it has led to the compromise of the rule of law and distortion of election results, and (5) it derails the institutional ability of government. Funds assigned for developing social infrastructures and other amenities for obtaining the good life for the citizens have been siphoned by corrupt government officials. Damaged and unrepaired roads have led to accidents and the death of millions in Africa. Poor health facilities abound in the continent, and due to poor health facilities, many Africans have died of diseases that could easily have been cured. Poverty is ravaging the land in Africa, where many are unemployed and hungry. The money that should be used to employ the teeming African youths has been embezzled.

Corruption in any form is a major problem for governance in Africa. It has crippled a great deal of infrastructure in Africa. Transparency International (2020) rightly notes that: "Corruption erodes trust, weakens democracy, hampers economic development, and further exacerbates inequality, poverty, social division, and the environmental crisis." Corrupt governments do not care about the welfare and good of the citizens. Looking at Africa, corruption is a major source of poverty. Mbonu (2004) writes:

*Think of the jobs, the infrastructure, the improved educational system, and the enhanced democratic institutions the looted funds could provide if they were redirected from the personal enrichment of the corrupt to the public service of the people. It is widely acknowledged that as a result of the siphoning off of these huge sums from the coffers of the developing countries to developed nations, most of the States have been failed States, unable to perform even ordinary State functions, including providing water, electricity, and adequate housing for their populations (p. 7).*

The cost of governance is extremely and excessively high in Africa due to corruption. Contracts for public projects such as roads, hospitals, educational facilities, and energy are

over fraudulently manipulated. Much of the money from such public projects then goes into private hands, thus depriving the public of adequate and efficient facilities. Africa abounds in the past and present with many accounts of corruption in governance that have precipitated underdevelopment and created social problems. Regarding the social and economic cost of corruption, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2011) has indicated that corruption costs the continent billions of dollars annually, depriving it of monetary resources for development.

Still, on the consequences of corruption, Kieh (2008) has shown that it has made many African ruling elites unable to satisfy the human needs of African people, such as water and sanitation, health care, education, food, and housing. Mbaku (2008) corroborates this fact when he writes that corruption deprives people of access to basic human services like education and health care. This viewpoint is also canvassed by Acemoglu and Robinson (2013) when they reveal that poverty, pain and suffering, life deprivations, bad education, and many other problems in places like Egypt, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, and other African nations are caused not by climate, geography, or cultural attributes but by narrow elites who organize their countries for their benefits to the detriment of the people. In all of these, it is the people who suffer as a result of corruption. Omoregbe (2007) asserts that “the most basic and most serious problem militating against good governance is corruption. Corruption is, to a large extent, responsible for the prevalence of mass illiteracy and mass abject poverty in African countries” (p. 23).

### **Combating Corruption**

Many solutions have also been proposed to curb or end corruption in Africa. Areo (2014) recommends the exercise of political will on the path of those who govern, the institutionalization of reforms to foster transparency, limiting of discretionary powers of public officers, provision of adequate information to the citizenry on every aspect of governance, making political office less

attractive and part-time legislature. This paper focuses on illustrating some of the above and other proposed solutions.

First among them is the instrument of the law. Law is a powerful instrument to curb corruption. This is why, for instance, there are many rules and regulations against corruption in society. One of the principal ways to combat corruption is the cultivation, implementation, and enforcement of anti-corruption laws. Government laws, regulations, activities, and even individual and non-governmental efforts to end corruption in so far as they don't create more problems or violate human rights, except in a legitimate manner, are all parts of anti-corruption ethics in Africa. These efforts and activities are necessary because corruption will not end on its own. King (1964) rightly states that “Human progress never rolls in on the wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co-workers with God” (p. 86). It is important to emphasize that anti-corruption activities should be pursued within the framework of the laws of the land. African countries should follow democratic norms in the fight against corruption. There are cases in which some people in political powers have been accused of persecuting their political opponents in the guise of combating corruption. This in itself gives room to another form of political corruption. Pursuing one's political opponents with government machinery is an abuse of power when there is no basis for it. It is also corruptive to fraudulently use the machinery of the state to rig elections.

Still, in the place of the law, the laws must be forcefully enforced. The problem is that the norms guiding ethical conduct against corruption are neither implemented nor enforced. Many of those who implement and enforce them are corrupt themselves. The various arms through which the state carries out the duties and functions of governance should know that they have a moral obligation to enforce the anti-corruption laws of their countries. Adewale (2011) states that the weakness of the state, especially in the developing world, to laws concerning corruption and ethical

norms regarding public life is a fundamental problem confronting statehood and good governance. The constitution and the rule of law are crucial for good governance. Adewale (2011) writes further on this, saying that it requires political will and a lot of determination to stand against corrupt practices. On a continental level, the African Union has agencies and organs responsible for combating corruption and encouraging African nations to fight corruption.

All these should be re-enhanced and encouraged. The legislature or parliament has a crucial role in fighting corruption in African nations. This is why the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2011) enunciates that: "Parliaments play a critical role in combating corruption, including through the enactment of anti-corruption laws. Parliaments can also curb corruption by reinforcing government accountability and good governance since they have the power to oversee government agencies." (p. 15). Kassahun (2011) says: "Over the years, African governments and their institutions lacked the courage and will to enforce the law, procedures, and policies meant to fight corruption." (p. 201).

More needs to be said regarding the law, as it is crucial to curbing corruption. The constitution is the supreme law of every country and on which ethical behavior revolves. The constitution is a major standard regulating the ethical conduct of those in governance and spells out in broad terms the limits and regulations concerning governments and their institutions. The Constitution of South Africa (1996) states that the state's goal is to foster democratic values, enhance fundamental human rights, promote justice, promote equality before the law, and foster life for all its people. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) states that among the fundamental objectives of the Nigerian state are the promotion of democracy and social justice, security, and welfare of the people. An examination of the constitutions of other African states will reveal that these goals of promoting democratic values, social justice, fundamental human rights, and the welfare of the people are found in them. Welfare,

human rights, democratic values, and social justice are all issues of ethics and morality. Promoting them is standard human behavior by the social values of African societies. Corruption contravenes these values and objectives stated in the different African constitutions. It is argued here that promoting anti-corruption ethics requires effective constitutionalism and observance of the constitutional frameworks of each state. This will help to abate corruption, especially among those in public office. Asefa and Haung (2015) rightly argue that:

*Effective control of corruption must be based on institutional and constitutional reforms to constrain the ability of state actors to intervene in private and market transactions. Tackling the problem of corruption, or the abuse of public trust for private gain, is not possible by simply jailing corrupt individuals without changing the incentives for corruption. It is imperative to create a constitution with checks and balances and the rule of law (p. 141).*

Another instrument that can be used in curbing corruption is the promotion of ethical values. There is no development, social progress, or upward mobility in a country or society without human beings, people of good character. There need to be people of good character and moral uprightness in government and politics. People who have anti-corruption values will shun corruption. They are people who will work for the benefit of the people and not abuse the power entrusted to them. Without these kinds of people, Africa's developmental strides will always be impeded. Adeyeye and Fasakin (2015) rightly note that value orientation rooted in strong human character is important in social change. Good leaders, they affirm, are diligent, incorruptible, fair, and concerned for all. Much of Africa's ruling elites have cultivated a Machiavellian mindset and divorced governance and politics from ethics or moral norms. Social contractarians like Hobbes (1968), Locke (1988), and Rousseau (1968) all affirm that the government has a contractual obligation to fulfill to the citizens. For Augustine (1998), a government without ethics is just a band of robbers. Those who govern have a



moral duty to safeguard the human rights of the citizens, affirm their human dignity and personhood, promote humanistic values and fulfill the goals for which society is created. Ilesanmi (2016) writes that when they fail to follow anti-corruption principles and lifestyle, they offend against all these. Nyasani (2010), Dada (2018), and Bolokor (2013) have all affirmed the need for public morality and the inseparable link between ethics and politics.

Emphasis on African cultural values can also help in curbing corruption in Africa. African cultural values that have helped Africans in the past should not be left out in the fight against corruption. These values include *Umunthu*, *Ujamaa*, humanism, and hospitality. *Umunthu* means “humanness” or “I am because we are.” Writing of *Umunthu* (also spelled as *Umunthu*) by Sindima (2016) says it is a moral and ethical force that guides against selfishness, greed, individualism, injustice, and corrupt practices and promotes human dignity, hospitality, duty, concern for others, and social order. The concept of *Ujamaa* (familyhood or brotherhood) was popularized by Nyerere (1968), who used it to denote his desired social and political system of government for Tanzania. *Ujamaa* is the African ethical value that made Africans feel kinship, togetherness, and community. In the spirit of *Ujamaa*, persons came to the aid of one another, and corrupt practices were shunned. African ethical systems were also grounded in humanism and hospitality. Despite conflicts and wars that every human society has experienced, Africans generally showed kindness and friendship to their neighbors, and corrupt practices were shunned and vehemently condemned. These values are to be promoted in anti-corruption ethics at all educational levels and among the populace to instill in people value for the social interest or public good. African humanism saw all human beings as brothers and sisters and showed hospitality, care, and concern for all human persons (Nyerere, 1965). These values are to be promoted through all forms of social education.

Citizens’ responsibility to hold the government accountable is also very vital in the fight against corruption. Outside the need for ethical leaders who commit themselves to promoting the ethics of the nation and the public good, as Gbadegesin (2012) writes that the followers have a collective responsibility to hold their leaders accountable and to save their nations from the grip of political robbers, daylight election robbers, political vampires, assassins and kidnappers in government. The role of the citizens in various African countries is so important and necessary. African citizens should not just accept things as they are. If citizens are silent about political corruption among their leaders, corrupt leaders will likely see their silence as an acceptance of their corrupt behaviors. An enlightened citizenry and a strong electorate are needed to help to curb corruption. Corruption continues unabated arising from a weak citizenry, a permissive attitude, and a weakened media. Lawal (2007) corroborates the imperative of citizens’ actions against corruption: “Public opinion has to be supportive of anti-corruption efforts, and public opinion is the major force in creating an environment in which corruption is not accepted or condoned. Public education about the detrimental effects of corruption is important in creating public awareness and an active public response in support of anti-corruption measures” (p. 2).

The mass media also have a crucial role in curbing and ending corruption. Sowunmi et al. (2010) write that the media should raise public awareness of the evil of corruption and investigate and report on corrupt practices. More than ever, the media in various African countries need to advocate against corruption. The media have an ethical responsibility to promote good governance and campaign against corruption. After all, the media exists for the public good and not the interests of those in power. The media are watchdogs of society. They should engage in robust investigative journalism to critique the affairs of those in power. The press should not shun the duty of whistleblowing if need be. United Nations Economic Commission highlights the significant role that the media can play in Africa (2011.)

## CONCLUSION

The paper has argued that corruption is an endemic problem in Africa. Some of the causes and consequences of corruption in Africa were examined. The causes include an attitude of primitive selfish accumulation on the part of some leaders, a permissive attitude to the problem, lack of adequate social welfare, too much discretionary power in some government offices, and so forth. The causes the paper noted do not justify corruption. It argued that corruption is a major impediment to good governance in the continent, arising from its many negative consequences. The consequences include the enormously high cost of governance, poverty, broken social infrastructures, erosion of trust in government, weakening of human rights and democratic values, and underdevelopment in all its forms. While there are many recommended solutions to the problem of corruption in Africa, the paper highlighted the importance of the law and its enforcement in curbing corruption. It also stated the significance of the internal imbibing of ethical and African cultural values and their practice. The role of an enlightened citizenry and media were also pointed out. The nurturing of an inward attitude that shuns corruption is important. It was revealed in the paper that in African countries outside the constitutions, various norms, rules, regulations, and laws abhor corruption. Implementing and enforcing these norms and laws with strong political will and the commitment of citizens to be morally re-armed to combat corruption will go a long way in creating a better African continent in which the good life is secured for its people.

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