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A Short Introduction to Corruption and Anti Corruption

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Abstract

Corruption is a very old problem in government, and concern about corruption has shaped the development of public services. For example, in many countries a Public Service Commission conducts exams or sets for the selection of suitable candidates to be appointed to the Civil Service posts. In this way it prevents political patronage, as well as promoting expertise. Many countries have established specialist anti corruption agencies relatively independent of the police or of the government.

Since the mid 1990s, there has been new international attention to corruption. Transparency International (TI), an NGO founded in 1993, publishes an influential Corruption Perceptions Index¹, and has a number of national groups that lobby governments. The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank now promote anti-corruption in their lending. Economists have become influential in international thinking about corruption. Comparing many countries, Daniel Kaufmann's statistical work for the World Bank finds correlations between corruption and low growth rates (Kaufmann, Kraay and Zoido 1999). The UN has a Convention against corruption. It sets out a comprehensive agenda for combating corruption in the public and private sectors²

Keywords: Corruption; Corruption Control; Governance; Anti Corruption Agencies

Resumo

A corrupção é um fenómeno que condiciona o desenvolvimento dos serviços públicos, quer pelo dano que causa ao erário público, quer pela má imagem e reputação que cria em relação ao desempenho institucional. A crescente preocupação com as ocorrências do fenómeno e sobretudo com a percepção negativa dos cidadãos sobre o desempenho da sua administração tem conduzido a um conjunto de reformas. Alguns países chegaram mesmo a introduzir exames/testes de conduta nas provas de acesso à administração pública, sessões de esclarecimento sobre conflitos de interesse para os novos elementos e comissões

¹ The local 'chapters' of TI are not involved in making these scores, which are derived from reports already produced by international ratings agencies or journalists. See www.transparency.org

² http://www.unodc.org/unodc/crime_convention_corruption.html

de aconselhamento. Outros optaram pela criação de agências anti-corrupção especializadas com autonomia funcional em relação às forças de investigação convencionais e independentes face ao governo. Este artigo começa por uma análise da definição de corrupção e dos factores (individuais, institucionais ou sócio-culturais) que inibem a sua ocorrência. Segue-se uma reflexão sobre a relação entre corrupção e ética em democracia e por fim conclui-se com algumas notas críticas sobre os efeitos perversos das campanhas anti-corrupção.

Palavras-chave: Corrupção; Controlo da corrupção; Governança; Agências anti-corrupção

What is Corruption?

Corruption is difficult to define and measure. The UN Convention does not define it. National legislation often just lists examples of particular activities, such as bribery rather than trying to define ‘corruption’ itself. The word, in English, carries connotations of widespread moral deterioration and decay³. Translations into different languages may convey different meanings. Transparency International, the international anti-corruption NGO, influentially defined it as ‘the use of public office for private gain’. The World Bank adopted this definition. TI later expanded its definition to include to the ‘use of entrusted power for private gain’, thereby including government functions that had been privatised. Both definitions emphasise individual acts, and economic crimes. They don’t capture the systemic qualities, and abuses of power that don’t involve money. They are also silent about corruption in the private sector and NGOS (including religious organizations). Broader conceptions, however, may make dealing with corruption even harder – like dealing with ‘evil’ in general.

Often a distinction is made between ‘petty’ corruption – small payments openly made to junior officials in exchange for services a citizen is entitled to in any case - and the ‘grand’ corruption of senior officials and ministers accepting secret bribes from contractors. The former is often open and tolerated. Both are typically illegal. A third category of ‘policy’ corruption, or state capture, refers to situations where private interests succeed in having the law changed in their favour (eg the media interests of the Berlusconi government in Italy or Thaksin governments in Thailand). This category is sometimes hard to distinguish from the normal workings of democracy in market economies.

Corruption can be seen as bad in at least two ways: as a violation of official rules and public duties; and as bad in its consequences. Agencies like the World Bank and UNDP have become more interested in corruption because of its consequences for development. State capture distorts the whole economy. Grand corruption may reduce the quality of services (eg poorly constructed roads), or distort investment into sectors that provide officials with greater opportunities for corruption (eg military expenditure). Petty corruption acts as an arbitrary tax on the poor. But the relationship between corruption and development is complicated. There are obvious examples of highly corrupt countries which have developed rapidly (the USA, China, South Korea, Taiwan). Each of these is concerned about corruption, and has set up agencies to combat it.

There is also link between corruption, incompetence and mismanagement. Arbitrary regulations and long queues for services create opportunities for corruption. So anti-corruption is often linked to wider processes of administrative reform. It is now also often linked to other kinds of crime.

³ The Oxford English dictionary defines it as follows:

1. moral deterioration, esp widespread
2. use of corrupt practices, especially bribery or fraud
3. irregular alteration (of a text, language etc) from its original state
4. irregularly altered form of a word
5. decomposition, especially of a corpse or other organic matter

What works against Corruption?

There is often cynicism and fatalism about corruption. There is some recent systematic evidence of what works but also of unintended consequences of anti corruption campaigns. Robert Klitgaard's pioneering 1988 book, *Controlling Corruption*, and his more recent *Corrupt Cities* (2000) show how particular agencies and municipalities have been able to do something about corruption. He describes how particular managers have managed inspire colleagues, sideline opponents, and enlist popular and private-sector support to reforming government agencies.

Hong Kong and Singapore are widely accepted as success stories in anti corruption, but also as special cases.

Research on anti corruption commissions in Africa by Alan Doig and his colleagues (2005) questions the value of independent anti-corruption agencies. A specialised, dedicated agency can provide a focus for anti corruption activity, including activity by donors. It may be given special powers and resources. It may develop expertise and provide advice to other parts of the government. The downside is that it may be only a symbol. Governments may deliberately keep it weak, by limiting its budget or appointing uncritical heads. It may get involved in turf wars with other anti-corruption agencies, including the police, and divides resources. It may allow heads of departments and other managers to claim dealing with corruption is no longer their responsibility. Too much is expected of the agency, with limited resources, so it is almost bound to fail. It may also be abused as a weapon against the government's opponents.

In a study for the World Bank Jeff Huther and Anwar Shah (2000) argued that different approaches need to suit different circumstances. In situations where corruption was endemic, people were often well aware of it and so awareness campaigns were unnecessary, or merely increased popular frustration. Similarly, understaffed and underfunded commissions might have little effect. In these circumstances, they argued, the anti corruption effort was best focussed on public service reforms that reduced opportunities for corruption in procurement and increased capacity to deliver services.

Bertram Spector, Johnston and Dinino (2005) have looked for common factors in successful anti-corruption campaigns. They compared reports on 35 cases of anti-corruption strategies or programs adopted across Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. About one third of the cases were enforcement programs, one third prevention programs, and one third were public awareness campaigns. In about 80% of the cases corruption was regarded as widespread. Eighty-five per cent of the cases were reported as successful: laws were changed (47%), behaviour changed (18%), and awareness was raised (20%). Two thirds were seen as having brought corruption under control.

The researchers cautioned that the data were poor (and reports of success might be self-serving) but went on to draw implications from their findings. They found much depended on the situation, but in general public awareness and transparency strategies may not be as effective as other strategies in the long run. Nevertheless, civil society (NGOs and business) plays an important role in motivating action, and awareness programs may build support that is necessary for more intrusive strategies to work. Important situational factors included as public tolerance and economic trends. Crises and transitions are the best time to initiate anti corruption programs, but without political commitment there is backsliding and 'recorruption'. A slightly different analysis of the same cases found that strategies aimed at grand corruption tended to be less successful, that strategies that improved accountability did better than those dealing

with transparency, awareness prevention and enforcement, and that the political significance of the corruption had a chilling effect on opposition to it.

Systems or Individuals

The oldest debate, which began in China is about whether corruption is caused by bad individuals, bad systems or some combination of both. If it is about individuals, then the focus should be on the character, integrity, ethics, selection and training of individuals. Bad individuals should be caught and punished to deter others. If it is a question of systems, then it is a matter of changing public service rules and procedures to reduce opportunities for corruption, and to encourage proper official behaviour.

National constitutions typically deal with systems, but they also rely on the character and integrity of individuals, particularly those in senior positions who make the rules. For example the 1998 Thai constitution was explicitly concerned with reducing corruption. It tried to increase the powers of the existing National Counter Corruption Commission, and it also tried to improve the quality and independence of individuals in the Senate. To qualify for election candidates would have to be over 40 years old, and have the equivalent of a bachelor's degree (Klein 1998).

The character and reputation of individuals may become important at more senior levels, and among the elite where 'the social constraint on self restraint' (Elias 1998) is more important than external pressure. The gender of those individuals may be important. The character of individuals also seems to matter in elections, especially if there are no substantial policy differences between parties and leaders. Party machines are sometimes criticised for stifling the chances of good individuals, untainted by politics, entering the system.

However, there are practical limits to an approach to corruption that relies entirely on the investigation and prosecution of individuals. Corruption often takes place in secret, between consenting adults. There is no obvious victim to complain. Corruption often involves complex technical transactions which are hard for ordinary police to follow. It is typically a crime of the powerful, who can influence the process of investigation, and afford highly qualified lawyers to defend themselves.

The desire for justice requires that individuals are caught and punished. Successful prosecutions may deter others, and restore confidence in the government. But investigation and prosecution are expensive in investigatory and legal skills. In the same ways as public health campaigns reduce pressure on hospitals, a reduction in opportunities for corruption can reduce pressure on the police and legal system. Systemic approaches target the risks of corruption, trying to prevent corrupt acts taking place before they happen. The model of an Independent Commission Against Corruption, invented in Hong Kong in the 1970s, sees investigation and prosecution going hand in hand with prevention and public education.

Current international thinking about corruption tends to emphasise systems over individuals, whereas national anti corruption agencies, such as the police, tend to target individuals. Transparency International deliberately avoids naming names in favour of systemic approaches. The World Bank links anti corruption to its long-standing concerns with deregulation and public sector reform. There are two influential systemic approaches:

1. National Integrity Systems

Transparency International's National Integrity System (NIS) model, used by TI Australia, pictures 'integrity' supported by a number of pillars, the executive, the legislature, constitutional office holders and so on, and resting on a basis of values. It embodies the idea, that goes back to the US constitution, that we need not only rely on good individuals to ensure good government. Theorists of the US Constitution, particular James Madison, argued that that self-interest and sectional interests could cancel each other out. In the right circumstances, such as open debate and freedom of association, the self interest of one group might be checked by the self interest of another that emerged to counter it. Indeed 'an institution can be better than the individuals who constitute it' (Warren 2004).

The constitutional separation of powers also limits opportunities for corruption, or increase opportunities for its exposure. Thus the legislature may supervise the executive (eg through a Public Accounts Committee), while judiciary ensure that police don't abuse their power. There may be gaps as well as overlaps in this system of mutual accountability that a constitution should fill.

2. Robert Klitgaard's Formula

The second systemic approach derives from economics rather than constitutional law. The economist Robert Klitgaard, whose book *Controlling Corruption* argues that corruption is the result of monopolies of power, and the discretion officials have to grant or withhold a service or licence. It can be mitigated by reducing their discretion, or by increasing their accountability⁴. Thus, put simply:

$$\text{Corruption} = \text{Monopoly} + \text{Discretion} - \text{Accountability.}$$

Klitgaard sees the private sector as a possible ally in the fight against corruption. Like other economists, he is in favour competition as a way of exposing 'rent seeking' behaviour, such as corruption. His approach is also like that of an auditor, assessing the risks of corruption, as well as following up corrupt events, after they happen.

Accountability

A common theme in these two systemic approaches is accountability. Accountability means the duty to explain and justify to other agencies (or forums). It does not mean that the accountable official has carry out the instructions of those other agencies or forums: merely that that he or she has a duty to explain and give reasons for decisions. The studies of national integrity systems extend this to the idea of 'horizontal' or 'mutual' accountability, which sees a number of independent institutions

⁴ The best example might be government telecommunications monopolies. There are often queues to get a new phone connected. These queues create opportunities for officials to demand a bribe to have a connection made more quickly, and consumers are often ready to pay. Where there is competition between telecommunications companies, it is less easy to extort a bribe from a consumer who can go to another company. Consumers often experience less corruption in acquiring a mobile phone from competing private companies (though the issuing of mobile phone company licences may involve grand corruption).

continually keeping an eye on each other. This is contrasted with older pictures of accountability upward to a monarch, Prime Minister or legislature. The principle of independence often does not sit easily with ideas of mutual accountability. Without accountability or supervision, independent offices may become corrupt, sinecures or merely ineffective.

Prevention

Systemic approaches propose attention to preventing corruption before it takes place, as well as investigating corruption once it has taken place. Certainly strong powers and capacity to investigate and prosecute are important, and may act as a deterrent. ICACs typically have three branches: investigation and prosecution; education; and prevention. Klitgaard's formula suggests where to look for risks – where power is concentrated, there is a large amount of discretion, and little accountability. (Appendix 1 sets out 'corruption risks factors' identified by the New South Wales ICAC: the first of these is 'discretion exercised by position'.) In creating powerful offices the constitution is also creating risks of corruption, so needs to hedge these around with checks and balances, and requirements of accountability.

Particularly risky are anti corruption agencies themselves – the police, the courts, and specialist anti corruption agencies. Corrupt officials will seek to undermine those agencies responsible for detecting their behaviour, just as crooks try – sometimes successfully – to compromise the police and justice system.

Core and Distributed Anti Corruption

Studies of the National Integrity System in Australia have distinguished between core institutions – the ICAC, Ombudsman, Auditor General, Police – and the wider responsibilities of government departments and statutory bodies to prevent corruption in their own activities (Sampford et al 2005). Anti Corruption Agencies are typically small, and can't be expected to deal with each and every incident. Part of their task is to take on the serious cases, set an example, and ensure that civil service managers, and officials down the line, take responsibility for their own agencies. For example, the Vietnam constitution proposes a highly distributed attack on corruption, proposing that it is the duty of all state agencies cadres officials and employees to resolutely struggle against corruption, extravagance, and all manifestations of bureaucracy, arrogance and authoritarianism' (cited in Andersson and Heywood forthcoming)

Corruption or Ethics

The study of ethics (ways of living well; the good) is in many ways the opposite of the study of corruption (how things go wrong; the bad). Arguments about ethics and integrity among officials have tend to concentrate on individuals rather than systems. For example, following scandals in the UK, a Committee for Standards on Public Life (the Nolan Committee) came up with an influential set of principles that dealt mostly with individual characteristics: selflessness, integrity, and so on (see Appendix 2). Current international arguments, as we have seen, tend to talk about systems.

If we are thinking about corruption we are also necessarily thinking about what is corrupted. Corruption involves a falling away from some ideal state of affairs – an impartial civil service, a more equal society, national ownership of business or a freely competitive economy. But as Mark Philp (2002) has pointed out, we can often more easily agree that something is bad than agree what is good⁵. There are legitimate and persistent disagreements about the ‘naturally wholesome condition of politics’, that corruption falls away from. Indeed ‘politics’ is sometimes defined in terms of living with those persistent disagreements (Stoker 2006). Coalition governments embody these persistent but legitimate political disagreements.

Codes of Practice set out how we think people should behave. Studies of the effectiveness of professional codes of practice show the importance of developing these codes from within (engendering) rather than imposing them from the outside (imposing). Codes for very senior officials must particularly rely on peer pressure and self-restraint, in the absence of a higher authority to enforce them. Andrew Brien (2001) suggests a checklist of desirable features for codes:

- Enforced in a known, settled way (not secretively and haphazardly)
- Applies to all (from the chief executive officer down)
- Rests on legitimate authority (e.g. consent of governed)
- People are treated in accordance with their culpability
- Addresses a real issue (not just used for social control)
- Within the capacity of the organization to implement
- Actually improves matters

Codes – and often the law itself - are mostly self-enforced, by peer pressure, so they must reflect values widely held by those subject to them. They must also deal with specific practical dilemmas faced by each profession (a code for politicians is therefore likely to be different to a code for judges or public servants). This points generally to the processes of constitution making, and – in particular – the codes meant to govern the behavior of judges, legislators, or civil servants. Without detailed knowledge of the working conditions in each profession, the constitution could mandate the production of such codes rather than try and set them itself. Each group needs to be involved in designing codes

Politics and Administration

In the USA in the late nineteenth century there was increasing disillusionment with the spoils system, whereby politicians appointed their supporters and cronies to civil service positions. The ‘Progressive’ movement proposed that there can and should be a clear line drawn between ‘politics’ (the job of elected leaders) and ‘administration’ (the job of civil servants, professionally trained to carry it out).

⁵ Many NGOs, for example, that support anti-corruption campaigns sponsored by international financial institutions might not support the liberal economic ideals that motivate them. Similarly the international organisations might welcome the support of NGOs while disagreeing with their egalitarian, protectionist, or redistributive ideals. Anti-corruption provides a convenient flag around which very different interests can rally.

In practice the line has been hard to draw. As governments have expanded their role, civil servants inevitably are involved in political decisions about 'who gets what when and how' (another definition of 'politics'). If states take on development tasks then officials take on more and more political tasks. And elected politicians have not wanted to surrender the detail to officials. In countries like the UK, Australia and New Zealand since the 1980s there has been a steady increase in political control over the civil service. Some scholars have argued that the tasks and skills of senior officials and ministers in Europe and the US have now become so similar, and overlapping, that we should now talk of a single group of 'political administrators', some elected some appointed (Aberbach and Rockman 1988).

In relatively new democracies – emerging from colonial or monarchical rule - complaints about corruption often blend into claims about political interference, politicization, and struggles over the distribution of government resources. Senior public service officials may resign to stand in elections for their home areas and return to government as ministers. The argument about corruption becomes part of an argument about the respective roles of ministers versus officials, and working relationships between them.

Corruption and Democracy

Anti corruption is presented these days as a natural ally of democracy, in international programs of 'good governance'. Certainly, authoritarian and monarchical regimes lack accountability and democracy may provide it. Democracy often gets its emotional force from anger at the corruption of the old regime (the luxury of the palace, the four-wheel drives of the bourgeoisie, or the hidden pleasures of communist officials). But democracy creates new pressures for corruption, for example in election campaigns, party funding and pressure from constituents. Gordon White (1996) talked of the 'New' Corruption that has followed liberalisation and democratisation in countries like Russia, China or India.

Until the mid twentieth century, democracy was often regarded with suspicion by elites, even as a form of corruption itself – 'mob rule', in which the crowd followed their short-term material interests at the expense of the long term good of society. Such anti-democratic feelings persist in many countries with a short history of democracy. There is also disenchantment with representative democracy in countries that have had it for much longer (Stoker 2006).

Some of the impetus for 'constitutional' government has come from a suspicion of democracy, and a desire to filter or mitigate its effects. Constitutions ensure that 'the people' are not in power directly, only their representatives, who often are recruited from the educated elite. The people do not influence government all the time, and only decisively at elections. Some positions are put out of reach of democracy altogether, for fear that popular pressure will impair their performance (most recently the job of head of the Central Bank in some countries). There are of course countercurrents in the constitution – human rights protect ordinary people from the government, especially abuse by the police. The Ombudsman hears their popular complaints and tries to resolve them. Freedom of speech allows newspapers to present popular – or to use the more negative phrase - 'populist' views.

The two most often cited success stories in anti-corruption (Singapore and Hong Kong) took place in undemocratic circumstances – a one party state in Singapore, and a colonial government in Hong Kong. The new Chinese rulers of Hong Kong have not

tried to unravel the ICAC, recognising its popularity and the attractions of a relatively uncorrupt business environment for foreign investment.

The spread of opinion polling throughout the world now makes it possible to get a clearer idea of what people actually think about their governments, politics and corruption. Governments no longer have to rely on self-serving politicians, expensive commissions of enquiry, demonstrations, or domestic intelligence services to tell them ‘what the people really think’. A recent global survey of popular opinion in 62 countries by Transparency International – called the Global Corruption Barometer - found that

- The public views political parties as the most corrupt institution, followed by parliament/legislature;
- Police are considered to be the sector most affected by corruption in both Africa and the Newly Independent States; and
- Political life is viewed as being most affected by corruption, followed closely by the business environment (Transparency International 2006)

The global survey also asked about people’s experience of corruption, particularly petty corruption involving bribes paid to officials in order to get services. Table 1 shows that the police were the public service most prone to taking bribes.

Table 1

	% of people dealing with this sector who paid a bribe (worldwide average)
Police	17
Registry and Permits	9
Legal/Judiciary	8
Medical Services	6
Utilities	5
Education system	5
Tax revenue	3

Source: Transparency International Global Corruption Barometer

The dark side of Anti-Corruption

The police example, above, points to the perennial problem of ‘guarding the guards’. Anti-corruption agencies are particularly vulnerable to corruption themselves. Installing a new layer of supervision above them creates new opportunities for corruption. Monarchies or military leaders sometimes see themselves as the ultimate guards of the national or public interest, but history tends to show there is no ultimate guard that does not need guarding.

The character of the constitution as a law, and cornerstone of the legal system, may also affect its role in dealing with corruption. The constitution may create concentrations of power and discretion that may be abused, as Klitgaard’s formula (above) suggests. New regulations may, paradoxically, create new opportunities for corruption. They create loopholes, and provide guidelines for avoidance (for example, multiple small gifts to avoid campaign finance legislation; holding assets in spouse’s

name; and so on). The police, the courts and the legal profession charged with enforcing rules against corruption are particularly vulnerable to corruption themselves.

In New South Wales, for comparison, concerns that the government would use the commission against the opposition led to the provision that the legislature may veto the Premier's proposal for Commissioner (so ensuring that only candidates acceptable to both sides are proposed). The Commission also reports to a bi-partisan committee of the legislature and the legislature has recently created the position of an Inspector General to deal with complaints against the anti-corruption commission.

The law may also be a friend for corrupt officials. Civil rights provisions may protect corrupt officials from investigation. Lawyers may leap to their defence. Defamation laws may prevent newspapers exposing corruption. Employment protections (and powerful unions) may restrict action against corrupt officials. Policy corruption and state capture are forms of corruption that may be entirely legal.

These intrinsic limitations to the use of law to punish corrupt individuals suggest more attention to ways corruption might be prevented before it happens rather than investigated and prosecuted after it happens. Preventive measures may be less likely to be abused. They include exemplary leadership, training, education, the development of codes of conduct, improved accountability, and the systematic reform of regulations that provide opportunities for corruption.

Research by Anechiarico and Jacobs in New York (1996) found anti corruption controls reducing the efficiency of government in New York. Each scandal led to the creation of a new layer of supervision, and effective contractors were permanently excluded from contracts. New forms of corruption control, including attaching inspectors to particular firms for particular projects, that combined regulation with reform were being tried.

Researchers in Eastern Europe are finding donor-sponsored anti-corruption campaigns undermine new democracies, by encouraging politicians to accuse each other of corruption, rather than debate policy (Krastev 2004). Most long-serving leaders have something embarrassing – personal, financial or political - to hide.

In several countries recently, including Nepal (in 2005), Thailand (2006), Fiji (2006) and Bangladesh (2007) anti-corruption has been used by combinations of monarchs technocrats and military leaders to justify for displacing democratically elected governments.

APPENDIX 1

Corruption risk factors

Factors which enable/optimize occurrence of corruption
.....Factors which aid in the perpetuation of corruption

1. Nature of the work performed
 - 1.1 Discretion exercised by position
 - 1.2 Position in organisation
 - 1.3 Service associated with delays
2. Working conditions
 - 2.1 The disputed role of salary and its relationship to need
 - 2.2 Lack of benefits for remaining with employer
 - 2.3 Employee dissatisfaction
 - 2.4 Work pressures
3. Individual histories and dependencies
 - 3.1 Ethical decision making history
 - 3.2 Dependence on employer
 - 3.3 Dependence on alcohol, drugs and gambling
4. Organisational culture
 - 4.1 Unclear messages about what is acceptable
 - 4.2 Attitudes of colleagues
 - 4.3 Example set by management
 - 4.4 Lack of reinforcement of ethical behaviour
 - 4.5 Other workplace practices
5. Failure to identify the behaviour as wrong
6. Organisational factors which affect taking action about corruption
 - 6.1 Reporting mechanisms
 - 6.2 Employee responsibility
 - 6.3 Organisation history in dealing with reports of corruption
7. Other factors which affect taking action about corruption
 - 7.1 Individual beliefs
 - 7.2 Features of the wrongdoing

Source: ICAC Minimising Corruption http://www.icac.nsw.gov.au/pub/list_pub.cfm

Appendix 2

Nolan's Seven Principles of Public Life

The Committee has set out 'Seven Principles of Public Life' which it believes should apply to all in the public service. These are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability.

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness.

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honest.

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership.

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Source: UK Committee on Standards in Public Life

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