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How to eliminate corruption in Africa?

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How to eliminate corruption in Africa?

Final Senior Thesis Project

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Abstract

Corruption is generally defined as the misuse of power for personal gain. The initial aim of this paper was to find a way to eliminate corruption. Even though corruption is a global problem, the research of this project is focused on African nations, particularly on the country of Angola.

The review of the literature consists of an analysis of the main causes and effects of corruption and of how they have a correlation to poverty and underdevelopment. I found that the specific case of Angola fits perfectly into all of the causes and effects of corruption that are mentioned in the literature review.

In an attempt to find solutions for the problem of corruption, a collection of interviews were performed. Through a combination of the research, the interviews, and the real-life experience of living in Angola, I found that corruption cannot be eradicated within the economical and political system that we currently live in.

Introduction

“When a contradiction appears in flesh and blood – when we live it – we are never the same again. The disturbance cuts deep, making an open wound. When the contradictions start to accumulate, piling up one on one, oozing slowly, not healing, they become intolerable. As a privileged person with countless opportunities but wrestling with nagging doubts and no longer willing to coast or conform, I began to search increasingly driven by the desire for meaningful purpose” (Smith, 1997: 2).

The above quote sounds like my own justification for deciding to develop my senior thesis project on the topic of corruption. Having grown up in Angola, I lived in a society that has lost the sense of justice and rule of law for the substitution for a higher law of bribes and corruption. Having the privilege to study in a western nation, I have been able to look at Angola from the outside, which only allowed for the rise of a stronger sense of revolt against what goes on in the place that I call home.

Corruption is most commonly defined as the exploitation of power for private or political gain. After a long period of civil war, Angola evolved into a society that is ruled by corruption above anything else. I have seen that corruption has become the norm and that it is generally accepted as the reality of our every-day lives. Despite it being generally accepted, the effects of corruption in Angola are evident. While the nation has greatly profited from its richness in natural resources in the last seven years of peace, it is perceptible that these earnings are being deviated from the majority of the Angolan population which still lives in levels of extreme poverty. In the face of these facts, the primary question for this research is: How can corruption be eliminated?

Although my motives for pursuing this topic were mainly related to my living experience in Angola, it is important to mention that corruption *is* a global issue that is

present in every single nation of the world. I decided to focus on this topic mainly because of what I have seen in my country, but also because Africa remains as the poorest continent on earth, and also as one of where corruption flourishes with the greatest vivacity. I believe that corruption might have a significant negative impact in the poverty and underdevelopment of African nations.

I began my research process with the development of the review of literature, which explores the main causes and effects of corruption, emphasizing its links to poverty and underdevelopment. Through the literature review, I found that a lot of the causes of corruption overlap with its effects. This led me to conclude that the causes and effects of corruption create a vicious cycle which is extremely hard to get out of. Nonetheless, this only increased my motivation in finding a way to eliminate corruption.

The research process of the literature review was complemented with interviews that I performed with some key knowledgeable people of providence that had dealt with corruption in different ways. After living in one of the most corrupt countries in Africa, it came as a coincidental irony that I ended up pursuing my college education in one of the most corrupt states of the United States. The truth is that, after deciding that this thesis would focus on corruption, all the life decisions that I had made until now, from coming to this country, to deciding to attend Providence College, to becoming a Global Studies major, seemed to come together in a harmonious way, almost making me believe that writing this thesis had been the underlying purpose of all my efforts unknowingly.

During the interviews process I focused my attention on possible solutions for the elimination of corruption or for effective ways to go against it. I was also simultaneously

engaged in the analysis of the current anticorruption movements to better understand their strategies.

With the combination of the research process, the interviews, and my personal experience in Angola, I come to the sad conclusion that corruption is ineradicable within the current economical and political system that we live in.

Literature Review

Executive Summary

The purpose of this literature review is to study the links between corruption and poverty, based on existent studies from various authors. Throughout this work there will be an emphasis on developing nations in Africa for they are some of the greatest victims of both corruption and poverty in the world.

With that in mind, this review will start by understanding what corruption is through various definitions. In a general sense, corruption consists of the illicit use of power for private gain, but in order to acquire a broader view on the topic, this literature review will expound upon how different standpoints influence the different definitions of the term. Following, the main causes that factor into the occurrence of corrupt acts will be analyzed thoroughly to provide a deep understanding of where corruption comes from and also of why it creates such a vast range of effects in a country's economy, growth, and society. Finally, the various consequences of corruption will be explored, with an emphasis on its links to poverty and underdevelopment. Lastly, it will be shown if these authors share an overall consensus on how all the major effects of corruption lead into the major and frightening effect of increased poverty.

This literature review will be concluded with the ties between what I came to know through my research and what I had already perceived and experienced while living in Angola. Finally, I will conclude with a reaction to my findings, which will allow me to continue to pursue my research into a more specific area of this topic.

Introduction

To corrupt literally means to destroy, from the Latin word *corruptus*. By the most common definition, corruption is the dishonest exploitation of power for private or political gain (Uslaner, 6). Corruption is an illegal activity that has been around since very ancient times and that has grown to be present throughout the many different nations of our world, both developed and developing. To attest to the ancient nature of corruption, Kaufmann (1997), Director of the World Bank Institute leading the work on Governance and Anti-Corruption, presents the following quote:

[The King] shall protect trade routes from harassment by courtiers, state officials, thieves and frontier guards...[and] frontier officers shall make good what is lost... Just as it is impossible no to taste the honey or poison that one may find at the tip of one's tongue, so it is impossible for one dealing with government funds not to taste, at least a little bit, of the King's wealth.

—From the treatise *The Arthashastra*, by Kautilya (chief minister to the King in ancient India), circa 300 B.C. - 150 A.D.

Along with its primordial nature, corruption is now considered a global issue. This illicit acquisition of personal wealth or power has been well verified in every society on earth, from the banks of the Congo River to the palace of the Dutch royal family, from Japanese politicians to Brazilian bankers to the New York City police department (Coolidge & Rose-Ackerman, 1997).

Whenever government officials, or those in power, use a nation's resources for their personal benefit, these resources are denied to the good of the economy and the society of that entire nation. For this reason, corruption stands may stand as an obstacle to the development of nations where it prevails, and also as both as cause and a barrier for overcoming poverty. Even so, as this review will show, there are some who defend that corruption can have some benefits.

This review will analyze how corruption might have a direct relation to poverty, and how the elimination or the reduction of corrupt activities could possibly eradicate or diminish poverty. To deeply understand how corruption has such damaging effects to a whole nation, this literature review will dig deep into the roots of this social phenomenon and analyze the reasons that lie beneath it by expounding upon its major causes. Following, it will examine the leading effects of corruption and how, as a whole, they stand as an obstacle to economic and social development and, consequently, to the endurance of poverty. A final section will present some conclusions based on my findings throughout this research.

In this review, I will focus mainly on African nations. I chose Africa for several reasons. First, because I have lived in Africa for most of my life, in a country where corruption seems to be the strongest law, and I have witnessed its effects on a day-to-day basis. Second, even though many nations have improved their standards of living and reduced levels of poverty during the last few decades with the benefits brought by globalization, Africa still remains as the poorest region of the world, and I am interested in studying whether or not corruption is one of the major contributors for this. Third, I suggest that corruption stands as the biggest barrier to many African countries that are now living a time of transition. Corruption is an important constraint both for foreign investment and for national development, and these nations could be taking much better advantage of the available opportunities for their significant overall benefit.

The Roots of Corruption

The Concept of Corruption

Even though there is a general agreement among writers on what corruption is and what it involves, there has not been an overall agreement on one true definition of the term. The reason for this is that there are many different perspectives from which corruption can be viewed.

In a more market-oriented perspective, Nathaniel Leff (1964) of Columbia University states that:

Corruption is an extra-legal institution used by individuals or groups to gain influence over the actions of bureaucracy. As such the existence of corruption per se indicates only that these groups participate in the decision-making process to a greater extent than would otherwise be the case (11).

While Leff presents corruption almost as a facilitator and an enhancer of power to those who practice it, Carl Friedrich (1963) takes a different approach, stressing how corruption stands as a destructive factor to the interest of the public:

The pattern of corruption can be said to exist whenever a power holder who is charged with doing certain things, i.e., who is a responsible functionary or office holder, is by monetary or other rewards not legally provided or induced to take actions which favor whoever provides the rewards and thereby does damage to the public and its interest (168).

Corruption can also be judged through the lenses of morality and ethics. In the New Oxford Annotated Bible, in the book of Exodus, when God defines the rules that his people must follow to have been given his protection, it is clearly stated: “You shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the officials, and subverts the cause of those who are in the right” (The New Oxford Annotated Bible, Exodus 23:8). In contrast to Leff and Friedrich, the Bible views corruption as a sin and as an act of immorality.

Along with perceiving corruption and bribery as acts of immorality, Eiras (2003) and

Bayley (1966) also view it as being unethical, but contrary to the previous view, there are no links to religion. Instead of religion as the basis for his views, Bayley links corruption to what he refers to as “political prostitution”, where the civil servant sells his public office and his responsibility to the highest bidder for personal gain. Eiras, on the other hand, takes an economics-oriented approach to the topic by analyzing the indirect relationship between corruption and economic freedom. As corruption rises, economic freedom diminishes, and as economic freedom diminishes, corruption keeps rising. As a consequence of diminished economic freedom, the improvement of the living standards of the poor are undermined, thus, corruption is an unethical act, for it can greatly affect the lives of the less favored.

There are obvious points of variance among the multiplicity of definitions of corruption. However, there are some main points that can be seen in all of them: corruption always involves two sides, the corruptor and the corrupted; it implies a misuse of authority and a violation of responsibility toward a system; and it involves the sacrifice of the public for private benefit. Most importantly, from the different definitions of corruption, it is clear that its grasp extends to various sectors of society, from economics, to morality, to the law, and of course, to the lives of the people. In addition to the many different views on the concept of corruption, authors have also distinguished different types of corruption.

Categories of Corruption

Both Mbaku (2000) and Rose-Ackerman (2006) make an interesting distinction between political corruption and bureaucratic corruption. While bureaucratic corruption is mostly used by civil servants to acquire additional compensation for themselves, their

relatives, and their friends, political corruption is used literally in the world of politics, to build political parties, political machines, and to help politicians capture and retain their leadership positions.

Mbaku (2000), author of the book 'Bureaucratic and Political Corruption in Africa', goes on to identify four different categories of corruption. The first type is called *cost-reducing* corruption and it involves the attempt by civil servants to reduce the cost of regulations, taxes for example, to ultimately reduce the normal spending costs of a firm or a business. This reduction of regulation costs will then bring an economic gain to the civil servant and to the firm, or to one of the firm's employees; in other words, it will bring gain to the corrupted and to the corruptor. The second category is called *cost-enhancing* corruption; this type of corruption is usually used when the government regulations impose a price ceiling on the sale of certain products, generally for the benefit of the consumers, and it is an attempt to charge consumers a price that approximates the price of the free market price. This is obviously a drawback for the good of the consumers. The third type of corruption is *benefit-enhancing*, and it is said to be prevalent in Africa and in developing nations. It consists of an illicit boost of public benefits that is done by civil servants for the advantage of one individual or a group. The recipients of these benefits then share them with the civil servants according to a previously settled agreement. In contrast, the final category is *benefit-reducing* and it involves the illegal appropriation of public benefits by civil servants that are supposed to go to private citizens, for their own personal convenience. Once again, this is obviously prejudicial to the lives of private citizens.

Knowing what the term corruption means and having an idea of its different

interpretations is not sufficient to truly understand this phenomenon and how it is related to poverty. It is important to unravel the reasons that drive humans to take these actions, and the causes that lie beneath them.

The Causes of Corruption

When analyzing corruption, it is difficult to separate its causes from its effects, because, like Rose-Ackerman (2006) says, “many causes of corruption also seem to be consequences of corruption” (4). Still, much research has attempted to examine both sides of the coin separately. When looking at the many different causes of corruption, it is easier to group them into two different categories. While some causes can be considered generators of corruption, those at the root of the problem, others are perpetrators of corruption, meaning that aside from serving as motivators for the creation of corruption, they are also the causes for its perseverance.

Generators of Corruption

Generators of corruption are causes of corruption, which are deeply rooted in the background of a system. The central factors are: culture, history, and natural resources.

1. Culture

Rose-Ackerman gives a good explanation of how these factors are generators of corruption when referring to the aspect of culture by saying that “given the invariance of cultural variables over time, we have reason to believe that the causality runs from culture to corruption and not the other way around” (17).

Mbaku (2000) gives the example of corruption in Africa, where the people expect their leaders to be kind, generous, and caring for the less fortunate ones. The author adds

that, based on that expectation, civil servants are expected to make choices based on personal norms, which obviously creates opportunities and public acceptance for the development of corrupt acts. Another reason for corruption in Africa is offered by Ekpo (1979) by arguing that it may just be the modern extension of the old African tradition of gift-giving. Similarly, Johnston (2005) refers to the very well accepted culture of gift-giving in Japan and to how the idea of “I’m good to you and you will be good to me” is very well accepted and seen as a very reasonable thing. Johnston goes on to state that it is difficult to distinguish when this gift-giving tradition of Japan is done as an act of corruption, or just as an act of recognition to the receiver of the gift. Because this distinction cannot be made clear, corruption can easily be camouflaged through this tradition, therefore increasing the opportunities to engage in it (28-32).

It is commonly known that different cultures of different societies are very much linked to their major religions. La Porta et al. (1997) examine how religion may have an influence in the levels of corruption. The authors view Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Muslim religions to be very hierarchal which destroys the motivation for civic engagement, and, as a result, should help reduce corruption. On the other hand, when Paldam (1999) tests the impact of 11 different religions on corruption, the author comes to the conclusion that although corruption does appear to be lower in countries with greater adherence to Reform Christianity and tribal religions, higher levels of corruption are seen in countries with a greater influence of Pre-Reform Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism.

A very strong connection is also seen between culture and the main values of a certain society. Johnston refers to loyalty as a great influence to the levels of corruption.

The author examines how the sense of loyalty in many African nations grew to become an unwritten law following their tribal tradition that, “the most well-off among the villagers were obliged to help the least well-off among them.” He goes on to say: “ it is precisely this sense of loyalty and obligation that provides the starting point of much of Nigeria’s corruption” (64).

Similar to the value of loyalty is the value that people give to family. Limpset and Lenz (2000) create a scale to measure “familism” by surveying people’s ideas, first on unconditional love and respect to one’s parents, regardless of their faults, and second on the percentage of people who think that divorce is unjustifiable. In their conclusion, the rates of familism are positively related to corruption. Ekpo (1979) also discusses values having an influence on corruption by keeping a main focus on pride. The author states that great pride in the nation, in the government, or in business, is an important contributor to low corruption levels. Ekpo underlines that pride cannot be created from one day to the other and it takes generations for it to be inherent in the people of a nation (26). As Ekpo concludes, the history of a nation is also a very important factor to consider when analyzing the causes for certain acts, in this case, for corruption.

2. History

Many authors refer to the heritage of nations as one of the most important influences in the level of corruption in certain nations, especially in Africa. Different authors tend to emphasize the relationship between history and corruption when they refer to African nations because of their colonized past. Johnston (2005) justifies this belief by stating that the colonizers of African nations pursued strategies that only considered the good of the lives of the colonizers and the colonizing nation. The

colonizers in Africa “not only locked their firms and market shares but also neglected to create a class of local entrepreneurs” (39). Ekpo (1979) goes on to support Johnston’s view and adds that aside from the people from these nations feeling diminished and discriminated by the way they were being treated, they began acting in corruptive ways:

Because government was carried on by aliens, citizens developed an attitude of irresponsibility and felt obliged thwart government in every possible way, including cheating. Cheating of ‘foreign devils in government’ became admired as a patriotic virtue (14).

Blundo (2006) adds that it must also be taken into account that the colonial administration was not spared from corrupt behaviors and irregularities.

In addition to a nation’s historical background, Sandholtz and Gray (2003) add that a nation’s geography can also have some impact on the levels of corruption; the authors demonstrate that neighbor countries may share similar norms and attitudes towards corruption, and these might carry over from one neighbor country to the other as they engage in trade. Another major impact that has to do with a nation’s geography is the richness in natural resources. In the opinion of some authors, this can also be a contributor to the increase of acts of corruption.

3. Natural Resources

Authors Leite and Weidemann (1999) and Johnston all argue that an abundance in natural resources creates opportunities for rent-seeking, which occurs when an individual, organization or firm seeks to make money by manipulating the economic and/or legal environment rather than by trade and production of wealth, giving rise to corruption. Leite and Weidemann demonstrate that when a country’s GNP (Gross National Product) is built up mainly from a natural resource industry, oil for example, the level of corruption in that nation is significantly high. Johnston backs up these findings by saying:

“Governments with budgets relying heavily on oil or mineral extraction are particularly exposed to international and domestic corruption through public procurement, under-invoicing, financial fraudulent practices, dishonest banking, and so on” (36).

As mentioned earlier, all these generators of corruption tend to be at the origin of why corruption exists. In addition to these, the factors that are many times created by corruption itself, and that take part in its perseverance, are also very important to this analysis.

The Perpetuators of Corruption

Many of these factors are considered perpetrators of corruption because they can be both a cause and a consequence of corruption, in other words, at the same time that they are motivators for corruption, they are also causes that keep corruption in existence. For this reason, the distinction between the causes and the effects of corruption are unclear. Authors identify the main perpetrators of corruption as: levels of inequality associated with social elites, level of economic competition, the structure of the government, and poverty.

1. Inequality

In his analysis of corruption, Uslaner (2008) emphasizes inequality as the main cause for the phenomenon. The author says that people who live in countries with high disparities between poor and rich, get caught in the “inequality trap” and even though they are hardly ever happy about it, they make payments and engage in corrupt acts because there is no way out, it is their only option. Therefore, inequality becomes not only a cause for the occurrence of corruption, but also a cause for its continuation.

In this inequality, the ones who stand on the side of the rich are always a minority of the population; they are therefore denominated as the elite of these societies. Mbaku (2000) takes a look at the elites in African nations and how they have their part in the perpetuity of corruption. Even though most of these African nations show significant high levels of poverty, these elites are able to maintain significantly high standards of living, thanks principally to corruption. Mbaku goes on to say that “corruption has emerged as an important structure that is used to defend and maintain elite privileges” (41). The author concludes by saying that, even though corruption has allowed for the accumulation of wealth and well being for a small percentage of the population, it has predominantly impoverished and marginalized a large majority of the African people.

2. Economic Competition

Rose-Ackerman (2006) states that when government laws restrict competition among firms, profits increase and politicians are given the opportunity to determine these profits, in return for an agreed share. In contrast, when there is competition, politicians do not have as much room to offer their “services” in exchange for bribes, thus there is less motivation for corruption. Henderson (1999) supports this idea when he argues that corruption is negatively related with the various indicators of economic freedom. In addition, Neeman et al. (2003) assert that economic freedom can actually be detrimental to development because the income that is generated from corruption can be allocated abroad instead of being reinvested in within the nation.

Economic competition and economic freedom are dependent on decisions and regulations imposed by the government. Likewise, other economic and social factors are determined by the way government is structured, including the problem of corruption.

3. Government Structure

Authors seem to agree that democracy and parliamentarism are contributors to the reduction of corruption. Conversely, systems with powerful presidents are perceived to be more corrupt. Kunicová (2005) does a study of a sample of more than 100 countries and shows that corruption is higher in regimes where the president's power is spread across both legislative and non-legislative functions. On a different note, Moe (1985) brings up the point that competition in politics and a democratic system do not guarantee that corruption will be diminished. As earlier distinguished in this literature review, in contrast to bureaucratic corruption, political corruption is used to build political parties, political machines, and to help politicians capture and retain their leadership positions. Thereby, in a corrupt environment, powerful politicians can eradicate their competition, subverting the selection process. Mbaku (2000) adds that this is very commonly seen in African nations and illustrates that idea by saying: "Once government is captured, the new regime erects substantial entry barriers, making certain that competitors have virtually no chance of capturing the government legally" (37). This consequently turns into another corruption mechanism, in which the government promotes a rise of corruption and also perpetuates it, not allowing for change.

In addition, Mbaku states that in many African nations, the state is viewed as an instrument for wealth accumulation. Thus, the holders of power oppress and drive civil society to misery. This misery that society is put through is both a major effect of corruption and another cause for its persistence, and it will be demonstrated in the analysis of the final major factor of corruption in this literature review: poverty.

4. Poverty

Gray and Kaufmann (1998) state that the biggest reason for widespread corruption throughout developing countries does not come from a difference in the people that live in these nations compared to people who live elsewhere, but from the conditions in these nations, which are ripe for corruption. They go on explaining that “the motivation to earn income is extremely strong, exacerbated by poverty and by low and declining civil service salaries” (9). Ekpo (1979) on the other hand, defends that different levels of poverty influence the levels in which corruption is carried. The author affirms that when poverty is elevated to a degree of starvation in a nation, it serves as a discouragement for corruption. Additionally, poverty above that level need not necessarily be conducive to corruption, but Ekpo does agree that it is a factor that might motivate it. He goes on to emphasize that, above all, poverty is a major effect of corruption.

There are many causes of corruption and, as it has been said earlier, some of these causes are also its effects. This is the basis for Johnston’s (2005) statement of how “corruption breeds corruption” (37). Even though some of the effects have been previously mentioned, it is important to have a clear view of what these generators and perpetrators of corruption can generate.

The Consequences of Corruption

The consequences of corruption have been analyzed by a number of authors who, for the most part, perceive them as being significantly damaging for the economy, the governance, and the people of a nation. This analysis of the authors’ views of the effects of corruption begins with the impact of corruption on overall productivity and

investment, followed by its impact in the public sector and, finally with works which claim that corruption creates inequality and poverty.

The sector in which there appears to be the greatest variety of opinions when it comes to the effects of corruption is the one that deals with investment. Even though corruption is generally never perceived as something positive, unless you are taking part in it, there are actually some theories that contradict this assumption. Still, most authors come to the conclusion that overall, corruption is damaging to the countries where it prevails, affecting both foreign and national investment, and consequently, the economic growth of a nation.

Corruption: Curse or Blessing for Investment?

When referring to corruption, one generally does not assume that corruption can actually be good. Surprisingly, according to Leff (1964) and Bayley (1966) corruption can enhance the ability of the private sector to gain access to the bureaucracy and contribute effectively to policy formulation. Kaufmann and Wei (1999) call this theory “the efficient grease hypothesis” in their analysis in that corruption can improve economic efficiency and that fighting it would be counter-productive.

Leff defends this theory by stating that corruption can improve the relationship between the civil service and the entrepreneurial class. Since business owners will be granted greater access to bureaucracy, they will be given the chance to impact the policy process and, consequently, their economic performance. Also, corruption can encourage civil servants to participate more in the private sector and to become more effective advocates of the programs designed by the entrepreneurial class. Bayley adds: “in

developing nations [corruption] is an indispensable means of reconciling insufficient wage rates with the claims of traditional society operating through extended family and clan ties” (728). Advocates of these ideas often give the example of some Asian nations, like Japan, where corruption does exist but where foreign investment and economic growth does not seem to be affected by it.

Kaufmann and Wei refute Leff’s and Bayley’s ideas by arguing that it can only be true in a very narrow sense, when bad regulation and official harassment are taken as exogenous. Through a survey-based study, Kuffman and Wei show that, contrary to Leff and Bayley’s idea, managers of the firms that pay more bribes on average end up spending more rather than less time negotiating with government officials, therefore decreasing efficiency. Through their study, they conclude that there was a disadvantage to those paying the bribes as well as to the society in general. With respect to the idea that Asian nations stand as proof of the truthfulness of the “efficiency grease” theories, Wei (1997) argues that among these Asian nations, foreign investors still prefer to go to less corrupt countries.

Gray and Kaufmann (1998) state that corruption “impedes long-term foreign and domestic investment” (8). To argue that corruption is, in fact, a discourager to foreign investment, Wei (2000) deduces through his calculations that if India could reduce its corruption levels to the same levels as Singapore, its ability to attract foreign investors would be the same as reducing its marginal corporate tax rate by 22 percentage points. Habib and Zurawicki (2001, 2002) support Wei’s idea of corruption deterring foreign direct investments, and they add that corruption has a bigger impact on foreign direct investment than on local investment. Mbaku (2000) adds, with examples of African

Nations, that corruption takes a big part in dissuading national entrepreneurs to invest within their own nations due to the sense of instability brought by the phenomenon. He also mentions that corruption can significantly distort global trade on the flow of investment, in addition to enhancing illicit activities of drug dealing and other forms of internationally organized crime.

Wei (2000) realizes that if corruption reduces both domestic and foreign investment, one can only conclude that it also reduces a nation's economic growth rate. Tanzi and Davoodi (2001) provide evidence for corruption lowering growth for a cross-section of 97 countries. An empirical study by economist Mauro (1997) shows that a country is likely to achieve aggregate investment levels of almost 5 per cent less than a relatively uncorrupt country, and lose about half a percentage point of gross domestic growth per year.

With diminished foreign and domestic investment and reduced growth, as Rose-Ackerman (2006) comes to prove, corruption also leads to the misallocation of public resources.

Effects of Corruption in the Public Sector

Through a systematic study on the effects of corruption, Tanzi and Davoodi (1997) conclude that corruption distorts public expenditure away from needed health and education funds. Mbaku (2000) asserts that, in countries in which corruption has become pervasive, the cost of public goods is very much inflated. He exemplifies this by saying that, in African nations it is not uncommon for people to bribe doctors and nurses in order to get treatment at government-owned hospitals or clinics where service is supposed to be

free for the citizens of the country. Mauro (1998) and Kaufmann (1997) provide evidence that corruption lowers government spending on education. Additionally, Tanzi and Davoodi also found that corruption reduces the public investment of a country's infrastructure. Wei (2000) states that "an increase in corruption reduces the quality of the roads, and increases the incidence of power outages, telecommunication faults, and water losses" (11). Welsch (2004) brings a new aspect to the table by exploring the relationship between corruption and pollution. The author concludes through his studies that poor environmental regulation can be a result of corruption and that corruption does increase pollution levels.

Gray and Kaufmann (1998) state that this distortion of state priorities undermines the state's ability to raise revenues and leads to higher and higher tax rates which are imposed on fewer and fewer taxpayers. Mbaku also expounds upon the same subject by demonstrating how this misallocation of public resources in Africa increases the costs for taxpayers. He stresses how "Africa's taxpayers now face higher and higher costs for a civil service that rarely produces benefits for society" (72-3). The author goes on to describe that, in these countries, people must pay twice for services like education and healthcare which are supposed to be offered free of charge by the government, first in the form of taxes, and secondly in the form of bribes.

Finally, Gray and Kaufmann observe that corruption undermines the state's legitimacy. Mbaku even posits the possibility that "eventually, the department may come to totally specialize in the extraction of bribes from the private sector with little emphasis placed on performing its traditional duties – serving the public" (73).

In the end, as engagers of corruption accumulate wealth and the rest of the

population lives the effects of corruption, most authors agree that all of these causes can join together and create one major effect of corruption: increased and perpetuated poverty.

Final Consequence: Poverty and Underdevelopment

In his concluding remarks on how corruption is related to poverty, Wei (2000) sums up many other effects of corruption and realizes that they are all joined in the worsening of poverty. He enumerates:

Corruption lowers economic growth, biases the tax system to favor the rich and well-connected, reduces the effectiveness of targeting of social programs, biases government policies towards favoring inequality in asset ownership, lowers social spending, reduces access to education by the poor, and increases the risk of investment by the poor (14).

Similarly, Rose-Ackerman (2006) lists several channels through which the poor are hurt by corruption and through which their level of poverty is never decreased. First, as it has been analyzed above, the poor will receive lower level of social services; secondly, infrastructure investment will be biased against projects that aid the poor; thirdly, the poor will face higher tax rates for fewer services; fourth, their ability to escape poverty through the use of indigenous, small-scale enterprise is diminished.

Johnston (2005) clearly refers to poverty as being the main effect of corruption by stating: “The main effect was increased poverty: already-poor individuals pay more and thus get poorer, with this vicious circle lowering their likelihood of getting out of the poverty trap” (47).

Conclusion

This literature review confirms that based on a variety of studies, there is a general consensus on the idea that corruption is directly related to poverty. Thus, one important and necessary aim in the fight of poverty, especially in African nations, is the fight against corruption. But how can this be done?

From this literature review, I realized that, differently from what people commonly think, bad governance is not the only reason to blame for corrupt societies. Corruption goes much deeper than that. It can be inherited in a nation's history, in a country's richness, or even in the way people have evolved to be.

Throughout my research process, I could not help tying my findings to what I have experienced living in a corrupt nation. As I read about the main causes and consequences of corruption, the facts and my personal experience matched so perfectly that I was almost sure that all the authors were referring to the specific example of Angola. Angola is extremely rich in natural resources; it has the historical background of an ex-colony, the corrupt neighboring countries, and the numbers confirming very high levels of poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment. Consequently, and confirming these author's points, it has recently been rated as the 22nd most corrupt nation in the world by the Transparency International organization. Just like in other corrupt nations, in Angola, corruption has been a part of every-day life for so long now, that it has almost become a norm of the everyday life.

In addition, one of the findings that struck me the most is how the causes and consequences are extremely interrelated. It demonstrates how corruption is a vicious cycle fueled by a wide variety of reasons. Taking this into consideration, it is extremely

different to come up with effective ways to fight corruption. This interrelation between causes and consequences is an indicator of how anti-corruption activities are fighting for a change that seems extremely difficult to achieve since some of these causes are deeply embedded in the roots of certain societies. In addition, even the causes that do not lie at the foundation of life in these corrupt nations still seem so extremely correlated to each other that the fight against corruption is carried out against a tremendously vast scope of problems. Which cause must be confronted first? How do you tackle an issue that has been around for so long that it has become a part of people's lives?

After understanding the complexity of the issue of corruption, it is easier to imagine why attempts of fighting against corruption have generally been ineffective. My next step in my research will be to analyze a variety of different attempts in the fight against corruption in order to gain a better grasp of what it is that they are missing. I would like to have a clear idea of what these movements have accomplished and why their efforts have generally not been very successful. I believe the problem might be that these anti-corruption movements are not confronting the fundamental grounds of corruption. I predict that since corruption seems to be so embedded in people's lives, specially in African nations like Angola, true change in corruption would have to come from a change in our current political and economical system.

Methodology

The literature review was the first step in the research on the topic of corruption. It served both as a foundation of my understanding of causes and effects of corruption and as the trigger for the questions that allowed for a further analysis of this topic. The following steps of the research can be considered the community engagement part of the research. The community engagement was composed of two main sections: 1) interviews of people who are or have been engaged in anti-corruption efforts of different forms; and 2) my personal experience in Angola, in which I played a more observatory role, but which also included some informal interviews with the people of Angola.

Interviews

In the interviews section of the community engagement I was mostly searching for answers for my initial question: how can we fight corruption? In the search for answers I split my interview research into two different sections: 1) face-to-face interviews with local individuals from Providence, RI; and 2) phone interview with a representative from international anti-corruption organization Transparency International.

After growing up in one of the most corrupt nations in the world, it can only be seen as true irony that I came all the way to America to get a college education in one of the most corrupt states of the U.S. – Rhode Island. After deciding that this thesis would focus on corruption, it came almost as a blessing that I was living in such a corrupt state. Soon enough I was given the opportunity to interview two individuals who were involved, in very distinct ways, in the famous Providence corruption case of former mayor Buddy Cianci. The two interviewees were Mr. Richard Rose, assistant U.S.

attorney and lead prosecutor of former mayor Buddy Cianci, and Mr. Michael Stanton, writer for the Providence Journal and author of the book “Prince of Providence”, which centers on the whole case of Buddy Cianci. The interviews were not meant to concentrate on this particular case of corruption, but on the views that these two distinct individuals hold in regards to the fight against corruption, seeing that they both took actions to either stop or to promote awareness of this particular corruption case. Both interviewees were given a background overview of the current situation of Angola and how corruption seems to almost have become a part of the culture of this country. These are some of the main questions that were posed to the interviewees:

- In a country where corruption seems to be established in society, how do you go against it?
- Do you believe that corruption is negotiable?
- Do you believe that corruption is eradicable?
- If so, what do you believe are the most effective ways to fight corruption?
- If not, what should be done?

In order to better understand the current anti-corruption efforts that are being done right now, I decided to interview a representative of the international anti-corruption organization Transparency International. I was offered a phone interview with one of their representatives and I posed the following questions:

- What does International Transparency see as the most effective ways to fight corruption?
- What have been your anti-corruption efforts in Africa?
- Has Transparency International had results of efficiency?

- Do you believe corruption is eradicable?

The interviews came as a great component to my research, but my personal experience in Angola adds a very strong influence to the development of this thesis and to the findings.

Personal experience in Angola

My personal experience in Angola has been happening almost since I was born, and I became aware of corruption long before I decided to do research for this thesis, just like any other Angolan citizen does. Nevertheless, after writing the literature review I made a visit to Angola with a new set of eyes and ears, open to hear and notice any aspect of everyday life that I could relate to this topic. The goal of the research in Angola was to be immersed in the everyday life of Luanda and to try to pay more attention to the underlying laws of Angolan society. During my stay in Luanda, I read the national newspaper, and watched some of the Angolan television news sources, where the government and the president are constantly mentioned. I constantly observed the way the Angolans deal with each other and also talked with some of them about their personal opinions about the government, widespread corruption, and future hopes for Angola.

Findings

Through the combination of the research done for the literature review, the interviews, and the experience that I have had in Angola, I have come closer to answering some of the initial questions that have driven me to pursue this topic. What lies at the root of corruption? Are the existing anti-corruption movements effective? How can corruption be eliminated? In analyzing the main causes and effects of corruption, I have found that Angola serves as a perfect example of a country that is ruled by corruption, causing a greater damage to the lives of the general population. This section of the paper will demonstrate how Angola serves as a mirror to the better understanding of the depth of corruption in African nations. Holding a better grasp of the reality of Angola, and in general of other African nations, is a useful tool when analyzing the current anti-corruption strategies. Anti-corruption efforts have been “more noteworthy for their limits than for their successes” (Szeftel, 232). This section of the paper will expound upon what I have found to be the main reasons for such failure, and why corruption will continue to exist as a prevalent problem in our current economic and political system.

The specific case of Angola: A mirror for corruption in Africa

Angola ranks 158 out of 180 on corruption watchdog Transparency International’s 2008 Corruption Perception Index. A wide number of African nations like Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Guinea-Bissau, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Sudan, and many others stand on very close ranks to the one of Angola (this can be seen on Appendix I and II). When linking the causes and effects of corruption that were referred in the literature review to the reality that is lived in Angola, there is an obvious

match between the theory and the truth. By analyzing this link, the true root causes of corruption in Angola become clearer, also serving as a sweeping reflection of what occurs in other African nations living in similar conditions.

The literature review divided the main causes of corruption between two main categories: the ones that generate corruption, and the ones that perpetuate corruption. Comprised in the generators of corruption are the history, the culture, and the natural resources of a nation. A general understanding of these three aspects in the specific case of Angola offers an extremely enlightening view of the underlying causes of corruption.

A defining historical point for the current situation of Angola is the 500 years of Portuguese dominance during the colonial period. Authors mentioned in the literature review stress the idea that European colonizers were never concerned with the authentic development of the colony. On the contrary, colonies were merely used as a source for natural resources and labor. This applies for the Portuguese colonizers in Angola also. A great example of this was the slave trade. Slavery served as a prodigious block to the development of the African people, removing them away from their land and forcing them to do labor-intensive jobs without receiving any type of reward (Rodney, 105), and this had an undeniable impact in the current underdevelopment of Africa. In a deep analysis of the historical facts that have contributed to the underdevelopment of Angola, Munslow (1999) states the following:

Under colonialism, the aim was to ensure profits went back to Portugal and that the growing demands of an expanding white settler population were met. Little was done to provide education, health, agricultural extension and other livelihood-enhancing support to the mass of the population. (564)

In response to the Portuguese dominance, Angolans began to organize for a movement for their independence. Different political parties were formed, mostly based

on family and friendship ties (Brinkman, 197), to fight for the independence of the nation. On November 11 of 1975, Angola became an independent nation, but unfortunately 27 years of civil war followed this long-awaited achievement. Many blame a lack of Portuguese will and ability to maintain an orderly transition to independence as the main cause of the beginning of the civil war. After the Portuguese left, the three main political coalitions that had fought together for the independence of Angola began to fight against each other, striving to obtain the power over the nation's natural resources. Munslow (1999) rightly affirms that, ironically, the wealth of Angola has caused the poverty of its population (552). The civil war lasted until 2002, leaving the country completely destroyed, with an almost stagnated economy, drained from the costs demanded from numerous conflicts; and with the immense majority of the population displaced, concentrated in the capital of the country, along with many other significant problems.

The long-lasting period of instability left profound scars on Angolan society that cannot be perceived at a first glance. Corruption is a big part of it. When taking a deeper look at the effect of all the years of conflict, their connection to corruption becomes more evident. Firstly, according to Munslow, "the norm in post-independence African political culture is a 'winner takes all' philosophy" (557). A parallel idea was many times mentioned in conversations that I have had with Angolans who endured the long-lasting war period. It was often said that when living in times of immense instability, one never knows what will happen on the next day; thus, when an opportunity comes to make one self better off, that opportunity will be used down to its very last drop of benefit. Although the country has been at peace for 7 years now, this "winner takes all" mentality

has prevailed and it can be seen in the way that the powerful people of Angola are drawing in all of the country's wealth for their personal advantage. It is also seen in the way that public officials will not miss a chance to take bribes. People in Angola are forced to pay bribes to be seen by a doctor at a public hospital, to take care of an official document, or even to get their children to move up a grade in public school. On the whole, the struggle for each "winner" to take the most he possibly can, leads to a society that literally runs on corruption.

Secondly, the fact that the political parties were formed mostly based on family and friendship ties is something that is still seen in the Angolan parties of today. The practice by those in power of favoring relatives or friends is what is defined as Nepotism. Not only is it considered a form of corruption, but it is also a source of corruption since it opens more doors for those who have the power to continue to keep the power among them. Interestingly, author Adam Bellow (2003) argues that nepotism is natural to human beings when he affirms that "since humans are the social animal par excellence, it would be more surprising to biologists if humans *didn't* practice nepotism" (52). The idea that the underling cause for nepotism lies in the nature of human beings, leads to the possibility that corruption might also be inherent in human nature. If Bellow justifies the idea of nepotism as being a part of human nature by the fact that humans are social beings, and therefore they care for the ones who are close to them, there is no reason that the same justification cannot be used for corruption. Corruption occurs for the benefit of the life of one's own and of his loved ones. Following this line of thought, one can conclude that corruption is also inherent in our nature. If this is true, how is it that we can fight corruption? I will return to this enlightening point later on, but for now I will

continue to explore the specific case of Angola and its links to modern-day widespread corruption.

Analyzing the culture of indigenous Angola, prior to the colonial invasion, is also an illuminating way of understanding underlying causes of corruption. The original inhabitants of Angola lived in a tribal system in which all the members of the tribe worked together for their own sustainability. It is also important to mention that people were related to each other through family ties, which kept them closely united, living in a true community. In the book *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Rodney (1972), asserts: “In Africa, before the fifteenth century, the predominant principle of social relations was that of family kinship associated with communalism” (36). This strong sense of community clashed with the imposed Europeanized system of private property, in which only a minority has power over the wealth. The imposed Europeanized system is analogous to the idea of the domination system. In *My Ishmael*, Daniel Quinn (1998) illustrates the domination system by distinguishing two main groups in the evolution towards civilization: the takers and the leavers. The takers represent the ones who introduced the concept of privatizing food and land, and who began to dominate over the others – the leavers - by imposing their own rules. Driven by the necessity of gaining access to food, the leavers were forced to accept the culture of the takers and to take part in this new system. This is exactly what happened when the Portuguese encountered the communal system of indigenous Angolans. However, some characteristic features of African culture could not be completely eclipsed by the European. The importance of family and kinship relations was never erased, but within the system imposed by the Europeans, they were extorted into the problem that we refer to as nepotism, and created

almost a necessity for the emergence of corruption to go against it. In a deep study of the domination system, Wink (1992) states the following:

The irony is that successful defense against a power-maximizing aggressor requires a society to become more like the society that threatens it. Thus domination is a contaminant, a disease that, once introduced, will inexorably spread throughout the system of societies (40).

In the same line of thought, corruption unfolded as a reaction to this dominant system that went against the culture of communalism. In addition, we must not forget that “communalism is one phase through which all human society passed” (Rodney, 37), which might be an explanation for why corruption is a global problem.

Another aspect about Angolan indigenous culture that is worthy of attention is the great importance and power that was held by the king or the leader of the community. The leaders were acknowledged as paramount and controlled every aspect of the community. In addition, they were often offered tribute and were believed to have substantial religious power and authority (Library of Country Studies, 1989). According to Mbaku (2000), people in Africa also expected their leaders to be kind and generous, and it is based on that assumption that civil servants of today are still expected to make decisions based on personal norms. The idea of the leader concentrating all power is something that is still very present in the reality of modern Angola. President Eduardo dos Santos, current president of Angola, holds both titles of chief of state, and of head of government which allow him to have a supreme say in all three branches of governance: executive, legislative, and judicial. Moreover, dos Santos has ruled Angola for 30 years now, without holding any presidential elections. It was demonstrated in the review of the literature that the opinion of the majority of authors is that a centralized government structure is much more conducive to corruption than one that one that is fragmented. This

is exactly what is seen in Angola. The president holds all the power over the state, and even though there are no proofs that he takes advantage of this power for his personal benefit because the state of Angola refuses to openly publish government's spending, it is seen in the multiple luxurious mansions and other indicators of his lavish lifestyle that his spending is well overdoing his officially reported two-thousand dollar monthly salary.

After analyzing the underlying causes of corruption in the specific case of Angola, an overview of its main effects must be done to justify the importance of this topic. While corruption in Angola does not seem to have too much of a damaging effect on the economy of the country these days, its impact on human development and on the personal lives of people is severe.

Since the ending of the war, Angola has been taking full advantage of its main natural resources, mostly oil and diamonds, to finance the reconstruction of the nation. Due to an increasing demand for oil from foreign countries, Angola has been extremely successful in its economic growth. According to World Bank reports, there has been an average GDP growth of 14% in the last six years, and close to 18.5% in the last 4 years. Angola has increased its oil production up to \$2 million barrels a day, and the current estimate of the nation's GDP in 2008 was of \$95.95 billion dollars. However, all this wealth does not filter through the hands of those in power to the ones that most need it. A very small elite maintains the wealth under its power, while 70% of the population still lives with less than \$2 dollars a day. Inequality, as it was mentioned in the literature review, is both a cause and an effect of corruption. In Angola, not only is it one of the main motivators for people to engage in corrupt activities or ask for bribes, but it is also an effect of the corruption that goes on. The gap between the small minority that has

access to the nation's wealth and the vast majority that does not is very visible. On the same street one will frequently notice the contrast between the shiny car driven by the man in the ostentatious suit, and the hungry child begging for money.

Corruption in Angola has also lead to the misallocation of government resources. Angola suffers profound problems in the realm of public health and education, which truly affect the future development of the population. The median age of Angolans is of 18 years, and about one in every four children dies before reaching the age of five. It is truly revolting to see that while the comfortable elite is able to afford for the services of private clinics and schools, the overwhelming majority of the population is left with the terrible conditions offered by public hospitals and schools. Besides, most of the times the public will still have to pay for these services in the form of bribes. Out of the nation's GDP it is estimated that only 1.5% is invested in public health services, and 2.6% in public education. As it was showed above, the problem is not that the country does not have the economic resources to better this situation. Even though there are no direct proofs that the rest of the nation's earnings are going toward personal spending by those who have access to it, it is clear that the true necessities of the nation are being ignored and pushed aside in the favor of something else. From some of the informal interviews and of my personal experience living in Angola, I have no doubt in my mind that this money is going towards the benefit of those who play a role in the government. One common answer that I heard in regards to this issue, in reference to the general attitude of Angolan government officials was the following: "The money is there, but we (Angolans) cannot resist the temptation to put that money into our own pockets. That is the problem."

Looking at the effects of corruption in the real lives of innocent people is what truly motivates the search for an effective way to fight against corruption. On the other hand, having in mind how the causes of corruption might be so deeply rooted in a society like the Angolan one, or even in human nature, gives an idea of the complexity of the issue.

Anti-corruption efforts: causes for their inefficiency

Even though there has been an emergence of attempts in the fight against corruption, their success in the control of corruption in Africa has been very limited, let alone the success of its elimination. Through the process of my research, and my personal experience of living in Angola, I have found that the current anti-corruption strategies in Africa, come from too much of a westernized point of view, and misunderstand the true reasons for the emergence of corruption, which consequently leads them to failure.

Through my research and through the responses that I got from the interview with one of the representatives from Transparency International, I found that the agenda of international organizations controlling corruption encompasses three key components:

1. Economic liberalization, which implies allowing for a freer economy, with less intervention of the government, in which competition could arise for the benefit of consumers, also forcing a reduction in the levels of corruption in business;
2. Improved governance, meaning promoting greater accountability and transparency in government operations; and

3. Democratization, which emphasizes an overall political reform to decentralize government, to allow for competitive parties to participate in elections, and to empower the media and other a related freedoms to publicize and deter governmental corruption (Tangri, 102).

Before I began to uncover the underlying roots of corruption, all of these measures sounded like very good steps to begin a fight against the issue. However, after gaining knowledge on the deeper causes of corruption, and after looking at examples of these efforts in the specific case of Angola, I began to understand why they have not been successful. Szeftel (1998) confirms this justification when by stating the following:

Corruption has survived and prospered despite efforts at institutional and political reform, precisely because such change has not affected the structural forces which give rise to it and, frequently, has not even addressed it. (238)

To provide a better understanding of how these measures fail in reality, I will give a true example of how they came to nothing in a particular instance in Angola. Due to a strong push by the international community, the World Bank, and Transparency International for the Angolan government to hold up to its democratic constitution, Angola finally took its first step in over 30 years for the free legislative elections. The legislative elections were held to decide how the different parties would be represented in the Angolan parliament. Unfortunately, during the pre-election period, the Angolan government showed its lack of cooperation for the freedom of the press. Reports show that during 2008, several state media journalists were suspended because they had criticized the government in public debates. In addition, the ruling party – MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) – was basically the single party holding enough capital to hold a serious political campaign. While MPLA campaigns

monopolized the radio and held big events for the general population, the weaker parties remained unnoticed in the MPLA shadow. In September of 2008, MPLA won the elections with an overwhelming majority of 81.64% of the votes. Because the ruling party won with more than two thirds of the votes, Angolan law states that the new government will now be composed of solely MPLA's ministers. This outcome goes completely against the initial objective of the anti-corruption efforts of decentralizing government and allowing for a greater degree of democratization. Moreover, the year of 2009 was supposed to hold the long-awaited presidential elections, but due to attempts of negotiations of how these will be performed, the elections have been repeatedly delayed. President Eduardo dos Santos has proposed for presidential elections to be held as "partial" elections, meaning that the members of the parliament will be the only Angolan citizens voting on this major decision. If this proposal is accepted, it will simply mean that the efforts made by the World Bank and Transparency International were completely pointless, for the power in Angola will continue to be centralized, maybe even more than before.

The World Bank and Transparency International often attribute their failure to a lack of capacity and resources, as well as the absence of political will to combat corruption from government authorities. Although these problems are certainly existent, I find that they are not the bona fide causes for the lack of success of these movements. Just like I find that the clash between the European dominant system and the original indigenous communalist system is what created a necessity for the emergence of corruption, I also believe that the strategies being taken by these anti-corruption efforts are once again imposing western views that go against the cultural norms of African

society. Current anti-corruption efforts seem to neglect the cultural and historical background of African nations in their performance. It is important to remember that unlike Europe, Africa did not have a natural political evolution process that lead to a democracy. Democracy has been claimed by the west as the right way of government, but the fact that it has lead to development and a greater overall success in western nations, does not mean that the same will occur in Africa.

In addition, I would like to recall the idea that was mentioned earlier when I referred to nepotism as a natural inherent characteristic of all human beings. I truly believe that corruption can be included in this same line of thought. In our current economic and political system, there will always be an elite that holds all the power, and that enjoys the benefits of wealth more than the vast majority of the general population. Coming from the premise that humans are social beings, and as so they will always do what is in their hands to better their lives and the lives of the ones that surround them, in the current capitalist system, where everything is privately owned, and mostly owned by a small minority, the urge to find ways to accumulate wealth will come naturally, even if it requires a disregard of the law. What I am saying is not that corruption should be accepted because it is inherent in our nature. What I am saying is that anti-corruption efforts are trying to go against something that rests at the root of our nature within the context of our current system. Consequently, that can only lead to failure because it is not negotiable unless our current system is changed.

I have found anticorruption efforts to be analogous to the attempts that many parents make into stopping their children into engaging in teenage sex. It is commonly known that our natural sexual desires begin to emerge in our teenage years, and no matter

how many advices are given by the parents, most people still engage in their first sexual experiences during their teenage years. Hasty (2005) goes as far as saying that putting barriers on corruption will only increase the desire to engage in it, and he describes it in a way that is alluding my analogy of teenage sex:

By criminalizing sociality and pleasure in the realm of the state, the global apparatus of anticorruption only serves to provoke the sociocultural desires it aims to eradicate and ultimately fetishes the pleasures of corruption as locally desirable and politically legitimate. (272)

Nevertheless, it is important to remark that anticorruption efforts have brought some positive results. Even though they have not been able to eradicate corruption, they can still be used to alleviate corruption. Most importantly, anticorruption movements have allowed for a spread of awareness of the topic of corruption, and this is always an important the first step to take when tackling any social issue – bring awareness to it. Transparency International has come up with the Corruption Perception Index, which measures the perceived level of public-sector corruption in each nation of the world. This index is now published everywhere and has become an influent figure for decision-making of international companies and organizations before getting involved in investments or projects in a foreign country.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, I have come to the final conclusion that corruption is not negotiable, and that within our current economic and political system, corruption cannot be eradicated. Even though it is difficult to come up with solutions to a problem that is permanent in our society, I will divide my conclusion into two different sections. The first one will expound upon what can be done to alleviate corruption within the context that we are living in today. The second will look into a possible elimination of corruption through a drastic systematic change.

Alleviating corruption

Although I have come to the conclusion that corruption cannot be eliminated within our current system, I still believe that efforts can, and should be made for corruption to be alleviated. It is important to keep in mind, however, that this is not a true solution to the problem of corruption. Reducing corruption and keeping it somewhat under control would only mean that a larger acceptance of the dominant Europeanized system would have to occur. In Africa, this would mostly translate to a wide awakening to the values that allow society to live within the concepts of justice.

I strongly believe that the soundest effort that can be made in Africa in order to alleviate corruption must rely on a strong investment in education. Although the evidence of the effects of this measure would only be seen in the long run, through education the values of honesty and sense of justice can be emphasized to a degree to which there will not be an imperative need to impose punishments and strict restrictions on corruption.

I remember watching a video about an anticorruption effort being made in Indonesia which was started in public middle schools and high schools. An enlightening experiment was put into practice in these schools. The school's convenience store, where students were allowed to buy snacks and drinks, was left without anyone present at the cash register. Consequently, the store relied solely upon the good values of the students to leave the correct amount of change for each item that they took from the store. I think this is an extraordinary example of shaping young citizens into building strong values that will stop them from engaging in corruption in the future.

Although education can have a strong power in shaping people's values, it cannot be forgotten that as long as there is a small minority holding the power and most of the existing wealth, and along with that a vast majority that does not get any type of access to such wealth, there will always exist a sense of injustice and a natural urge to better one's life, with no regard to the rules of the system. This can be associated to the concept of "the bubble" introduced in the book *Necessary Revolution* (Senge, 2008). The idea of "the bubble" is that two realities will develop, one inside the bubble and one outside. The more the bubble grows, the more the people are drawn into it. I believe this is what ultimately occurs with corruption in Angola and in Africa. As people felt the necessity to go against the system, the bubble of corruption began to emerge. Seeing the benefits that may come with corruption, more and more people began to join the trend, and the result is the current corrupt society that Angola has turned into. The theory goes on predicting:

After generations, it becomes hard to even imagine an alternative way of living outside the bubble. But at some point the tensions and inconsistencies between life inside the bubble and the larger reality outside of it must be resolved (35).

It is my also my prediction that accepting corruption as a part of society will reach its tipping point, for it is not a sustainable way of living in harmony within a society. It is for this reason that I must look into the more realistic view of seeing corruption as an un-negotiable problem. As I have mentioned numerous times before, within our current system corruption is ineradicable, which is why I must look into the possibility of a drastic systematic change.

Necessary System Change

As it was mentioned above in the “bubble” analogy, corruption will reach a point of depletion, unless a systematic change occurs. Unfortunately I do not have a final solution for exactly what our current system should be transformed into. All that I know is that it would have to be conducive to man’s natural compulsion to care for the self and for the loved ones that surround him, in a way that this would not go against the law or be labeled as corruption. Daniel Quinn (1999) is an advocate for systematic change as a solution to many of the World’s current problems, including poverty and the damage of the environment. However, I have seen the solution to the problem of corruption in many of his writings. Correspondent to my view of setting up a system that allows for the natural pursuit of human relations, Quinn constantly stresses the idea that “when things work, the forces that *make* them work are invisible” (11).

One possibility that could encompass the redesign of our system would be to adapt some of the concepts of indigenous Angola, or even of current small tribal communities that still exist in modern Angola. Tribalism tends to have a very negative connotation to chauvinism, but as Quinn puts it “From the point of view of ethnology or

evolutionary biology (...) the success of human tribes is no more an idealization than the success of bison in herds or whales in pods” (12). The truth is that while living in a communalist system, Angolans enjoyed the benefits of living in a tight community that worked together for its own sustainability. The benefits range from feeling secure within the sense of family provided by the community, to not having any necessity to engage in corruption for everything is owned collectively. It is not a coincidence that humans lived harmoniously in communal societies for centuries before they were dominated by the “taker’s” culture of civilization and everlasting growth.

In reality, it is extremely hard to imagine life in a completely different system from the one that we are currently living in. More difficult to imagine is how the transition into a new system would occur. I honestly cannot imagine such change occurring without the use of violence. Seeing that there are a number of people who greatly benefit from the system that we currently live in, and also understanding that adapting to a completely different reality would be difficult for all of us, a systematic change seems like an impracticality.

Along the four years of being a global studies student, I was introduced to a number of ways through which real change can occur. Two of them stick out to me as possibilities to a transformation of our current system. Firstly, the idea of reaching a tipping point, which was firstly introduced me through the writings of Malcom Gladwell (2000). Gladwell suggests that the “the Tipping Point is the moment of critical mass, the threshold, the boiling point” (12) that triggers a reaction from the population. Secondly, Atkisson (1999) presents the idea that innovation can be sparked by what she refers to as “Change Agents” (182). I believe that a prime example of a change agent was Ghandi

who peacefully fought for the independence of India. I believe that real change could occur either when corruption reaches its 'tipping point' or when another Gandhi is born for the advocacy of a more sustainable way of life that is in agreement with the natural characteristics of human beings.

As with many other global issues, I come out of this long research process without any specific solutions or answers for the problem of corruption. Nonetheless, I have gained a rich knowledge in this topic and I will forever continue to search for practical solutions for this issue. As I plan my return to Angola after graduation, I will forever remain outside of the corruption 'bubble' and will continue to advocate for a change. Keeping my eyes and ears open, I will await the moment of the 'tipping point' or of the arrival of an African Gandhi.

Appedix I
2008 Corruption Perception Índex in Africa

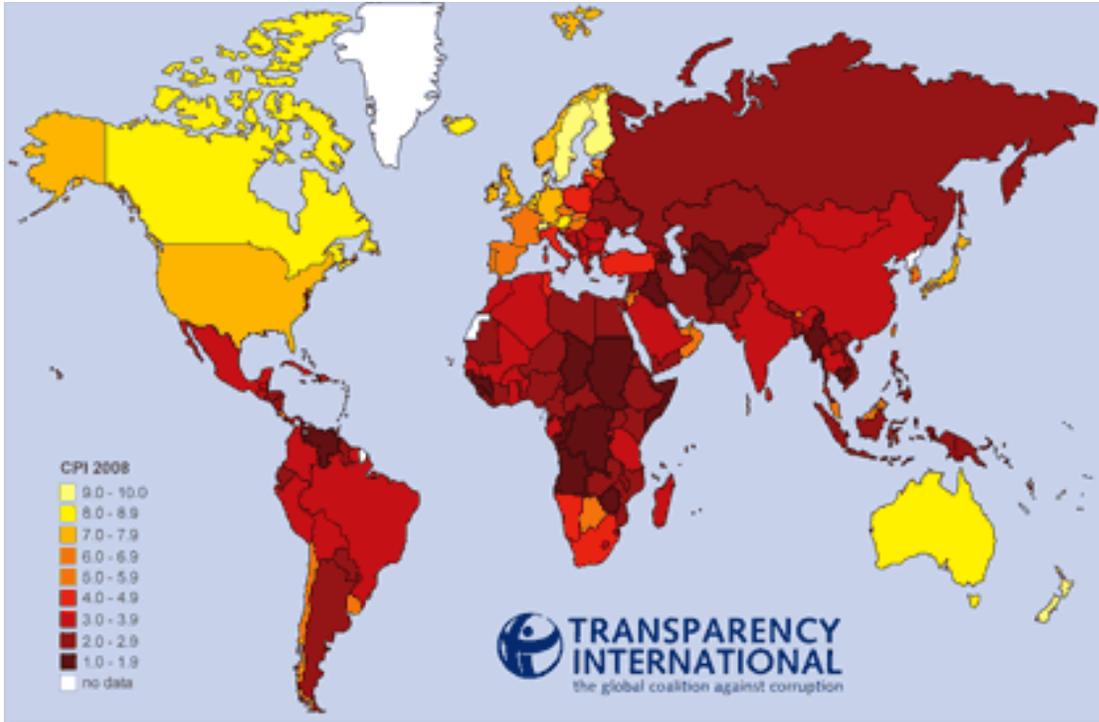
Country Rank	Country	2008 CPI Score	Confidence Range
1	Qatar	6.5	5.6 – 7.0
2	Botswana	5.8	5.6 - 7.
3	Cape Verde	5.1	3.4 – 5.6
4	South Africa	4.9	4.5 – 5.1
5	Seychelles	4.8	3.7 – 5.9
6	Namibia	4.5	3.8 – 5.1
7	Tunisia	4.4	3.5 – 5.5
8	Ghana	3.9	3.4 – 4.5
9	Swaziland	3.6	2.9 – 4.3
10	Burkina Faso	3.5	2.9 – 4.2
10	Marrocos	3.5	3.0 – 4.0
11	Madagascar	3.4	2.8 – 4.0
11	Senagal	3.4	2.9 – 4.0
12	Algeria	3.2	2.9 – 3.4
12	Lesotho	3.2	2.3 – 3.8
13	Benin	3.1	2.8 – 3.4
13	Gabon	3.1	2.8 – 3.3
13	Mali	3.1	2.8 – 3.3
14	Djibouti	3.0	2.2 – 3.3
14	Rwanda	3.0	2.7 – 3.2
14	Tanzania	3.0	2.5 – 3.3
15	Malawi	2.8	2.4 – 3.1
15	Mauritania	2.8	2.2 – 3.7
15	Niger	2.8	2.4 – 3.0
15	Zambia	2.8	2.5 – 3.0
16	Nigeria	2.7	2.3 – 3.0
16	São Tome and Príncipe	2.7	2.1 – 3.1
16	Togo	2.7	1.9 – 3.7
17	Eritrea	2.6	1.7 – 3.6

17	Ethiopia	2.6	2.2 – 2.9
18	Liberia	2.4	1.8 – 2.8
19	Cameroon	2.3	2.0 – 2.7
20	Kenya	2.1	1.9 – 2.4
21	Central África Republic	2.0	1.9 – 2.2
21	Cote d'Ivoire	2.0	1.7 – 2.5
22	Angola	1.9	1.5 – 2.2
22	Burundi	1.9	1.5 – 2.3
22	Congo, Republic	1.9	1.8 – 2.0
22	Gambia	1.9	1.5 – 2.4
22	Guinea-Bissau	1.9	1.8 – 2.0
22	Congo, Republic	1.9	1.8 – 2.0
22	Gambia	1.9	1.5 – 2.4
22	Guinea-Bissau	1.9	1.8 – 2.0
22	Sierra Leone	1.9	1.8 – 2.0
23	Zimbabwe	1.8	1,5 – 2.1
24	Congo, Democratic Republic	1.7	1.6 – 1.9
25	Chad	1.6	1.5 – 1.7
25	Guinea	1.6	1.3 – 1.9
25	Sudan	1.6	1.5 – 1.7
26	Somalia	1.0	0.5 – 1.4

22	Sierra Leone	1.9	1.8 – 2.0
23	Zimbabwe	1.8	1,5 – 2.1
24	Congo, Democratic Republic	1.7	1.6 – 1.9
25	Chad	1.6	1.5 – 1.7
25	Guinea	1.6	1.3 – 1.9
25	Sudan	1.6	1.5 – 1.7
26	Somalia	1.0	0.5 – 1.4

Appendix II

World Map of Corruption Perception Index



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