

## **Dimensions and Alignments in the African Anti-Corruption Debate**

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### **Abstract**

Current theories of anti-corruption reforms in developing countries highly depend on the assumption that ‘vested interests’ oppose the interests of more progressive groups in society. However, no systematic description is yet available of the preference space of anti-corruption decision-making in developing countries. Are there consistent alignments of key stakeholders in the preference space, such as: the government, president, ruling party, parliamentary opposition, civil society, the media, (business) interests, and various anti-corruption agencies? This article presents a multidimensional scaling analysis of data on 33 contested proposals on public sector reform in seven African countries, collected in 2001. The analysis shows that important differences exist between countries in: (a) the number of dimensions of the preference space, (b) the involvement of key stakeholders, and (c) alignments between key stakeholders. Results are discussed with reference to anti-corruption policies of international non-governmental organizations.

**Keywords:** corruption, developing countries, public sector reforms, multi-dimensional scaling analysis.

### **1. Introduction**

#### 1.1. The problem of corruption

The problem of corruption is widespread in developing countries and its costs are widely recognized. A standard definition of corruption is ‘the abuse of public power for private gain’ (Heywood, 1997, 5; Philp, 1997). The international anti-corruption NGO Transparency International (TI) defines corruption as ‘the misuse of public power for private benefits, e.g. the bribing of public officials, taking kickbacks in public procurement or embezzling public funds’. Public expenditures often favour

the secret bribers of government officials at the expense of the taxpayer (Mauro, 1997, 104; Della Porta and Vannucci, 1997, 516-538). Corruption can have devastating economic and social effects, particularly on developing countries. Moreover, corruption discourages foreign direct investment and slows down economic growth (Mauro, 1997; Ades and di Tella, 1997, 499-501; Treisman, 2000).

An important element of theories of corruption is the question of how corruption can be studied properly (cf. Heidenheimer, 1990). Current assessments of corruption measure self-reported perceptions by employees of international business and institutions (Transparency International, 1995-2003). Their perceptions result in the ranking of countries with respect to impact of corruption on economic and social life, and with respect to the involvement in corrupt practices by public officials and politicians. An obvious problem with the standard assessment of perceptions is that ‘there is no evidence to indicate that those polled are operating with the same concept of corruption’ (Heywood, 1997, 425).

The causes of *corruption* in developing countries are subject to much theoretical discussion (Heywood, 1997, 426-432). One theoretical approach explains corruption from pervasive patron-client relations that undermine the proper functioning of government (Riggs, 1962; Khan, 1998; Heywood, 1997, 427). Another theoretical approach explains corruption from particular deficiencies in the political-administrative system of a country, such as: excessive state regulation (Krueger, 1974), regulatory discretion (Kaufmann, 1998), or inadequate law enforcement (Rose-Ackerman, 1978; 1999). These deficiencies are maintained and exploited by private interest groups, who acquire private ‘rents’ from public resources. Theorists implicitly assume that, together with powerful decision-makers, these interests groups represent ‘vested interests’ in corruption.

## 1.2 Interests, alignments, and anti-corruption reforms

Theories on *anti-corruption policy-making* depart from the assumption that the success of political-administrative reforms heavily depends upon the existence and political power of these ‘vested’

interests (Krueger, 1993; Rodrik, 1993; Geddes, 1991; Rose-Ackerman, 1999; Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2000). Theories of corruption are tantamount to the question how corruption can be curbed in developing countries. Some studies assert that constitution building is necessary, with a complete transformation of the political-administrative system (e.g. Mbaku, 2000). Non-governmental organizations call for incremental reforms to deal with deficiencies in the political-administrative system (UNDP, 1998; TI, 2000; WBI 1999; Kaufmann, 1998; 2000). Examples of such reforms are changes in the legal and judicial system (Rose-Ackerman, 1978), introducing competition among officials (Rose-Ackerman, 1978, 137-159; Ades and di Tella, 1997, 510-512; Schleifer and Vishny, 1993), or the creation of anti-corruption agencies (Klitgaard, 1988). Current policies of the World Bank Institute (WBI) and Transparency International are based on such incremental reforms and offer technical assistance to putting together coherent national anti-corruption strategies (World Bank, 1999a).

The theoretical concept of 'vested' interests and stakeholder alignments has profound implications for policy advice on anti-corruption reforms. For example, Rose-Ackerman (1999) and Geddes (1991) suggest that 'vested' interests can be overcome only if the political-administrative system would reinforce political and public pressure to reform, even among conservative actors. This would occur under conditions, such as: close competition between political actors (Geddes, 1991), strong civil and political liberties, press freedom, or the freedom to assemble (cf. Rose-Ackerman, 1999). The assumption that powerful interests are likely to block proposals for political-administrative reforms is part of the core of the 'United Nations Development Program' (UNDP) (cf. Kpundeh, 1998; Khan, 1998). Only if 'vested' interests are challenged by a strong 'political will' to reform, proposals for anti-corruption reforms have a chance of being adopted. Policy programs of the World Bank Institute and Transparency International likewise assume the existence of a small clique of non-reformers. In the long run, this small but powerful group is supposed to be counteracted by a coalition of reform-oriented interest groups.

Indeed, descriptive, historical (case) studies show that the adoption of political-administrative reforms in developing countries is often blocked by various groups in society. Descriptive case studies by Rose-Ackerman (1999, 202-220) on anti-corruption reforms in various countries across the 20<sup>th</sup> century and by Geddes (1991) on administrative reforms in twelve Latin-American democracies reveal a tendency among powerful decision-makers to protect their own interests. The studies infer that robust interest cleavages exist across different developing countries, which are shaped by specific historical and cultural processes. The groups in society that have the formal power to authorize and adopt anti-corruption reforms appear to be those stakeholders who benefit from maintaining the *status quo*.

### 1.3 Aim of this paper

Surprisingly, the literature on corruption and anti-corruption reforms in developing countries provides no systematic empirical evidence on the cleavages in interests among important stakeholders. Studies of political-administrative reforms and anti-corruption policy debates generally display three shortcomings.<sup>1</sup> In the first place, studies lack precision in their description of the dimensions of the anti-corruption policy debate. In the second place, studies do not describe systematically alignments between (coalitions of) powerful stakeholders in the anti-corruption policy debate in developing countries—for example alignments between the government, parties, private interests, organizations from civil society, and the international donor community. In the third place, studies do not provide a comparative analysis of interest cleavages in the anti-corruption debate across different developing countries. They are confined to historical, country-specific analyses.

In the present paper, by contrast, we apply a research technique that is normally used in research on policy-making processes in Western democracies: multidimensional scaling analysis on policy distance data. This research technique has proven to be extremely powerful in unravelling the dimensions of political space and representing the alignments of stakeholders in European policy-making and United States policy domains. For example, Hix (1999) found a ‘Left – Right’ dimension

and an ‘Integration – Independence’ dimension in data on party positions in the European parliament, collected using document analysis. Subsequent roll-call voting studies on European parliament (Pennings, 2002) and a study of EU policy-making in a broad set of policy domains (Thomson, Boerefijn and Stokman, 2003) are consistent with these results. In U.S. national health care and labour policy domains, Laumann and Knoke (1987, 320-343) found consistent cleavage patterns between proponents and adversaries of controversial issues, with the key political institutions located in the centre. The results of these studies do not point at the existence of systematic cleavage patterns between ‘vested interests’ and reform-oriented interests.

We examine a data set containing 33 anti-corruption reform proposals in seven sub-Saharan African countries: Bénin, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda, which all participated in a World Bank anti-corruption training program. The data were collected in the period between April and September 2001. The data are very specific with regard to the preferences of various stakeholders involved in anti-corruption policy-making. Within each country, substantive reform proposals and alternative outcomes of policymaking are captured in various one-dimensional scales. Put together, these scales aim to cover the national anti-corruption debate. The data provide a unique insight in the relative positions of different categories of stakeholders and their alignments in these countries.

The multidimensional scaling analysis enables us to investigate three research questions that arise from the idea that systematic alignments between ‘vested’ interests underlie the anti-corruption debate in developing countries. In the first place, we want to find out whether ‘vested interests’ exist in the African anti-corruption policy debate, as predicted by theory. If we find robust dimensions in the anti-corruption debate in each African country, this is an indication that ‘vested interests’ indeed exist and oppose more reform-oriented interests. Moreover, the fewer the number of dimensions we find, the stronger are these interest cleavages. In the second place, we are interested in the substantive conceptualisation and interpretation of these dimensions. In the third place, we test whether these systematic alignments reflect more universal interest cleavages in the sub-Saharan African countries. If we find comparable alignments of stakeholders in the seven countries, this is an indication that these

interest cleavages are a more general feature of this group of countries. We proceed as follows. The next section describes the research design, data collection, and method of analysis. Section three presents the results of the multidimensional scaling analyses for each of the seven African countries. In section four we conclude with a comparative analysis of the different countries and discuss our results with reference to the anti-corruption policies of Transparency International, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund.

## **2. Design of the study and data collection**

We selected seven sub Saharan African countries for our study because a large number of substantive anti-corruption reforms were put on the political agenda in these countries in 2001. The basis for these proposals was a World Bank anti-corruption program (World Bank, 1999b). According to World Bank experts (interviews 2000, Washington DC), these countries have been selected for the World Bank program because their state leaders indicated a willingness to formulate a comprehensive anti-corruption program, and to subsequently discuss this strategy in a number of meetings, involving actors of various types, including NGOs (for example, research institutes) and civil society. These criteria suggest a possible bias in our data towards countries that are willing to reform. Except for Ethiopia, all African countries are presidential systems, so that we are able to keep constant the institutional characteristics of the political system (cf. Shugart and Haggard 2001, 71-80).<sup>2</sup>

### **2.1 Key informant research**

In order to collect the precise, but sensitive data on the reform proposals and stakeholder preferences in these countries we applied a specific methodological approach: we conducted telephone interviews with key informants. The key informant method in the present study has proven to be very valuable in previous studies of policy-making in Western democracies and European policy-making. Key informants are asked to make an assessment of the substantive reform issues, and their alternative outcomes. These outcomes are mapped on one-dimensional issue scales, where the distance between

alternative outcomes reflects their substantive differences. Subsequently, the informants are asked to locate stakeholders on the issue scale, indicate the relative salience of stakeholders for the various reform proposals, and provide an estimate of their bargaining power. Key informants are essential for a proper assessment of these data, because decision-making processes in developing countries often have a secretive and informal nature. For this reason, anonymity was guaranteed to the key informants, and the data or conclusions cannot be traced down to individual judgments.

The World Bank assisted in efforts to find knowledgeable and independent experts in the various countries. The World Bank offered the names of participants in anti-corruption courses held in Washington. Moreover, World Bank country-experts supplied the names of potential additional experts, based in the African countries. From these participants and additional contact, a final list of experts was obtained. Experts were selected on the basis of: (a) their knowledge regarding anti-corruption decision-making, (b) their independence from stakeholders involved in the reform debate and decision-making, (c) their willingness to express judgements about anti-corruption reforms, and (d) their ability to translate qualitative judgements into numerical estimates. Of course there exists a trade-off between an expert's access to information and her involvement in policy-making (Torenvlied, 2000, 109-10). The experts appeared to have various backgrounds: members of the scientific community, editors of nation-wide independent newspapers, high-rank administrators (staff of anti-corruption agencies), representatives of national non-governmental organisations and interest groups in the field of anti-corruption and, incidentally, members of parliament.

We held 45 well-structured telephone interviews. We interviewed about three specialists in the particular domain of anti-corruption policy-making per country. Interviews were held in the period between April and July 2001. On average, about two forty-minute interviews were held with each expert, addressing about five anti-corruption issues. The experts have been interviewed by telephone, which has several advantages over written or e-mail surveys (cf. Bailey and Chang 2001, 479-80). The first, obvious advantage is the combination of a long distance with a personal interview. Second, telephone interviews facilitate the questioning of experts on a larger range of issues. Third, experts can

be encouraged to come up with substantive arguments for their estimates (see also Conklin, 1999, 423; Dillman, 1978). A final advantage of telephone surveys is the higher response rate and completeness of the data. For Tanzania and Kenya, the data gathered by telephone-interviews were validated with data gathered in face-to-face interviews during field research in November 2000 and June 2002.

A potential problem in key informant research is retrospective bias: informants' knowledge of past events is distorted by present information (Himmelweit et al., 1978). We expect that this bias is relatively small, because the investigated decision-making processes were relatively recent. Moreover, several experts were interviewed per country. This made it possible to validate the reported estimates and information across different experts, such that distributions of policy preferences and bargaining power could be compared. Additional evidence has been collected by means of a content analysis of policy documents, texts of laws and law proposals, amendments, minutes of meetings, evaluation reports, and government dossiers. The background documents are listed in appendix 1. The results of the content analyses were used to confront experts with possible inconsistencies during the interview (Torenvlied, 2000).

## 2.2 Selection of anti-corruption reform proposals

The selection of reform proposals was a comprehensive process, in the sense that this selection determines the main events in anti-corruption policy-making in a country (cf. Laumann and Knoke, 1987). An inventory was made of all reform proposals in the national anti-corruption program. Subsequently, the five most controversial reform issues were selected for further analysis. The main reason for this selection was to provide a clear-cut description of interest cleavages, and stakeholder alignments, which was not distorted by uncontroversial, or symbolical policy statements. This resulted in the selection of 33 reform issues in the seven African countries. An overview of the substantive content of these reform issues is presented in appendix 2. The issues cover a wide range of topics. For example, strictly legal policy issues refer to topics such as: to which extent should the legal definition of corruption be extended? Should the media be granted legal access to governmental information?

Legal-institutional issues refer to, for example, the legal amendment to install an anti-corruption bureau, or, its maximum amount of formal authority.

### 2.3 Identification of stakeholders, preferences, and bargaining power

Conventional studies of interest cleavages and alignments of stakeholders in policy-making focus on democratic institutions, such as U.S. national policy domains, or European policy-making. In these contexts, stakeholders involved can be clearly distinguished from the legal institutional context. However, developing countries have an absent or, at most, weakly developed democratic system. To better understand the alignment of vested interests versus a wider collective interest in developing countries, we cannot rely on the legal context of democratic institutions. In the sub-Saharan African countries under study in this paper, we observe the involvement in anti-corruption decision-making of the following categories of stakeholders. In the first place, a ruling party and a strong leader, most often a president, dominate in all the political systems under study. We assume that, together with *government* institutions (ministries and bureaucracy), these institutions benefit from maintaining the status quo in corruption and protect special interest groups. Additionally, anti-corruption reforms sometimes involve institutional stakeholders with an active role in the reform process: *anti-corruption agencies*, the *judiciary*, *audit offices*, or the *auditor-general*. Finally, we observe the involvement of reform-oriented spokesmen of the *media*, representatives from *civil society* (such as: churches, small business), and the international *donor community*, representing the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, or bilateral donor countries.<sup>3</sup>

The variables ‘policy position’, ‘salience’ and ‘bargaining power’ were measured using well-structured interviews with the expert. The measurement procedure has proven to yield informative and interpretable results (e.g. Bueno de Mesquita and Stokman, 1994; Huber and Inglehart, 1995; Torenvlied, 2000; Thomson, Stokman and Torenvlied 2003). Recently, expert judgements on party positions have been successfully validated with the results of content analysis (Laver and Garry, 2000). Each expert was asked to reconstruct the debate on different anti-corruption policy issues.

Using the structured interview procedure, issues were transformed into policy scales, and policy positions of stakeholders, as well as the location of the *status quo*, were mapped on a position somewhere in the range between 0 and 100. To measure issue salience, experts were asked to rank stakeholders with regard to the priority of reform issues, and subsequently assign values to this priority, varying between 0 and 100. Finally, to assess bargaining power in the anti-corruption policy-making process, experts were asked to rank the identified stakeholders according to their power resources. These resources could comprise: voting power, the ability to mobilise co-operation, or financial resources. The most powerful stakeholder by was assigned a value of 100. The least powerful stakeholder was assigned a value of 0. All the other stakeholders identified were placed somewhere between these extremes, where their relative distance reflects differences in bargaining power.

### 2.3 Multidimensional scaling analysis

The data collected on reform proposals were analysed in order to reveal dimensions underlying actors' preferences and structural patterns of alignments of actors. All issues were rescaled between '-100' and '100' in order to make distances between extreme alternatives comparable across the different issues. For each issue, we multiplied the absolute distance with issue salience. We did so for two reasons. In the first place, we want to capture differences between stakeholders with respect to the strength of these preferences. In the second place, this enables us to deal with the problem that stakeholders who are not involved, or have no distinct preferences (that is, they are not salient for the issue) would be otherwise missing from the analysis. As a result, non-involved stakeholders and non-salient stakeholders are plotted at the centre of the distance scale. For each country, we subsequently computed a distance matrix, containing  $N \times N$  pairs of stakeholders, where  $N$  is the number of stakeholders involved in anti-corruption policy-making. Each cell in the matrix contains the 'Euclidean' distance between a pair of stakeholders: the sum of absolute (salience-weighted) distances on all the issues. The data were treated as ordinal because distances between actors on one reform issue are difficult to compare with distances on another scale (cf. Thomson, Boerefijn and Stokman, 2003).

A multidimensional scaling (MDS) technique is a non-parametric algorithm, which tries to represent a distance matrix as best as possible in a space defined by a given number of dimensions (cf. Kruskal and Wish, 1978). Actors with small distances are plotted close to each other in the space, whereas actors with large distances are plotted far away in space. The procedure is iterative, and an optimal solution results. Because the distances between pairs of stakeholders in the matrix are based on differences in preferences on anti-corruption reforms, we can interpret the resulting space as ‘anti-corruption’ preference space. From the spatial representation we re-calculate distances, which subsequently are compared with the initial distances in the matrix. This comparison provides a measure for goodness-of-fit, or ‘stress’. An additional measure for goodness-of-fit is the RSQ-measure, indicating the proportion of scaled disparities between points in the solution that is accounted for correctly by the original distances in the matrix.

For each country, we analysed the stakeholder distance matrix and computed the values of ‘stress’ (Kruskal’s stress-1 formula) for solutions in one, two, and three dimensions. We have two general indicators for goodness-of fit. In the first place, for a small set of issues, a stress value above 0.10 indicates a poor spatial representation of the distance matrix. In the second place, a spatial representation is optimal if the addition of one extra dimension does not sharply reduce the stress.

[Table 1 about here]

For each country, we analysed a one- and a two-dimensional solution. Table 1 presents the stress-value and RSQ of all the obtained representations of the stakeholder distance matrix. With the exceptions of Ghana, Kenya, and Uganda, stress values are very satisfactory for the one-dimensional solution. The stress of solutions for these three countries reduces to an acceptable level in a two-dimensional representation. We must make a cautionary note with respect to the robustness of the results of an MDS analysis based on a limited set of reform issues. A rule of thumb for the stability of results is that the number of stimuli should be at least four times as great as the number of dimensions

of the solution space ( $I - 1 \geq 4 R$ ) where  $I$  is the number of stimuli, and  $R$  is the number of dimensions. Since the reform issues are the stimuli in our data set, we must inspect the second column of table 1. The limited number of reform issues make clear that the two dimensional solutions for Ghana, Kenya, and Uganda remain tentative until replicated in other studies (Kruskal and Wish, 1978, 34). Moreover, given the limited number of issues, a three-dimensional solution will be highly unstable and we disregarded of such solutions.

### 3. Results

In this section, key dimensions in actor preferences are derived for each of the seven different African countries. For each country we present results through a concise description of dimensions and actor alignments, and present a plot of the anti-corruption preference space. The descriptions relate to the social and political situation in these countries in 2001. In these plots, stakeholders are represented by a black dot, of which the size indicates perceived bargaining strength. In the two-dimensional plots, we have drawn a rectangular axis that best fits our interpretation of the dimensions underlying the preference space. In some countries, the anti-corruption debate reveals a single underlying dimension on which actors are divided, whereas in other countries the space appears to be defined by two separate dimensions.

#### 3.1 One-dimensional preference space: Ethiopia, Benin, Tanzania, and Malawi

In Ethiopia, Benin, and Tanzania, and Malawi the analysis shows a representation in a one-dimensional preference space. It implies that cleavages are simple, and alignments of stakeholders are characterised by one dominant dimension: the *level of reforms* implied when the anti-corruption policies would be implemented.

*Ethiopia: government dominates the debate*

Figure 1 shows how the clear-cut ‘level of reforms’ dimension characterizes the Ethiopian anti-corruption debate. The scale varies from ‘selective political reforms’ to ‘anti-corruption policies’. On this scale the Ethiopian government, which is dominated by the ruling party ‘Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front’ (EPRDF) strongly wants to uphold its power and firmly controls the formulation of anti-corruption policy (personal interviews, July, October, 2001). The government’s position on ‘selective political reforms’ signifies the symbolical value of paper reforms (cf. Rose-Ackerman, 1999, 208). At the other end of the scale, a ‘reform coalition’ can be identified, consisting of the media, the legal profession, and a few small interest groups from civil society. However, the reform coalition is not able to effectively oppose ‘vested interests’ in corruption, as represented by Ethiopian government. The parliamentary ‘opposition’ (very weak in Ethiopia), the Judiciary, civil society, and the private sector have a central position—indicating non-involvement rather than a moderate position.

[Fig. 1 about here]

*Bénin: fragile anti-corruption coalition*

Figure 2 displays the one-dimensional representation of the Bénin anti-corruption debate. The structure of the preference space resembles the space in Ethiopia: a ‘level of reform’ dimension. The scale also varies from preserving the *status quo*, versus the formulation of anti-corruption policies. Indeed, also in Bénin, government and ministries support the ‘vested interests’ in corruption. In Bénin, also a weak and still unorganised anti-corruption coalition can be discerned, consisting of the parliamentary opposition, a number of civil society organisations and the Technical Committee (a temporary anti-corruption agency institution). However, there are two striking differences with Ethiopia. First, the President of Bénin, Mathieu Kérékou, can be characterised as a hesitant reformer, who seems to mediate between the ruling party (the ‘presidential movement’ consisting of four large and four smaller parties) and the weak parliamentary opposition. Second, civil society, although

weakly organized, is strongly opposed to the government position and favours large-scale anti-corruption initiatives.

[Fig. 2 about here]

*Tanzania: shadow of the donor community*

Figure 3 shows how the single dimension of ‘level of reforms’ characterizes the anti-corruption debate in Tanzania. In Tanzania, we find again a very powerful stakeholder preserving the *status quo*: the majority of the ruling party ‘Chama Cha Mapinduzi’ (CCM) and the highly influential Tanzanian business community. At the other end of the scale, we find a coalition of unorganised civil society organisations (churches, grassroots organisations, a minority of the business community, the media) together with the donor community, all eager to reform. However, in contrast to Ethiopia and Bénin, the anti-corruption coalition in Tanzania is able to mobilize important resources because the donor community (notably, the World Bank and IMF) has an important influence on president Mkapa and the government. The central position of president Mkapa in the one-dimensional anti-corruption space resembles that of his colleague Kérékou in Bénin. However, in contrast with the situation in Bénin, a supportive minority of his ruling party reinforces the central position of the president. Clearly, in Tanzania more than in Ethiopia or Bénin, the alignment of vested interests is more strongly opposed by a reform-oriented coalition. Moreover, the ‘shadow’ of a powerful donor community seems to force president Mkapa to take a more activist position in the anti-corruption debate.

[Fig. 3 about here]

*Malawi: hesitant, reform-oriented power elite?*

In Malawi, multilateral donors and international monitoring institutions observe tendencies of increased centralisation of the power elite and a ‘crack-down’ of the political opposition (World Bank, 2000; Freedom House, 2001). Nevertheless, figure 4 displays a more differentiated picture with regard to preferences on anti-corruption reforms. Key informants indicate that on six reform issues,

enforcement organisations, president Muluzi, and the judiciary have a position in the middle of the ‘level of reform’ scale. So does parliament, which consists of the ruling party of president Muluzi, the ‘United Democratic Front’ (UDF), and an opposition party, the ‘Malawi Congress Party’ (MCP). In many respects, the alignment of stakeholders resembles that of Tanzania. In Malawi the donor community is also actively involved in the debate, which could explain the relatively reform-oriented position of the power elite. At the most conservative end of the ‘level of reform’ scale, we find a group of stakeholders identified as ‘independent actors’ by the key informants. At the opposite end of the scale, we find a loose and weak reform coalition of civil society, and the Malawi anti-corruption bureau.

[Fig. 4 about here]

### 3.2 Two-dimensional preference space: Kenya, Ghana and Uganda

In Kenya, Ghana, and Uganda, the most optimal multi-dimensional scaling solution is a two-dimensional representation. Additional to the ‘level of reforms’ dimension we observed in the preceding countries, a second dimension exists, which identifies the extent to which stakeholders are embedded ‘internal’ to the national political elite versus stakeholders ‘external’ to this elite.

#### *Kenya: hesitant, reform-oriented power elite*

Despite manifold and extensive anti-corruption plans, conflict of interests characterise Kenya’s national anti-corruption policy debate. Figure 5 shows that the anti-corruption debate in Kenya is characterised by two dimensions. The first dimension can be interpreted as the ‘level of reforms’ dimension we encountered in the countries with a one-dimensional anti-corruption debate. The powerful government aims to preserve the status quo. Less outspoken, and more central in this dimension are: the president of Kenya, Daniel Arap Moi, the judiciary, the ruling party ‘Kenya African National Union’ (KANU), the Finance Department, enforcement agency, media, and the anti-

corruption agency. The parliamentary opposition, civil society and the donor community (notably IMF and the World Bank) form a weak, reform-oriented coalition. The second dimension identifies the extent to which the various actors are embedded in the national 'political elite'.<sup>4</sup> The core of the political elite in Kenya consists of the ruling party KANU and president Moi. The parliamentary anti-corruption committee, the media and enforcement organisations are least integrated in this elite. Remarkably, although weakly organized, civil society and the donor community are better integrated than these stakeholders. The spatial alignment of stakeholders shows that the core political elite, consisting of the ruling party KANU and president Moi, is supported by a coalition of relative outsiders in their modest preference for reforms, and that the more reform-oriented international stakeholders are relatively well-embedded in the political elite. This provides a counterweight to the protection of 'vested interests' in Kenya, and an opportunity to establish reforms.

[Fig. 5 about here]

#### *Ghana: strong coalition of 'vested' interests*

Like in Kenya, Ghana's anti-corruption debate is best represented by two dimensions, of which the first is a 'level of reforms' dimension, and the second is the level of integration in the political elite (see figure 6). However, with regard to stakeholders' alignments, there are a number of striking differences with the situation in Kenya. The government, including president John Agyekum Kufuor and his New Patriotic Party (NPP) strongly prefer to preserve the status quo, and do not take a moderate position, which is reserved for the Attorney General, donors, media, and civil society. The three latter categories of stakeholders are less involved in the anti-corruption debate, rather than taking a moderate position. On the reform-oriented end of the scale, we find a coalition consisting of the anti-corruption agency, the parliamentary opposition and the Ghana Anti Corruption Coalition (GACC). The GACC is a quadripartite coalition, comprising the official anti-corruption agencies in the public sector, as well as civil society and the private sector<sup>5</sup>. Officially, the government of Ghana recognises the GACC and takes part in it. However, the empirical data clearly show that this involvement does not reflect a sincere preference to reform (cf. World Bank, 1999b; personal interviews, 2001). In this

regard, stakeholder alignments bolster ‘vested interests’ more than in Kenya. The second dimension, the extent to which stakeholders are integrated in the political elite, shows a centre-periphery alignment of stakeholders. In the centre, we find the political elite, involving president Agyekum Kufuor, the NPP, as well as donors. In the periphery, we find at one side the opposition and the GACC, whereas at the other side we find civil society and the media.

[Fig. 6 about here]

*Uganda: Power elite proposes incremental reforms*

The anti-corruption debate in Uganda is best represented by the two-dimensional preference space displayed in figure 6. Just like in Kenya and Ghana, a ‘level of reforms’ dimension is distinguished (dimension I) with the government and president Museveni as the most conservative stakeholders. The ‘National Resistance Movement’ (NRM), which acts as a ruling party, holds a less conservative position. Unlike all other countries under study in this paper, Uganda has a political system, which does not include political parties, but instead the NRM as an ‘organisation of the masses’. At the other end of the reform scale, we observe the Auditor General, the ‘Directorate of Ethics and Integrity’ (DEI, a ministry), and the ‘Inspector General of Government’ (IGG), the latter two being the official anti-corruption agencies in Uganda. Uganda’s civil society, the parliamentary opposition, the media and the donor community take a middle-coalition. The alignments along the two dimensions strongly resemble the anti-corruption debate in Ghana, where we likewise observed a reform-oriented coalition of official agencies, which opposes the president and ruling party. The second dimension reflects the extent to which stakeholders are embedded in a national power elite, and strongly resembles the Kenyan situation. Unlike Kenya however, we find a reform-oriented stakeholder within the national power elite: the Auditor General.

[Fig. 7 about here]

#### **4. Conclusion and discussion**

In developing countries, relatively few powerful stakeholders protect corruptive practices that serve the interests of private groups in society. Theories of corruption predict that ‘vested interests’ will build-in deficiencies in the political-administrative system and strongly oppose reforms. However, surprisingly modest empirical evidence exists on systematic interest cleavages and stakeholder alignments in anti-corruption policy-making. Our current knowledge of corruption exclusively depends upon the perceptions of citizens and a business elite, as well as anecdotal information and historical descriptions.

In this paper we provide a new look at the old devil of corruption. We systematically collected comparable empirical data on anti-corruption policy-making in seven sub-Saharan African countries: Bénin, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, and Uganda. We presented a more systematic description of interest cleavages among important categories of stakeholders in anti-corruption policy-making. Although the method of multidimensional scaling analysis is traditionally used for the analysis of western-democratic policy-making, we showed that it can be successfully applied to anti-corruption policy-making in developing countries.

The results provide an answer to our three research questions. Our first research question focussed on finding robust patterns of interest cleavages and actor alignments in the seven African countries. We found robust dimensions in the anti-corruption debate in each African country. Consequently, we have shown that ‘vested interests’ indeed exist and oppose more reform-oriented interests. In four countries we found a one-dimensional solution, indicating relatively strong interest cleavages. In three countries we found a two-dimensional solution, which still reveals systematic cleavage patterns, although not as strong as in the other countries. Hence, we corroborate the assumption in the theoretical literature on anti-corruption reforms that interest cleavages, involving ‘vested interests’, do exist.

Our second research question concerned the substantive interpretation of dimensions of the anti-corruption policy debate in the different African countries. Central in all the countries was a dimension of ‘level of reform’, which represents stakeholder preferences that vary from substantive reforms to a refusal to change the status quo. This dimension is clearly distinguished in theories on anti-corruption reforms. Moreover, in few countries a second dimension emerged from the analyses: the extent to which stakeholders are embedded in the national power elite. This dimension reveals that reform-oriented stakeholders sometimes are embedded within the national power elite. This result implies that stakeholders from within the national power elite could initiate reforms.

In our third research question we wondered whether systematic actor alignments occur across the sub-Saharan African countries. The existence of comparable alignments indicates that these interest cleavages are a more general feature of this group of countries. Indeed, for all countries we found systematic cleavages between ‘vested interests’ and more reform-oriented interests in the anti-corruption policy debate. However, and interestingly, there exists considerable variation in stakeholder alignments across the countries under study. Remarkably, in Ethiopia, Ghana, and Uganda we found a clear-cut cleavage between the president, government, and ruling party vis à vis anti-corruption agencies, civil society, and the donor community. However, in all the other four African countries, the president takes a more moderate position, and bridges conflicts of interests between conservative ‘vested’ interests, and wider anti-corruption coalitions. Presidents clearly display openness to reform in most of the African countries under study. This finding supports the results of earlier research in Latin-American presidential systems (Shugart and Haggard, 2001). In the context of anti-corruption reforms, we could explain the moderate location of presidents from their dependence on international development assistance (cf. Knack, 2000). It is remarkable that presidents of countries ranking high on civil and political liberties (such as Benin and Ghana) are not systematically more reform-oriented.

The measurement of stakeholder preferences regarding reform proposals could provide an indirect way to measure interests in corruption in a country. Hence, our results may have implications for the international comparative study of corruptive practices. We can safely assert that stakeholders, who

strongly oppose proposals to reform, protect the interests of private interests in society that benefit from maintaining the status quo. Highly powerful stakeholders seem to adhere strongly to the status quo, while the least powerful stakeholders appear to be eager to reform. Ruling parties, governments, and the judiciary most often resist change. Particularly in Bénin and Ethiopia, civil society was reported to be weak and numb. If reform-oriented stakeholders are powerful, they appear to be the international donor community. Although our analyses show interesting differences between countries, further research should point out whether we could obtain a rank order of countries on the basis of vested interests in corruption.

Our results are relevant to policy recommendations and programs initiated by non-governmental organizations, such as the World Bank Institute, the United Nations Development Program, and Transparency International. These programs all rightly assume that a small, but powerful group in society represents ‘vested interests’ in corruption. However, these programs also aim to stimulate a general ‘political will’ to reform, and a more general ‘openness of the political system’ in order to overpower these interests. Policy recommendations can be tailored to specific stakeholder alignments, and our approach is helpful in describing these alignments in a systematic manner. Our study shows that recommendations and proposals should become much more focussed. Examples are:

‘strengthening the specific demands of reform-oriented stakeholders within a national power elite’, or: ‘putting pressure on specific factions within ruling parties to support a hesitant president’, and: ‘stimulating the donor community to put pressure on a hesitant president’. A more focussed strategy could yield better results in the short run. In contrast, traditional strategies, such as ‘strengthening weak civil society’, have their effect only in the (very) long run.

More research is needed to evaluate the robustness of our results. We noted that the number of issues per country is limited and that consequently the two-dimensional solutions are only tentative.

Nevertheless, the data we collected comprise the most important issues of the anti-corruption debate in the six countries for the period 1999-2001. More recent data will be as much informative about changes in stakeholder alignments, as it will inform us about robust results and continuities. Research

on anti-corruption debates in more, and different countries is feasible because more countries (notably Latin-American) have recently initiated anti-corruption policy-making. Notwithstanding our results, the increasing population of anti-corruption policies is a promising development in itself.

28 September 2004

**9105 words**

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## Appendix 2. Summary of reform issues

### Bénin

1. 'Loi de Règlement': parliamentary control over the government budget (no control – full control)
2. Chair of anti-corruption agency (government official – independent 'technical committee')
3. Openness of procurement procedures (no tenders – open tender procedures)

### Ethiopia

1. Who should draft the 'code of conduct' for the media? (government- media)
2. Who should lead the new 'Anti-corruption Commission'? (government – independent stakeholders)
3. Who prosecutes the corrupt? (government- independent prosecutor)
4. Legal protection of suspects of corruption (no protection – protection through bail and evidence laws)
5. Legal enforcement of the access to government information (no enforced access – access to be legally enforced)

### Ghana

1. Access to government information (no access – full access)
2. Repeal of criminal libel laws (no repeal – full repeal)
3. Judicial strengthening (no reforms – implement reform proposals)
4. Extension of prosecution powers of the 'Serious Fraud Office' (no extension – extension)
5. Adoption of 'whistleblower' legislation to protect people reporting about corruption (no adoption- adoption)
6. The declaration by leaders of their personal belongings (no declaration – full declaration)

### Kenya

1. Powers of Kenya's 'Anti-Corruption Authority' (abolish anti-corruption agency – fully independent agency)
2. Control over parliamentary resources (no extension- full control)
3. Legal definition of corruption (exclude private sector – include private sector)
4. Adoption of a 'list of shame' by parliament (reject – adopt)
5. The amnesty issue: prosecute those who were corrupt in the past? (grant amnesty– prosecute past suspects)

### Malawi

1. Extension of the legal definition of corruption (no extension – include 'any irregularity')
2. Amendments to the Corrupt Practices Act (no amendments – adopt all proposed amendments)
3. Extension of prosecution powers of the anti-corruption bureau (no extension – extension)
4. Who should have the burden of proof in corruption cases? (the anti-corruption bureau - the suspect)

### Tanzania

1. The declaration by leaders of their personal belongings (not obliged - obliged)
2. Openness of procurement procedures (no tenders – open tender procedures)
3. Installment of a 'tax identification system' (no system – install proposed system)
4. Privatisation of state companies (maintain state companies – dispose of state companies)
5. Wage level in the public sector (no raise – raise wages to reduce corruption incentives)

### Uganda

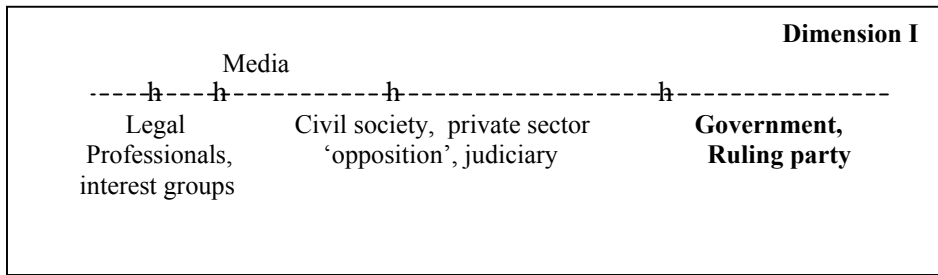
1. Maintenance of the system of 'classified' government expenditures (maintain – abolish)
2. The declaration by leaders of their personal belongings (not obliged- obliged to declare in public)
3. Wage level in the public sector (no raise – raise wages to reduce corruption incentives)
4. Independence of the Auditor General's Office (no additional independence – full independence)
5. Independence of the Inspector General of Government (IGG)'s office (no extension – some extensions)

Table 1. Goodness-of-fit of two MDS solutions

Country	# issues	Stress of spatial solution <sup>a</sup>	
		RSQ in parentheses, final solution obtained in bold	
		1 dimension	2 dimensions
Bénin	3	<b>.014</b> (.999)	.000 (1.000)
Ethiopia	5	<b>.054</b> (.995)	.020 (.999)
Ghana	6	.281 (.754)	<b>.125</b> (.904)
Kenya	5	.187 (.889)	<b>.097</b> (.958)
Malawi	4	<b>.013</b> (1.000)	.039 (.993)
Tanzania	5	<b>.043</b> (.994)	.015 (.999)
Uganda	5	.277 (.752)	<b>.075</b> (.967)

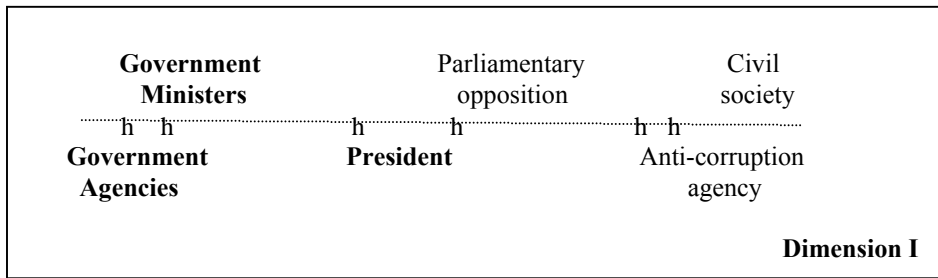
<sup>a</sup> Kruskal's stress formula-1.

Figure 1. Anti-Corruption Preference Space in Ethiopia



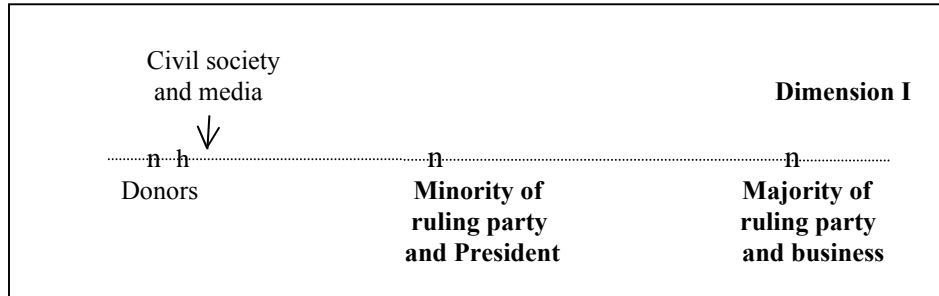
*Note.* N = 9 stakeholders; M = 5 reform issues; Kruskal's stress formula 1 = 0.54; Vested interests in bold; Strong bargaining power n n n . Weak bargaining power.

Figure 2. Anti-Corruption Preference Space in Bénin



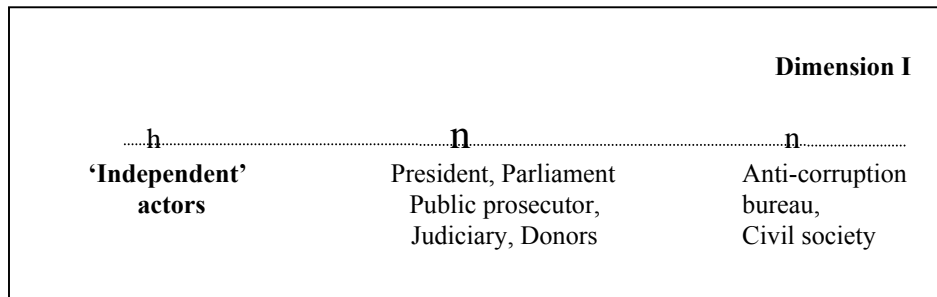
*Note.* N = 6 stakeholders; M = 3 reform issues; Kruskal's stress formula 1 = 0.014; Vested interests in bold; Strong bargaining power n n n a . Weak bargaining power.

Figure 3. Anti-Corruption Preference Space in Tanzania



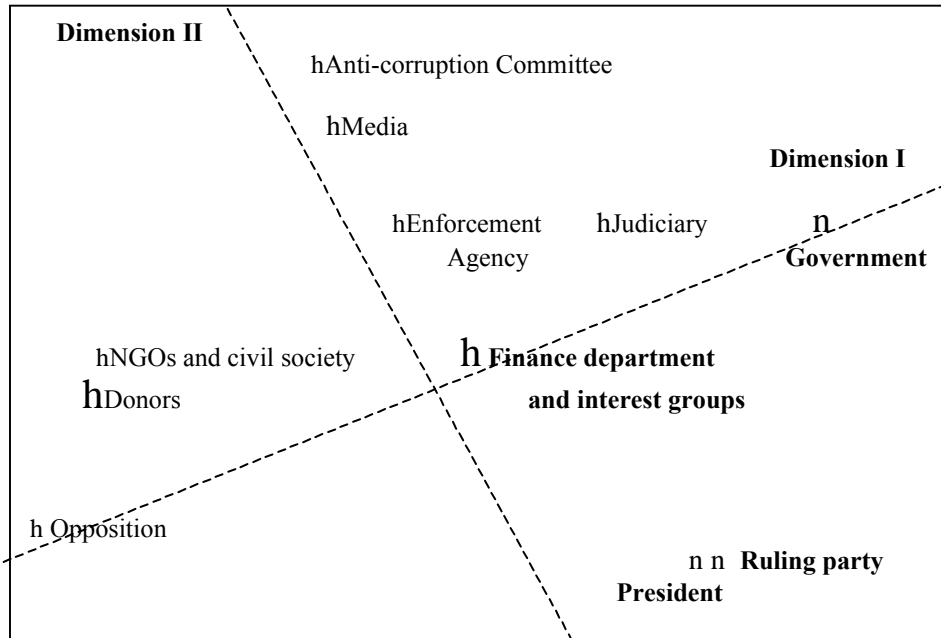
*Note.* N = 6 stakeholders; M = 5 reform issues; Kruskal's stress formula 1 = 0.043; Vested interests in bold; Strong bargaining power n n n . Weak bargaining power.

Figure 4. Anti-Corruption Preference Space in Malawi



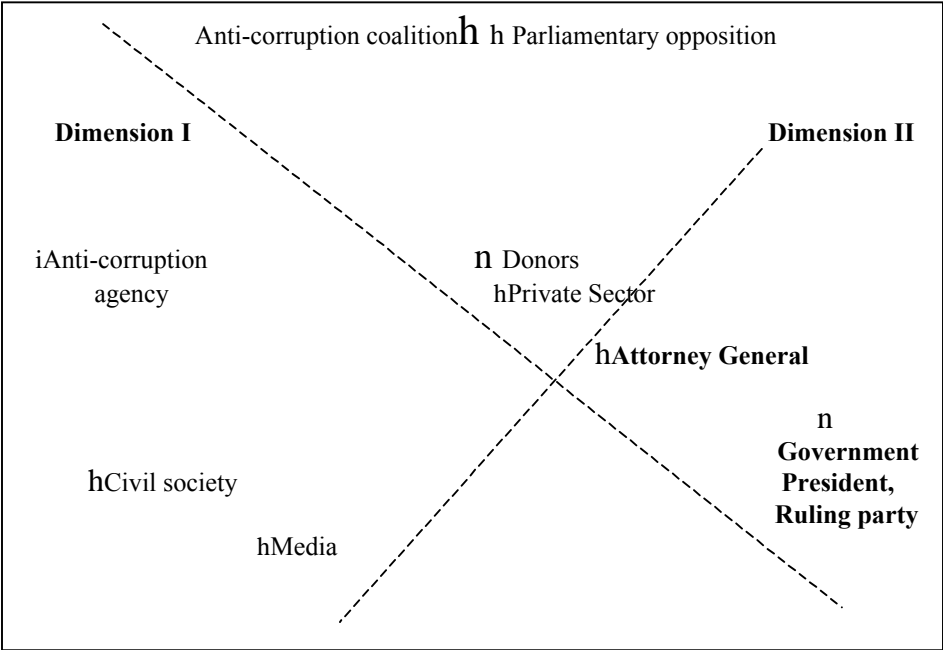
Note. N = 9 stakeholders; M = 6 reform issues; Kruskal's stress formula 1 = 0.013; Vested interests in bold; Strong bargaining power n n n . Weak bargaining power.

Figure 5. Anti-Corruption Preference Space in Kenya



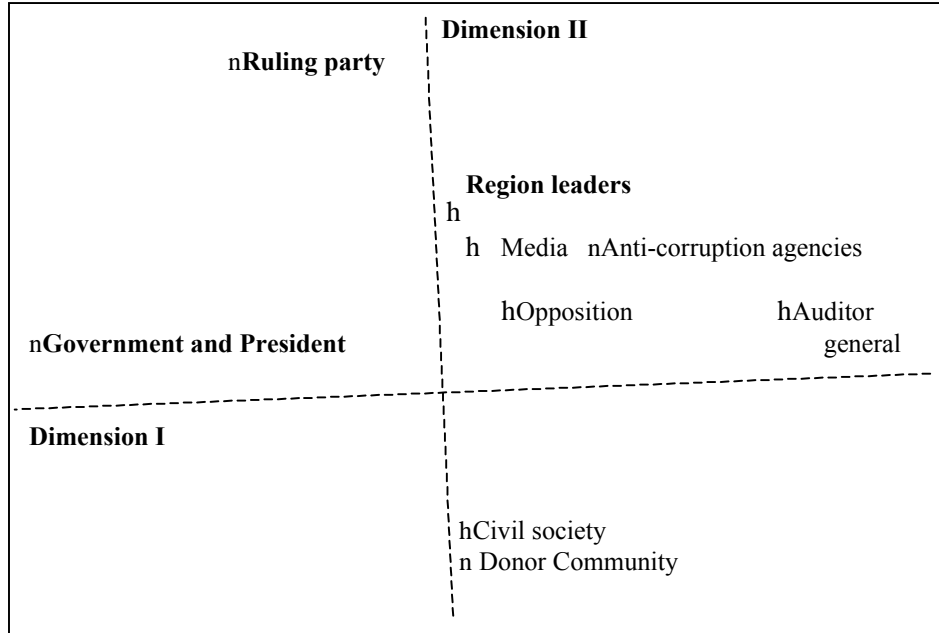
Note. N = 12 stakeholders; M = 5 reform issues; Kruskal's stress formula 1 = 0.097; Vested interests in bold; Strong bargaining power n n n . Weak bargaining power.

Figure 6. Anti-Corruption Preference Space in Ghana



Note. N = 9 stakeholders; M = 6 reform issues; Kruskal’s stress formula 1 = 0.125; Vested interests in bold; Strong bargaining power n n n . Weak bargaining power.

Figure 7. Anti-Corruption Preference Space in Uganda



Note. N = 9 stakeholders; M = 5 reform issues; Kruskal's stress formula 1 = 0.075; Vested interests in bold; Strong bargaining power n n n . Weak bargaining power.

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<sup>1</sup> The question of how these policy debates and cleavages in interests result in policy outcomes is beyond the scope of this article.

<sup>2</sup> This reduces the effect of differences in the institutional characteristics of countries. Obviously, the aim of this paper is *not* to test for effects of institutional differences between countries, and neither to test for effects of the World Bank Program.

<sup>3</sup> To our great surprise, the military was never mentioned as an explicit stakeholder in anti-corruption policy-making. An obvious explanation would be social desirability in the expert's answers, or the highly sensitive nature of such information. Nevertheless, it strikes us that not a single expert, in none of the seven countries, not even off-the-record, referred to an involvement of the military in the anti-corruption debate.

<sup>4</sup> We checked this interpretation with selected experts, as well as in relevant background documents.

<sup>5</sup> The core institutions of the coalition are: Serious Fraud Office (SFO), Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), National Institutional Renewal Program (NIRP), the Private Enterprise Foundation (PEF), the Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII), the Ghana Journalist Association (GJA), the Centre for Development and Democracy (CDD) and the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) (WBI, 2001 *-unpublished letter*).