

Bureaucratic Corruption in Zimbabwe: Causes and Magnitude of the Problem

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Résumé: *Après 1980, le Zimbabwe indépendant voit se développer une petite bourgeoisie. Mais le viol de l'éthique politique permis par une domination politique et administrative attira la critique et l'oppression populaire ainsi que des enquêtes et condamnations par le biais du bureau de l'«Ombudsman». L'auteur repère des causes économiques, politiques, sociales et culturelles à la corruption; il suggère la création d'une commission permanente, l'amélioration des conditions de travail, des procédures de gestion rigoureuses et la réduction des subventions du gouvernement, pour palier ses méfaits.*

Introduction

Just over fourteen years since the attainment of national independence, Zimbabwe has, become just like any other African or Third World country — riddled with the over-familiar problem of unethical conduct among public officials. Like many former colonies, Zimbabwe inherited a Western public administrative system, complete with the usual characteristics such as hierarchy, departmentalism, code of conduct for public servants and various pieces of legislation for the handling of misconduct, corruption and unethical behaviour. None of these elements, however, succeeded in preventing the successors of colonial administrators and public figures from being corrupt in former colonies which attained independence much earlier than Zimbabwe; they have since failed to prevent the same behaviour among Zimbabwe's public officials.

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the problem of bureaucratic corruption in Zimbabwe, and to discuss the various mechanisms that have been devised and utilised in dealing with the problem. The paper will also discuss the various possible causes of bureaucratic corruption in Zimbabwe, albeit briefly, since these are largely the same as in several other countries of comparable stature or politico-socio-economic setting. Finally, the paper will propose a few solutions to the problem of bureaucratic corruption in Zimbabwe.

This paper proceeds from the basic assumption that in a neo-colonial setting such as Zimbabwe, bureaucratic corruption is purposed to serve those

social, cultural and economic objectives of its perpetrators which would otherwise not be attainable. To a considerable extent, these objectives are dictated by the nature of the ruling elite and the prevailing socioeconomic conditions of a given polity. The paper is primarily based on a study of various public sector documents, media reports, court records and observation. Materials dealing with this rather sensitive issue are not easily made available to researchers, especially by public servants who may fear that they may be exposed or victimised in some way should they be found out to have released such information. It was almost impossible to find any public official who would agree to be interviewed on this present subject matter, and the few who agreed to be interviewed generally provided responses of little value to the study.

Literature Review

This study makes no distinction between unethical acts committed by political figures and those committed by public administrators and public sector officials. Thus the term 'bureaucratic corruption' will be used in this study to refer to both these kinds of misconduct. To the extent that considerable studies have been done on the present subject (Caiden and Caiden 1977) this study will only review a few selected works which seem to be relevant to the Zimbabwe case. Bureaucratic corruption is generally defined as the use (or abuse) of public office for personal gains or advantage at the expense of the public good, and in violation of established principles, regulations and ethical considerations. Dwivedi (1978) suggests:

A problem of ethics in the public service may be said to exist whenever public servants, individually or collectively use positions (or give appearance of doing so) in a way which compromises public confidence and trust because of conflicts of loyalties or as a result of attempts to achieve some form of private gain at the expense of public welfare or common good.

Noting that authorities have offered many definitions of bureaucratic corruption, Jabbra and Jabbra (1983) assert that despite the diversity of these definitions, they have a common denominator:

the use of public office with its paraphernalia of prestige, influence and power, in order to make private gains, which need not be monetary, 'in breach of laws and regulations nominally in force.

They further contend that this violation of established regulations is consistent with societally founded and supported patterns of behaviour and attitudes obtaining in Third World countries. This contention, obviously, assumes that there are no similar violations of established rules and regulations in non-Third World societies, which is fallacious, errant and

mischievous. Tunde Agarah (1990) rightly points out that, whether developed or developing, no bureaucracy is free of corruption.

With specific reference to Africa, Ekhomu defines bureaucratic corruption as:

...the direct or inadvertent thwarting of the implementation process through either the accepting or asking for a bribe, suboptimal utilisation of available resources due to selfish motivations, and performance or non-performance of one's official duties with the view of achieving a private end which does not directly aggregate into community good (Aina 1982).

Given these few definitions of bureaucratic corruption, it is possible to identify a number of selected characteristics of this 'conspiracy against the people' (Aina 1982) in relation to the specific case of Zimbabwe. First, it is necessary to point out that for the purpose of this study, bureaucratic corruption is considered to be a problem at virtually all levels of public administration—local government, national ministries and departments, parastatals and political structures. Second, this study rejects as necessarily over-simplified and over-generalised, the notion that in Africa, abuse of public office for personal benefit is regarded as acceptable conduct (Jabbara and Jabbara 1983:132). If this were in the least correct, there would not have been any public outcry against such behaviour. On the contrary, recent developments throughout the continent of Africa have not only resulted in the demand for democracy, a key factor in public accountability, but have also resulted in the overthrow of some of the most notoriously corrupt leaders and public officials. There is danger in misconstruing public inaction, lethargy or even debility in the face of bureaucratic corruption as benevolence towards such behaviour. Indeed, a Senior Policy Seminar held in Arusha, by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Association of Public Administration and Management (AAPAM), Tanzania in 1991 observed:

The problem of ethics and accountability in African public services is more of an illusion. We must in particular be wary of the tendency to cast Africa in the worst possible light, especially by our colonial and post-colonial mentors. African institutions, societies, and behaviours are regarded as imperfections. The judgements on the African public services is influenced by this negative conception of Africa. However, this conception has grown out of the misunderstanding of the context and historical reality of Africa. Historically, the Western form of political domination did not succeed in Africa. The State as an institution existed parallel to other traditional structures. The situation did not change with independence. The state has thus remained alien. The alienation of the State from society led to a crop of informal polities parallel to and competitive with the State.

The state is, largely personalised or privatised in most African countries. It therefore relies heavily on the use of raw force (ECA and AAPAM 1991) to maintain some resemblance of 'stability' or 'peace' thereby making it extremely difficult for civil society to organise and take action against corrupt leaders. Traditional norms and values are thus extended into this public domain whenever those in power feel that doing so will be of benefit to them socially, politically and economically. The seeming appeal to cultural and traditional values must therefore, be understood to be an expedient means of attaining access to scarce resources, whether they be political, financial or social benefits.

The third aspect or characteristic of bureaucratic corruption which needs consideration in this study is its relationship with prebendal politics, normally considered under the notion of patron-client relationships which:

...may be defined as a special case of dyadic (two persons) ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher socioeconomic status (patron) uses his own influence and resources to provide protection and/or benefits for a person of a lower status (client), who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services to the patron (Jabbara and Jabbara 1983:133).

The assumption that the patron is of a higher socioeconomic status than the client does not always obtain, especially in situations where reciprocity is among corrupt public officials probably operating in different organisations or sectors of the public domain. The extent to which patron-client relationships promote and exacerbate bureaucratic corruption, in every society, can however, not be disputed. To project it as a phenomenon typical of African and Third World societies, which are alleged to have '...a very poorly developed social conscience, for which personal profit and private loyalty take precedence over public duty' (Jabbara and Jabbara 1983:133), is tantamount to simplistic over-generalisation bordering on ethnic chauvinism.

The fourth and final aspect of bureaucratic corruption that will be noted in this paper is its close link with, and implications for social formation in a given polity. In a study of bureaucratic corruption in Zaire, David Gould (1980) contends that corruption cannot be understood outside of the context of a given society:

...i.e. the 'system of social relations in which individuals live, work and struggle'. The fluctuations and evolution of these relations, the status of the political conjuncture, will determine the meaning, the form, the role, and the intensity of the phenomenon of corruption.

Thus the political setting is as important for the understanding of the causes, magnitude and consequences of bureaucratic corruption in Zimbabwe, as

anywhere else. This is closely linked to the third factor discussed above, which perceives bureaucratic corruption as necessarily a resource resorted to for selfish purposes of survival and self-enrichment at the expense of the larger society. In a neocolonial setting like Zimbabwe, bureaucratic corruption has to be viewed as, not only a means for capital accumulation by the emergent petit bourgeoisie, but also as a conduit through which some of the objectives of international capital can be facilitated by the comprador class. Regarding Zaire, Gould (1980) aptly notes:

Independence brought about a major change, in that direct exploitation was transformed into neocolonialism. Subtlety and ruse replaced open, foreign domination and brutality. In the new context, corruption came into its own as one of the most efficient appendages of post-colonial capitalism. For the international bourgeoisie with interests in Zaire, corruption serves as a mechanism for puncturing local surplus and at the same time as a pipeline for facilitating accumulation at the centre for the local bourgeoisie, corruption allows the consolidation of both its economic base and its percentage in the process of sharing the international profits from Zaire, and at the same time of its political power over the masses through domination of the political process.

Thus, in Gould's view, corruption and underdevelopment are dialectically related in that the international capitalists and local petty bourgeoisie's accumulation of wealth through unethical means, essentially, results in the impoverishment of the masses and the nation as a whole in a neocolonial state (Gould 1980:7). To what extent then can it be demonstrated that the four characteristics of bureaucratic corruption discussed above are pertinent to Zimbabwe? It is the contention of this present paper that although the extent of the corruption problem in this country has not yet reached the phenomenal levels, '...where wrongdoing has become the norm, and accepted behaviour necessary to accomplish organisational goals' (Agarah 1990:30), the predilection certainly exists; it is only a matter of time.

Extent of Bureaucratic Corruption in Zimbabwe

The advent of national independence in Zimbabwe brought into power an avaricious petit bourgeoisie which had spent some ten to thirteen years in prison, exile or simply outside the country during the liberation struggle. The ideology of the liberation struggle had been projected as socialism which was assumed to be more appropriate for the new Zimbabwe society, unlike the colonial capitalist system which had resulted in, *inter alia*, the oppression, exploitation and subjugation of the masses and other natural resources of Zimbabwe. The white settler community and international capital had, over the ninety years of colonialism, made good their stay and domination of all forms of power and access to resources. The Lancaster House Constitution (LHC) of 1979 sought to protect the interests of the

minority and international capital by preventing rapid nationalisation of key elements of the economy such as land, mines, industry and other forms of private property. The LHC further sought to promote, or at least, maintain the pre-independence social formation by requiring that policies for reconciliation between black and white, the victors and the vanquished, the *haves* and the *have nots* be adopted by the new nation.

This, however, did not prevent the emergent petit bourgeoisie from making a sprint for the national coffers. Having lost so much time 'in the bush', the new rulers devised all kinds of ways of getting rich quickly. Their integration into the hitherto 'whites only' socioeconomic fabric, by virtue of their political and bureaucratic positions, resulted in the creation of what a local analyst calls the *nouveau riches*, who became part of the 4% who own 90% of all the wealth in Zimbabwe (SAPEM 1990:2). As early as 1984, in the light of increasing bureaucratic corruption among even the party faithful, the ruling party drew up a 'Leadership Code' with the purpose of:

...trying to prevent the drift of those in power towards establishing themselves as part of the bourgeoisie and thus with an interest in maintaining the existing socioeconomic order (Stoneman and Cliffe 1989:81).

This was, however, done too late since most of the top leaders had already acquired considerable wealth through devious means. Indeed, the magnitude of bureaucratic corruption reached such heights that the press began to expose some of it: university students demonstrated against it; and, the President was forced, by public outcry, to take some action:

The rise of corruption and self-aggrandisement among the politico-administrative leadership was well documented and exposed in the media. It culminated in the appointment, in January, 1989, of the Commission of Inquiry into the Distribution of Motor Vehicles, popularly known as the Sandura Commission. This Commission was so successful in its work that it was re-commissioned for another round of investigations into the same subject. The results of this Commission include: the resignation of several politicians and top civil servants, the trial of several individuals, and the imprisonment of at least one former minister (Makumbe 1990:179-89).

All in all (see Table 1), the Commission investigated nine ministers, one Provincial Governor, four Members of Parliament (MPs), seventeen top level public servants (including army chiefs), and six businessmen.¹ This

1 The six business-people were assisted by, at least, two politicians and three top public officials to obtain vehicles in violation of public ethics.

clearly underlines the fact that only those who had the political leverage had been able to take advantage of the special privileges provided for top public officials, to purchase vehicles directly from assemblers, as a shortcut to wealth accumulation. Indeed, some of the vehicles concerned were purchased in the name of the ruling Party.

Table 1: Illegal Purchase and Resale of Motor Vehicles

Catagory Investigated	Politicians	Public Servants	Business People	Total
Individuals	14	17	6	37
Vehicles	39	31	18	88

Source: Compiled from Sandura Commission Reports

The whole exercise was turned into a mere charade when the first minister convicted as a result of this investigation was pardoned by the President after spending only one night in prison. Further the Attorney General (AG) dropped all charges against the other ministers and MPs on the pretext that should they be convicted they will be pardoned by the President. It was generally believed that the AG may have been given 'appropriate' instructions to this effect, especially after one of the ministers had allegedly committed suicide.

This did not, however, put an end to bureaucratic corruption in Zimbabwe. It simply made the bureaucrats more circumspect in the execution of their aberrant exploits. The national police disclosed in October, 1992 that the Zimbabwe Government (ZG) had lost a total of Z\$14.6 million (US\$3 million) in the previous twelve months due to theft and fraud by public officials:

During the same period, 26 cases of corruption were reported in Government institutions in which more than \$739.000 was received by some of the employees as bribes...[a total of] 350 cases of fraud had been reported. Cases of fraud and corruption were reported throughout the country and they involved junior and senior officers (The Herald 1992).

The gravity of the matter is further underlined by the fact that some members of the police force are also involved in this depravity. At one time, virtually the whole top brass of the police force were undergoing trial for several unrelated charges. They were fifteen (15):

Acting Commissioner of Police:	Contravention of the Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA);
Senior Assistant Commissioner:	PCA two charges, plus charges of theft by conversion;
Senior Assistant Commissioner:	Parks and Wildlife Act, plus attempt to deviate the course of justice;
Police Inspector:	Parks and Wildlife Act, plus attempt to deviate the course of justice;
Police Inspector:	Parks and Wildlife Act, plus attempt to deviate the course of justice;
Deputy Police Commissioner:	Police Act, attempt to deviate the course of justice, contempt of court (<i>Sunday Times</i> 1992).

This level of questionable behaviour among law enforcement agents, the major custodians of law and order, is a major indicator of the rapidity with which bureaucratic corruption is increasing in Zimbabwe. Indeed, at the same time that these police officers were undergoing trial, there were charges of fraud being levelled against the AG himself:

He therefore has no normal authority to preside over the administration of justice. The nation is anxious to know what Government intends to do about an attorney general whose integrity has been publicly impinged. Zimbabwe should not degenerate into a society in which the powerful find succor and comfort in a mutual protection society (*Sunday Times* 1992).

But bureaucratic corruption of the nature indicated above is not the only problem that Zimbabwe is facing. There are also other forms which are largely internal to public institutions, or which are dealt with internally, to the extent that they escape the scrutiny of investigative journalism. Table 2 indicates some of the cases of bureaucratic corruption and misconduct that were dealt with by the Public Service Commission (PSC) in 1990.

Table 2 : All Ministries 1990: Summary of Cases of Misconduct

Allegations	No. of Cases	Discharge	PENALTIES		
			Fine/ Reprimand	Demotion	Resignation
Fraud, forgery, theft, corruption embezzlement	99	60	22	12	5
Absenteeism, negligence, insubordination, assault, inefficiency, indecorous	222	32	150	18	7
Misuse of govt., property, including vehicles	35	11	21	-	3
Nepotism	8	4	2	2	-
Violation of	28	-	28	-	-
Rape and	2	2	-	-	-
Improper association with school girls	51	42	-	-	9
Contravention of rules	2	-	2	-	-
Overspending	18	-	-	-	-
Accidents with	4	-	3	-	1
Total	469	151	228	32	25

Source: Public Service Commission.

Not all of these cases necessarily reached the courts of law. A few of these cases do not, however, qualify as bureaucratic corruption in the sense of this present study. For example, specific details would need to be provided in order to determine whether an officer who is alleged to have committed a case of insubordination may have acted in a merely recalcitrant or in an unscrupulous manner. An interesting feature of Table 2 is the large number of fraud, theft and embezzlement cases. Indeed, the number of officers dismissed from the Service as a result of these cases indicates that a serious problem does exist. Further, since these figures are of cases committed only by officers and

not by lower level employees of the Public Service, they essentially constitute the tip of an iceberg. The figures also exclude cases committed in the parastatals and local authorities. These are always major areas of bureaucratic corruption. Parastatals in Zimbabwe have had several commissions of inquiry and investigations, but the problems continue to escalate.

An examination of selected cases of bureaucratic corruption which reached the High Court and the Supreme Court of Zimbabwe between 1985 and 1990 reveals that 90% of the cases were convicted with sentences varying from five months to more than five years in prison.² A number of appeal cases made against the Public Service Commission's (PSC) dismissal of officers alleged to have committed various acts of misconduct were also examined. The majority of these cases (96%) were dismissed by the Supreme Court on the grounds that both the PSC and the High Court had not erred in reaching their decisions. Finally, court records also indicate that fraud cases which eventually reach the courts constitute more than 60% of all misconduct cases from public institutions.³

The magnitude of bureaucratic corruption can also be highlighted by the number and kinds of complaints that reach the Ombudsman each year. In Zimbabwe, this number has been rising considerably since the establishment of the Ombudsman's Office in 1983 (Makumbe 1992:103-25). While the increase in the numbers may merely be indicative of growing awareness among members of the public and aggrieved public servants, it is also likely that part of the increase can be attributable to increasing bureaucratic corruption in Zimbabwe. In his *Seventh Annual Report* (1991), the Ombudsman makes a serious attempt to educate the MPs on the malevolence of bureaucratic depravity:

Corruption and abuse of office are the most sinister culprits generally held responsible for demeaning public service. They are two sides of the same coin. Both entail the use of or misuse or abuse of public office for personal or group gain. The only distinction between them is that corruption practices, being criminal, attract legal sanctions, while abuse of office is dealt with extralegally as an administrative delict.

It is largely the types of complaints that the Ombudsman received that help to ascertain the level of bureaucratic corruption in Zimbabwe, or to find out whether the public is increasingly feeling that social justice and economic

2 Based on a selection of 40 cases which this researcher was allowed to study for this paper. Direct citation from court records is, however, prohibited by law in most of these cases.

3 This is actually an under-estimation since the researcher was refused permission to view some of the cases from parastatals and local authorities.

development, which should be promoted by public offices, are being negated. Table 3, which summarises the cases received by the Ombudsman, indicates that complaints closely related to or suspect of corruption, and those of abuse or excessive use of authority tend to have the highest figures. 'Delay or lack of responses to applications', for example, is a major source of bureaucratic corruption since some public servants have, reportedly, been accused of 'high-jacking' project proposals submitted to government for approval and passed them on to family members and friends for implementation (*The Financial Gazette* 1992).

Table 3: Complaints Received by Ombudsman - 1989

Nature of Complaint	No. Received
Delay or lack of response to applications	396
Inattention, faulty procedures	241
Negligence and omissions	309
Inefficiency or ineffective control	61
Arbitrary decisions or unfair treatment	113
Discrimination/favouritism	37
Corrupt motive or error or wrong decisions	30
Administrative excess or abuse of authority	186
Actions contrary to law	202
Unjust/biased decisions	124
Total	1699

Source: Adapted from Seventh Annual Report of the Ombudsman

The other major complaints received by the Ombudsman, such as 'arbitrary decisions and unfair treatment', 'administrative excess or abuse of authority', and 'actions contrary to law', all have possibilities of having been committed with unscrupulous objectives in mind. Surprisingly, the highest number of complaints were levelled against the Ministries of Defence and of Education. The reason for this is partly because Zimbabwe also has another unit within government which deals with economic crimes. Efforts to obtain information from this unit were actively stymied. It may be appropriate at this juncture, to briefly discuss some of the possible causes of bureaucratic corruption in Zimbabwe.

Causes of Corruption

As noted earlier, the nature of a neocolony like Zimbabwe is such that individuals who manage to attain political and bureaucratic office tend to

scurry away from the masses towards the centres of socioeconomic concentration. The deprivation experienced by Zimbabwe's *nouveau riches* during the liberation struggle resulted in their anxiety to recover lost ground by short-circuiting rules and regulations of public office, or by breaching public ethics in order to accumulate wealth. It is generally well known in Zimbabwe that there is hardly a senior bureaucrat or politician who does not own, at least, one farm. In fact, some rapacious figures have up to five large-scale commercial farms, some of which are grossly under-utilised, while the landless and displaced masses are being harassed and arrested as 'squatters'.

A possible second cause may be the demise of the socialist ideology which the ruling party had initially vowed to pursue after independence. As noted earlier, the LHC contained entrenched clauses which were aimed at preserving the sanctity of private property as a way of protecting and advancing the interests of white settlers and international capital. Is it possible that top bureaucrats and politicians concluded that 'if we cannot beat them let us join them'? The LHC's entrenched clauses, though moaned about in public by the elite, certainly suited the class interests of Zimbabwe's emergent petit bourgeoisie. The collapse of socialism internationally thus served the purpose of effectively entombing, the half-heartedly implemented 'Leadership Code'.

The third cause is certainly the economic hardships that Zimbabwe like many other Third World countries, is experiencing. The ever rising cost of living, shortage of basic necessities, and deteriorating social amenities have tended to force some of those who have the penchant and opportunity for doing so, to adopt unethical methods of making ends meet. Inappropriate accounting and reporting procedures constitute the fourth cause of bureaucratic corruption in Zimbabwe. The inherited Westminster model of public administration, initially designed to cater for the needs of a settler minority, is not able to cope with the demands made upon it by a vastly expanded bureaucracy and the various publics.

Besides, government's excessive intervention and participation in the economy has exposed the public bureaucrat to higher levels of interface with the general public than was ever faced by colonial bureaucrats. In the fourteen years since independence, the Zimbabwean government (ZG) has expanded the national bureaucracy by creating more ministries, departments and parastatals. Little reform of the internal or organisational workings of these institutions has been undertaken. The Public Service Review Commission (PSRC) (also known as the Kavran) Report (1989) aptly observes:

The public see themselves confronted by a plethora of instructions, rules and procedures, including forms. They are too complicated and they are modified too frequently... The public expressed the need to simplify and

codify the government rules and instructions, making them easy to read and understand... It will often be better not to work upon the existing forms but to design new forms.

To date the ZG has implemented only a few of the recommendations of the PSRC. In the face of increasing socioeconomic hardships, the ZG has, however, had to bow to the conditionalities of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in order to try out these institutions' structural adjustment programme (SAP). The result to date is increasing hardship for the people, and, therefore, increased bureaucratic corruption.

Lack of or inadequate supervision is the fifth cause of bureaucratic corruption in Zimbabwe. Commenting on the loss of Z\$14.6 million of state funds through corruption in 1992, a police Assistant Commissioner said, 'I think senior managers in Government should control the situation by monitoring regularly the work of their juniors' (*The Herald* 1992). The main problem with this is that sometimes it is the senior managers themselves who are more corrupt, and therefore anxious not to rock the boat in any way, lest their own misdemeanours be discovered. The Ombudsman's Report notes:

Where supervision and accountability are non-existent public officers tend to carry out their duties with minimum regard to procedures thereby exposing themselves to favouritism and partiality. Where this happens corruption and abuse of office have crept in.

Finally, there is evidence to the effect that significant numbers of bureaucrats lack the necessary training and skills to operate a fairly complex bureaucracy. The rapid democratisation of the public sector after the attainment of national independence resulted in, *inter alia*, the appointment into senior positions of individuals who did not necessarily have the requisite qualifications and skills to do the job. At the same time, training facilities have not been available in sufficient quantities thereby negating training's critical role of equipping bureaucrats with the requisite skills, knowledge and attitudes for the efficient running of national affairs and institutions.

There are obviously many other causes of bureaucratic corruption in Zimbabwe which have not been discussed in the present paper. The selected causes, however, serve the purpose of underlining the fact that there, indeed, is a problem which needs urgent rectification in the young nation. Solutions do not come easily, but there must be serious attempts at solving this problem.

Proposed Solutions

Some of these have been dealt with already, but the few that are mentioned here may need more discussion than is possible in this present paper. It is also a fact

that each proposed solution has its own attendant problems and inhibitions, or it spawns new problems which may need to be solved. The first possible solution may be for the ZG to take seriously some of the PSRC's recommendations regarding reforming the public service. Several other reviews have also been undertaken for parastatals, and their recommendations need to be examined and, if found feasible, implemented speedily. Second, there is a real need to improve public officials' remuneration and other terms and conditions of service. It is unlikely that the ZG can afford to offer public servants such high salaries and fringe benefits that corruption will die a natural death. But salaries and perquisites can be of such a reasonable quality and quantity that fairly 'normal' bureaucrats will not need to bow to the enchantment of corruption to survive.

A possible third solution may be to create an anti-corruption commission on a permanent basis. It is a well known fact that commissions of inquiry, though useful in exposing maladministrative practices, rarely ever have the requisite 'teeth' to handle cases of bureaucratic corruption. There is need for an independent body of skilled and committed public figures who will not only carry out their own investigations into cases of unethical behaviour, but will be able to invite the general public to report such cases openly or anonymously. While it is possible that some of the members of such a body may themselves become corrupt, there is also a good chance that they will do the nation some good in exposing and punishing the festering situation of corruption in Zimbabwe.

There are already several measures being used to deal with the problem of bureaucratic corruption in Zimbabwe, but they do not seem to be winning the battle. The Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee has done a sterling job in disclosing bureaucratic mismanagement of public funds. But this Committee is impaired by the lack of meaningful authority to prosecute the culprits:

The Committee has evidenced zeal and competence in fulfilling its tasks, and gives Parliament substantive reports which are subjected to extensive parliamentary debate, but a year later equally critical reports... are forthcoming, evidencing blatant disregard for the reports of the Auditor-General and... the Committee and equal disregard for the concerns of the Legislature (The Financial Gazette 1992).

The Auditor-General's attempts at dealing with financial mis-management, as noted above, have also not resulted in any solution to the corruption problem. Indeed, during parliamentary debates, portfolio ministers actively defend the actions of their subordinates rather than allow Parliament to punish them for their mis-deeds. For example, Table 2 indicates that, of the eighteen public officials accused of 'overspending', not even one was penalised in any way.

The legal system in Zimbabwe should also be urged to impose more severe sentences on convicted corrupt bureaucrats. This will be a useful deterrent to other public bureaucrats in the long-run. Further, malefactors should be made to compensate or reimburse society in real terms even if it means selling their private property in order to do so. Corruption must be projected as excessively hazardous and deleterious to public figures if it is to be diminished or terminated in Zimbabwe.

It was noted earlier that one of the major causes of bureaucratic corruption in Zimbabwe is the government's excessive involvement in The national economy. It is the view of this paper that this creates an atmosphere conducive to corruption. Thus another possible solution to the problem may be a reduction of government controls on the economy and a relinquishing by government, of some aspects of the economy to the private sector. To this end, the majority of existing parastatals should be privatised, or allowed to negotiate joint venture arrangements with private sector organisations. This must not be taken to mean that there is no corruption in the private sector in Zimbabwe. The essence of the matter is that the above arrangements are likely to significantly reduce the financial burden that currently falls on the Zimbabwean tax-payer in subsidising corruption infested parastatals which make annual losses amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars.

Conclusion

However defined, bureaucratic corruption is a malady which has serious negative consequences for its perpetrators, the government, and the public as a whole. It is, however, a universal problem rather than a problem unique to Africa and the Third World. To the extent that African and other Third World countries have severely circumscribed development and public resources, the problem of bureaucratic corruption tends to have, or seems to have, more ravaging consequences than it does on countries that are better endowed in these resources. It is not necessarily correct to assume that bureaucratic corruption is so pervasive in emergent societies because it is a societal norm. Rather, the legacies of these societies seem to play a major role in determining the role of the state in conflict resolution among elements of class, culture, social and economic interests. Thus, to the extent that the colonial legacy has defined a weak state for most emergent nations, and to the extent that, in most African countries, the state has been privatised or personalised, its role in being an impartial arbiter in cases of abuse and mis-use of public resources is severely limited.

Having lost so much time in prisons, in exile and generally in limbo during the liberation struggle years, Zimbabwe's petit bourgeoisie scrambled for the settlers' and international capital's left-overs by violating public ethics to accumulate wealth in the shortest possible time. The attainment of intra-elite cohesion, culminating in the signing of the Unity Accord of 1987, coupled with

the collapse of hitherto unimplemented socialism, essentially put an end to all forms of hypocritical governance and created a field day for corrupt bureaucrats. The pervasiveness of the problem is manifest in the inclusion into its tentacles of law enforcement agents, so that the popular police training aphorism: 'every civilian is a potential criminal' can now be inverted thus: 'every policeman/woman is a potential criminal'. In Zimbabwe, so is every public servant or bureaucrat

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