

ABSTRACT

Political corruption is found almost everywhere, but it is stubbornly entrenched in the poor countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Despite all the remarkable national and international efforts to fight political corruption, to date, it continues to plague the everyday lives of citizens in sub-Saharan Africa and the full impact of such efforts remains to be felt. Africa is still ranked high on public sector corruption and is widely considered among the world's most corrupt places. Many studies have been done which confirms that public sector corruption is still seen as endemic and so much entrenched in the sub-Saharan region. Political corruption in Africa has become both a way of accumulating wealthy and a mechanism to staying in power by most of the national leaders.

Some of the efforts made to understand the institutional roots of political corruption in order to find effective ways of dealing with it have traced it to colonial political clientelism. The emphasis has been on the colonial rulers and their system of governance as the roots of political corruption in sub-Saharan African states. In as much as the studies help us in understanding the roots and genesis of political corruption in the institution of colonial political clientelism, they have not gone further enough to trace the institutional roots of political corruption in sub-Saharan Africa. They have just gone as far as the colonial era. They have seemingly failed to trace the historically grounded roots of political corruption which is in the features and elements of the pre-colonial patron-client institution. Furthermore, they have also fallen short of showing how the colonial powers manipulated and modified these features which gave rise to political corruption.

This study therefore was aimed at tracing the pre-colonial institutional roots of political corruption in sub-Saharan African states. It concluded that the institutional roots of political corruption in sub-Saharan African states are in the features and elements of pre-colonial patron-client relationships; the occupancy and roles of patrons and clients; the resources and exchanges; normative orientations and; the core values and functions. The flexibility and informality of these features and elements of traditional clientelistic relationships are ideal tool for manipulation and an easy leeway for the development of corruption. The colonial masters took this opportunity to modify and manipulate these features and elements which then led to the introduction and development of political corruption in the sub-Saharan African states. The study concludes that, unless well targeted reforms and strategies are made to deal with political clientelism, political corruption will still continue to terrorize the many lives of the people of Africa.