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"We've been structured to be looted" - some reflections on the systemic underpinnings of corruption in contemporary South Africa

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“We’ve been structured to be looted” (a senior public sector manager)

Some reflections on the systemic underpinnings of corruption in contemporary South Africa

Jeremy Cronin

The challenges of corruption have escalated significantly in South Africa over the past decade, threatening democratic achievements, undermining the capacity of the state to advance socio-economic transformation, and eroding the solidarity culture that once underpinned the broad-based anti-apartheid struggle. But what, if any, are the systemic factors contributing to the entrenchment of the problem?

Often, although less often now, the challenge has been reduced to bad individual behavior within the new post-1994 political elite, a “few bad apples”, of whom “an example” must be made. Certainly those involved in corruption need to be dealt with, regardless of their political affiliations or past struggle credentials. In fact, we should expect and demand a higher level of conduct from them, especially from those in public service.

But we are dealing with something more systemic than simply a “few bad apples”. In an attempt to find a more generalized explanation for corruption we sometimes encounter syndicalist left-wingers unwittingly echoing “free market” right-wingers in their exaggerated suspicion of the state and its bureaucracy in general, regarding it as always-already, inherently “corrupt”. “Power corrupts”, we are frequently told. It is a message that is continuously amplified by an oligopolistic commercial media that likes to conceal its own very significant market and paradigm-setting power.

The idea that politicians and the state are, more or less by definition, corrupt is liable to undermine our determination to use state power (along with social activism) to deal decisively with corruption. It also helps to obscure the fact that where corruption occurs in the public sector there are, invariably, private sector corrupters.

Other explanations focusing on the new political elite border on racial stereotyping of the “you see what happens when THEY take over” variety. Corruption is blamed on some supposed generalized tendencies within post-independence, Third World liberation movements, or post-

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colonial African societies, for instance. This line of argument tends to exempt the deep complicity of the old elite in both past and present corruption.

“The sins of incumbency”, “shaped by historical deprivation” – the socio-psychological pressure on the new political elite

Two recent and thoughtful interventions by Njabulo Ndebele and Joel Netshitenzhe, respectively, focus on the new political elite in ways that, I believe, help to take the discussion forward in a more constructive way. Writing in the City Press (“A meditation on corruption”, 22 January 2012), Ndebele argues that the “new elite”, since being installed in power in the post-1994 reality, has been tugged between competing imperatives – individual redress versus substantial social development, redistribution versus systemic transformation. Although he doesn’t quite say this, Ndebele correctly implies that the competing logics of these very different imperatives were often blurred in language as if they were one and the same thing. “Transformation”, for instance, came in the course of the latter half of the 1990s to mean not the radical transformation of the embedded features of apartheid-colonialism, but individual promotion to ensure some racial representivity within essentially the same unchanged realities – the same boardrooms, the same private schools, the same wealthy suburbs, the same elite golf clubs.

Ndebele argues that the “new elite” was increasingly torn between its own “personal material needs...shaped by historical deprivation” on the one hand, and the “social commitment that once gave meaning to the struggle for liberation” on the other. In Ndebele’s view, “access to state wealth” meant that relatively quickly individual redress became individual entitlement and these values then trumped social transformation, side-lining it into little more than a “niggling ethical burden”.

Writing in ANC Today (“Competing identities of a national liberation movement and the challenges of incumbency”, 15 June 2012), Netshitenzhe follows a similar trajectory to explain corruption. He invokes concepts like the “sins of incumbency” and the problem of “growing social distance” between the new political elite and its mass base. Like Ndebele, he analyses the roots of corruption in the socio-psychological challenges confronting an “emerging middle class” without historical assets to support what are often large extended families, leading it to take on excessive debt. “Having dipped their toes in that lifestyle, but with no historical assets as are available to the white middle and upper strata, some then try to acquire the resources by hook or crook.”

Implicit, but insufficiently developed in these arguments, are two considerations. The first is that the “white world” to which the new political elite has often been encouraged to aspire is
typically a highly exaggerated version of what the average, privileged nonetheless, white family once enjoyed under apartheid. Secondly, this newly promoted “elite”, without its own historical personal assets, continues to be located within an extraordinarily unequal society – characterized by islands of significant wealth in a sea of enduring mass poverty. Our untransformed social reality pitches the new elite into a political game of snakes and ladders. Here the snakes and the ladders are exaggeratedly long. If you land on the right square, by securing a regional chairpersonship in the ANC for instance, you might suddenly find yourself on a heady upward ascension. But if you lose your footing, you are liable to fall rapidly down a very long snake, back to zero and abject poverty – this is a reality that can induce toxic outcomes and particularly in the party political space since access to political office is often the only ladder available.

I believe that Ndebele and Netshitenzhe help us to understand the socio-psychological “phenomenology” of the new political elite. However, both tend to take exaggerated versions of the “average white life-style” for granted – as if all white South Africans were, or had been, wealthy capitalists. More significantly, neither sufficiently emphasizes the connection between persisting high levels of inequality and the socio-psychological pressures on the new political elite. As a result, the anti-corruption remedies they offer tend to be limited to moral lamentation and pedagogy (requiring one more read of the ANC’s “Through the Eye of the Needle”).

But what about the old economic elite?

A single-minded focus on the new political elite can obscure the manner in which the heady, insecure world of rags-to-riches with the ever-present possibility of riches-to-rags opens up significant possibilities for subjective strategic leverage over this new political elite (and therefore over the democratic state and the ANC ruling party) by those who happen to be historically well-resourced - the former and still incumbent economic elite. In the public discussion in SA about corruption there is often a failure to recognize that established capital did not stand idly by in the face of the impending new, post-1994 political reality. It continued to pursue the agenda of late-apartheid, namely to build a “buffer” black middle strata, the better to be able to entrench its own powers and privileges, linked to an historical growth path dominated by the mineral-energy-finance complex. In the early 1990s negotiations period, for instance, it was no longer a question of preventing the ANC coming to power, but rather of ensuring that the ANC that came into power would be hegemonised by the “doves”, the “sensible moderates”, those who would distance themselves from the dangerous “radical populists” and their “volatile” mass base.
Hein Marais graphically describes the ideological effort that was put into wooing key elements of the ANC leadership in this early period. Amongst other things there was a “plethora of corporate scenario planning exercises unleashed after 1990” by major South African companies, including Nedcor, Old Mutual, Sanlam and the SA Chamber of Business:

“Our language was that of melodrama, laden with populist flippancies and cartoon-like metaphors. Lavishly promoted (in the form of books, videos, multi-media presentations, newspaper supplements), their impact was ensured by a bewildering assortment of seminars, conferences, workshops, briefings, international ‘fact-finding’ trips and high-profile visits by carefully chosen foreign ‘experts’ – financed by business and foreign development agencies. ANC leaders were feted with private ‘orientation’ sessions and confabs at exclusive game resorts.” (Hein Marais, South African limits to change, The political economy of transformation, 1998, p.150)

Much has been made in certain anti-ANC alliance quarters about the woeful consequences of “cadre deployment”. Indeed, inappropriate appointments based on family, political and business connections have often seriously compromised the effectiveness of the new state. But neglected in this debate has been the systematic “cadre deployment” that leading circles of big capital (both domestic and international) implemented in the immediate pre- and post-1994 period. The two longest serving post-1994 Treasury directors general, for instance, were graduates of orientation stints at the Goldman Sachs “cadre school”.

The consequence of this ideological softening up and strategic placement of appropriate candidates in critical state locations was to be the adoption by the state in 1996 of an essentially neo-liberal macro-economic strategy, GEAR. This strategy helped to return the economy to modest growth, it stabilized profits in the dominant sectors of the economy - but it also consolidated a problematic, jobless growth path excessively dependent on mineral exports and capital goods imports. It is a growth path that has characterized SA since the late 19th century. Alternative approaches proposed in the early 1990s and focusing on active industrial policy, infrastructure development, and more dynamic redistributive interventions were rejected. The consequences have been the reproduction and entrenchment of extraordinarily high levels of unemployment, racialised poverty and inequality. In short, the radical inequality that once characterized apartheid South Africa and that continues to be a key factor in the socio-psychological vulnerability of the new political elite has been reproduced, in part, by a strategic macro-economic compact between elements of this new elite and the incumbent economic elite.
“Black Economic Empowerment” – fostering a “patriotic bourgeoisie”

However, there was another, related, and even more dramatic element to this compact between elements of the new and old elites - the policy of so-called “black economic empowerment”. At the heart of BEE has been the sale (typically a highly leveraged sale) of share-holding stakes in existing corporations to politically-connected black individuals and consortia. Jenny Cargill estimates that “far more capital has been invested in the shareholding to black groups than in other key areas of socio-economic transformation, such as low-income housing and land redistribution – at least R500 billion as against less than R150 billion on housing and land” (Trick or Treat. Rethinking Black Economic Empowerment, Jacana, 2010, p.xiii).

From the side of established big capital, cutting in politically well-connected black groups represented both an insurance policy and a commercial advantage over competitors, particularly in areas where the state exercised a strong regulatory role (mining, cell-phones, broadcasting and gambling). In many respects it also represented a re-run of how mining and banking corporates had once, but belatedly, accommodated themselves to the 1948 Afrikaner nationalist political victory. But BEE was particularly a strategy that was actively developed by a dominant tendency within the ANC and government (what the SACP has described as the “1996 class project”). For this revisionist tendency within the ANC and government, the creation of a new BEE elite was seen both as a means to self-enrichment and also as an active counter-balance to the influence of the ANC’s left-wing partners and of the ANC’s own township and rural mass base.

The canonization of “BEE” as a central programme of government brought into play a dangerous nexus between political office, personal enrichment, and established capital. Insofar as the BEE strategy was ever more than simply a tactical accommodation on the part of established capital and a personal accumulation strategy for elements of the new elite - then the longer-term economic and strategic claims made for it were misplaced. These claims failed to appreciate the significant differences between contemporary South Africa and two precedents that were often evoked in justification.

In the first place the Asian Tiger and Chinese state-led, market-based growth trajectories were held up as examples of how the state working closely with a new “patriotic bourgeoisie” could drive growth and development. The critical difference is that by mid-20th century South Africa was already a relatively developed (if highly skewed) capitalist economy. The mining revolution of the late-19th century had, through the course of the 20th century, led to extensive industrialization, a relatively sophisticated financial sector, widespread proletarianisation, an
effective logistics backbone, and high levels of capital concentration, particularly in the mineral, finance and energy sectors. Under conditions of minority rule, an indigenous but entirely white capitalist class had emerged. It was this indigenous capitalist class working with the white-minority state that drove modernization and industrialization in South Africa (but in a highly skewed, racialised manner, of course). In short, the new post-1994 South African political elite was located within a relatively advanced capitalist economy. Aspiring black “patriotic capitalists” were in a very different situation to emerging South Korean or latterly Chinese private entrepreneurs. Yes, the potentially incestuous relation to state power and (in the Chinese case especially) a ruling party are similarities, but China in 1978 (for instance) was a highly egalitarian and backward country. The unleashing of individual entrepreneurship supported by the state and party under the Deng reforms, spurred a remarkably industrious, innovative, modernizing, although not exactly corruption-free, process. By contrast, and this has everything to do with structural realities in South Africa, BEE beneficiaries have tended to be compradorial in their activities; “tenderpreneurs” rather than entrepreneurs; highly leveraged share-holding paper capitalists in existing enterprises rather than innovative drivers of new development.

The second misplaced precedent that is often quoted to justify BEE is the example of how emerging Afrikaner capitalists in South Africa used the 1948 electoral victory of the Afrikaner National Party to advance Afrikaner economic interests. Afrikaner capitalists certainly worked hand-in-glove with the post-1948 apartheid state to leverage a much greater role for themselves, partially displacing some of the former exclusive dominance of their white English-speaking counterparts in sectors like mining, finance and retail. But the trajectory of emerging Afrikaner capitalists was different to the current BEE-aspirants in at least two significant respects. In the first place, it was premised on the unapologetic intensification of racial exploitation and expropriation of the Black majority (the removal of trade union rights, and the further expropriation of Indian traders and African small farmers, for instance). In the second place, the phase of primitive accumulation in the case of emergent Afrikaner capital preceded the 1948 electoral victory. Early Afrikaner capital accumulation was based on the mobilization of agricultural capital (often through cooperatives) and, especially, on the ethnically mobilized savings of the volk. (The classic study on the development of Afrikaner capitalism is Dan O’Meara’s, *Volks-kapitalisme. Class, capital and ideology in the development of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1934-1948*, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1983)

By contrast, as we have already noted in the first section, the post-1994 political elite did not have any significant pre-existing capital resources. An earlier phase of primitive accumulation had not occurred in their case, precisely because colonialism and apartheid had actively dispossessed the black majority, and then restricted future capital accumulation possibilities through a barrage of racial legislation and institutions. The post-1994 BEE policy of actively
encouraging the formation of a new “patriotic bourgeoisie” could only be based, then, on using state power for a different kind of accumulation - leveraging “donations” out of established capital, and extracting rents bureaucratically. As a result, the new “patriotic bourgeoisie” has tended to be compradorial and parasitic in character – a far cry from the envisaged entrepreneurial, productive stratum that was supposed to have emerged.

The corruption of the solidarity ideal

The ANC’s draft “Economic Transformation” document presented to the June 2012 National Policy Conference has very little to say about BEE. What it does say by way of a question for discussion betrays a certain bewilderment: “BEE is an important strategy for de-racialising South African Capital, why is it unpopular and how can it be improved?” (ANC National Policy Conference 2012, Umrabulo Special Edition, Section 3, p86). The manner in which the ANC document poses its question is instructive and lies behind the confusion. After all, capital doesn’t have a skin pigmentation (a “race”). So de-racialising capital doesn’t make sense. What is meant, of course, but this is being fudged in the formulation, is that BEE is about de-racialising the class of capitalists.

Now nowhere in the pre-1990 programmatic documents of the ANC (like the Freedom Charter) will you find any reference to a strategic objective of “de-racialising the class of capitalists”, still less to the nonsensical objective of “de-racialising capital”. What you will find, and quite correctly so, is a commitment to removing all racially discriminatory barriers to the right to trade, or to enter any profession. However, these anti-discriminatory commitments to individual rights are always subordinated to a commitment to collective solidarity principles designed not to de-racialise the apartheid system, or the capitalist board-room, but to transform a racially oppressive system SYSTEMICALLY. Hence the Freedom Charter’s clarion call for the “wealth to be shared” amongst ALL South Africans.

Of course, if it could be shown that the deliberate de-racialisation of the capitalist class (and the diversion of some R500bn to achieve this) has had, or was likely to have a significant transformative impact, then interventions of this kind, whether they are to be found in the Freedom Charter or not, should certainly be entertained. But, as I have tried to show above, there are structural reasons why a supposed new black “patriotic bourgeoisie” was never going to spearhead serious transformation. For all of these reasons, the BEE strategy was deeply intertwined with the deliberate corrosion of the core principle of solidarity. “I didn’t struggle to be poor”, one BEE beneficiary located at the time in the ANC’s presidency, notoriously once said. The capitalist boardroom is more likely to transform the black BEE beneficiary than the beneficiary the boardroom. Rather than contributing to deracialising the South African economy, BEE has in effect been complicit in perpetuating racialised economic inequality and
poverty. And this lies at the systemic heart of the corruption challenges we are now confronting.

But the story would not be complete without a brief consideration of how the restructuring of the state post-1994 (ironically often in the name of “good governance” and of increasing transparency and probity) has further contributed to the problem.

**The new public management restructuring of the state**

In 1994 the state apparatus that the ANC-led government inherited and sought to transform was thoroughly distorted by its internal colonial features. On the one hand, there was a relatively well-functioning, hierarchical state bureaucracy that had serviced a white minority welfarist system. In the latter years of apartheid, as its own crisis developed, hegemony within the white-minority state increasingly shifted towards the military and security apparatus, with a major increase in security budgets and personnel. International arms, oil and financial sanctions directed against the apartheid regime in its last decades also encouraged the development of an extensive shadow-state. An array of dirty-tricks front organisations and sanctions-busting networks were spawned, involving secret accounts, spies, mercenaries, lumpen-capitalists, and criminal syndicates. After 1994 many of these networks mutated into nominally legitimate businesses, consultancies and private security operations, and many succeeded in infiltrating the new state and partnering in so-called BEE deals with some of the new political cadre.

On the other hand, what was also inherited in 1994 was an extensive, ethnically fragmented set of subordinate state apparatuses - former Bantustan, African township, “Coloured” and “Indian” bureaucracies. In 1994 the new state inherited almost 650,000 former Bantustan employees (Ivor Chipkin, “Beyond the popular discourse: Capacity constraints in the public sector, *Public Affairs Research Institute*, Short Essay 1, May 2011). While there were dedicated professionals among them, the dominant ethos in the Bantustan bureaucracies was one of patronage and rent-seeking. Again this legacy continues to leave a powerful and perverse imprint on the present state – provinces that incorporated former Bantustan bureaucracies are typically those with the most serious administrative and corruption challenges.

“How the entrepreneurial spirit is transforming the public sector”

After 1994 and under the prevailing neo-liberal hegemony, the ANC-led government set about transforming the state – but this agenda was often informed by the same hard-sell from both external and internal quarters that characterized the related macro-economic wooing of key...
ANC personnel in government. As with macro-economic policy, perhaps even more so, the ANC-led movement and its leading cadre had paid little attention to public administration or to a vision of a future state administration. The focus had been on smashing the apartheid state. One of the few exceptions among ANC exiles was Patrick Fitzgerald, who founded the influential Graduate School of Public and Development Management at Wits University in the early 1990s, as well serving in senior administrative posts in the Gauteng and national governments. The paradigm for public sector reform, actively promoted by Fitzgerald, Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, the first ANC Minister of Public Administration, and others, was essentially the neo-liberal aligned “new public management” approach. It was based on the assumption that the problem with the apartheid state was that it was “bureaucratic”, hierarchical, and based on rule-governed, routine compliance. The proposal was to replace “public administration” with “public management”. Ivor Chipkin and Barbara Lipietz have briefly traced the process through which this paradigm became hegemonic within the ANC and post-1994 government’s approach to public sector transformation. They note that Osborne and Gaebler’s book, Reinventing Government: How the entrepreneurial spirit is transforming the public sector became a key reference. “It [the book] suggested that the state could continue to play a meaningful role in the economy and society provided it moved away from the ‘bureaucratic model’ to apply a range of ‘techniques’, including management practices, developed in the business world.” (Chipkin & Lipietz, 2012, p.12).

The approach included replacing a public sector ethics of service to citizens with a managerialist ethics of “delivery” to “clients/customers”; substituting professional leadership of the public sector with generic corporate managers; and replacing professional and vocational incentives in the public sector with monetary incentives. Even on its own terms, the approach called for a high level of public sector capacity that was not available in South Africa.

Above all, and this is what has been particularly problematic in the South African case, these measures were linked to a significant fragmentation of the state apparatus. The fragmentation has sometimes been based on a distinction made between “policy”, “regulatory” and “operational” functions. The Department of Transport, for instance, after 1994 styled itself as a “policy” department. Regulatory and operational functions previously housed within line departments like the DoT were spun out and established as separate entities (for instance, the Cross-Border Road Traffic Agency, the Road Traffic Management Corporation, the South African Maritime Safety Agency, or the SA National Roads Agency Limited). These agencies each have their own “corporate” structure, “business model”, “vision and mission statement”, a board with a Chairperson, a CEO, a CFO, and an expensive head-office. They are expected to be self-funding. Those with a significant asset base (like SANRAL) are able to raise funds on the financial markets. Others, like SAMSA, have significant tariff revenue streams. In these cases the entities have grown into powerful corporations in their own right with a policy and
operational capacity that far outmatches the policy and oversight capacity of the line department to which they are nominally answerable.

Mandate expansion and the danger of country priorities being set by corporate (albeit nominally “public” corporate) priorities are very real. The dangers are compounded by the role of the boards which are typically populated with aspirant and actual BEE beneficiaries. Other entities, like CBRTA and the RTMC have battled to develop a “sustainable business case”, but they also, nonetheless, have all the trappings of corporations – boards, CEOs, CFOs, and have been targeted for rent-seeking activity.

The distinction between public policy and public operational responsibilities is also highly problematic in other ways. With the loss of senior professional staff (road engineers from the Department of Transport in the case of SANRAL, for instance) the supposed line department responsible for policy and oversight of its entities, also loses policy capacity in these areas. The result is that the independent entity does not just have greater operational capacity, but greater policy capacity than its line department. The line department then, typically, has to outsource policy-making to private sector consultants.

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“Global maritime ambitions” – the case of SAMSA

Established in 1998 in terms of the South African Maritime Safety Authority Act, SAMSA is in theory answerable to the Minister of Transport. As the name suggests, SAMSA’s core focus is (or should be) maritime safety and marine environment protection. This involves, amongst other things, enforcing technical and operational standards for all shipping operations in South African waters; promoting responsible operations in terms of seaworthiness, safety and pollution prevention; and managing the national capability to respond to marine pollution incidents and other maritime emergencies (see www.samsa.org.za/about). However, in its web-site these core functions are overshadowed by SAMSA’s self-declared status as “custodians and stewards of maritime policy” (note, not just of “maritime SAFETY policy”) and its “VISION” statement which positions SAMSA as “The Authority championing South Africa’s global maritime ambitions”. These overweening ambitions are not mere rhetorical flourishes on a web-site. Over the past years SAMSA has used its substantial tariff income to organise and host high profile maritime industry conferences focused on lobbying for a range of policies to promote aspirant BEE business interests in the shipping sector, and brazenly seeking to undermine the draft DoT-led, maritime green paper policy process.
“Love me tender, love me true” - the tenderized state

The private sector managerial principle of “maximizing share-holder value” applied to the public sector has seen outsourcing occur across a wide front. It is not just national or provincial line departments or municipalities that have been encouraged to “outsource non-core business”, it has also been applied to individual institutions like hospitals. Professionals (educators, health professionals, engineers) in the state apparatus, those that have remained, have increasingly been reduced to compilers and adjudicators of “tenders” with all of the attendant moral hazard.

The proliferation of corruption in and around the state tendering process has recently led to calls from some within the ANC-led alliance for the outright “banning of tenders”. While understandable, the call is somewhat misguided, since some of the corruption occurs through the bypassing of any tendering process whatsoever. At the ANC national executive committee’s July 2012 lekgotla the question of state tendering received some focused attention. It was agreed that, while certainly there will be the need for the state to procure externally many services and resources, these should be subjected to transparent tendering. It was further agreed that, where possible, there should be a greater degree of centralized procurement to cut-out the proliferation of intermediaries and to achieve economies of scale, enabling the state to move from being a price-taker to a price-maker in procurements. The ANC lekgotla also supported government’s recent decision to establish standardized reference pricing for commonly procured services and resources.

Tightening up on tendering is absolutely critical because state procurement through deliberately manipulated tendering processes has become a major area for rent-seeking and corruption. A recent document of the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission lists no fewer than 16 different ways in which infrastructure-related tenders have been corruptly gamed – including through bribes and kickbacks; undisclosed conflicts of interest; collusive bidding (for example bid rotation and market division by major engineering firms); unbalanced bidding (inside information supplied to one bidder); rigged specifications tailor-made for a preferred bidder; phantom service providers; product substitution, etc.

However, any attempt to tighten up on state procurement processes will be strongly challenged by the fragmentation of the state, the attendant proliferation of many centres for rent-seeking activity, and the many vested, unequal and undemocratic power relations that the new public management approach has consolidated. The re-structuring of the post-1994 state has exposed the state even further to the influence of big business and the attention of tender-preneuring
go-betweens, while insulating it from ordinary citizens. The discourse of the market misapplied to the public service transforms the public in general from collective and hopefully active citizens with rights into supposed individual “customers” and “clients”. In the market, notionally at least, if you don’t like what you’re getting, you go next door to a competitor. While in principle many functions should belong inherently to the public sector, this is even more the case in a country with high levels of poverty, where the majority cannot afford private health-care, or private security, or bank-financed housing, or a private car. They cannot transfer their “custom” to a competitor. They rely on public health-care, on publicly funded police services, on publicly subsidized housing and on subsidized public transport – and therefore on the solidarity of redistributed surplus.

Moreover, not only are the majority locked into dependence on public service, but it is a public service that is inclined to look upwards, rather than outwards. The monetarising of performance evaluation against top-down established “delivery targets” further undermines popular influence and diminishes the impact of popular oversight and activism. Yet the mobilization of popular activism and vigilance is absolutely critical if we are to begin to win the battle against corruption.

In summary

In summary, we have a toxic mix of:

– the subjective and objective vulnerabilities of a new political elite, in the context of an extremely unequal society;
– the strategic agenda of established capital (to protect its own interests by accommodating a buffer stratum with political connections);
– the canonization of BEE as official state policy and the deliberate fostering of a supposedly “patriotic bourgeoisie” (whose objective situation, quite apart from any subjective leanings to probity or venality, was always liable to lead to compradorial and parasitic behaviour); and
– fragmented, unjoined-up governance structures ushered in under the auspices of the new public management approach and inevitably creating a fertile milieu for a wide-range of rent-seeking behavior to proliferate at public expense.

To address the scourge of corruption in South Africa we require, therefore, a combination of interventions. If vigorously applied, some can have an immediate impact, including tough anti-corruption measures that use the full might of the state to uncover and crack-down on wrong-doers; popular campaigns that encourage whistle-blowing and that mobilize community-based organizations and social movements to play an active role in undercutting corruption; the
strengthening of the declaration of interests regulations applying to public representatives and senior public servants; the outlawing of public servants from being involved in private businesses; and the tightening up of state procurement processes. However, we need simultaneously to address the more systemic underlying factors behind the scourge of corruption – by placing our economy on to a different, more egalitarian developmental path; and by critically and thoroughly reviewing BEE and public administration policies.