

Strategies for Bridling Corruption Using the Five-Part Model for Social Change

Bob Osburn, PhD

Senior Fellow, Wilberforce International Institute

INTEGRITY UGANDA GROUP

© 2025 Robert Osburn

Definition of Corruption

**The social and personal decay when people seek
their private gain at public expense**

Costs of corruption

1. In Africa, \$150 billion/year, or 25% of the continent's GDP, is absorbed by corruption (Laver, 2018).
2. \$2.6 to \$3.6 trillion, or 5% of world GDP, is annual cost of corruption worldwide (World Economic Forum)
3. \$1 trillion/yr is paid in bribes worldwide (World Bank)
4. 30% of Africa's wealth is held offshore, which means that \$14 billion/yr of taxes is lost (Oxfam)

People and Corruption: Citizens' Voices from around the World

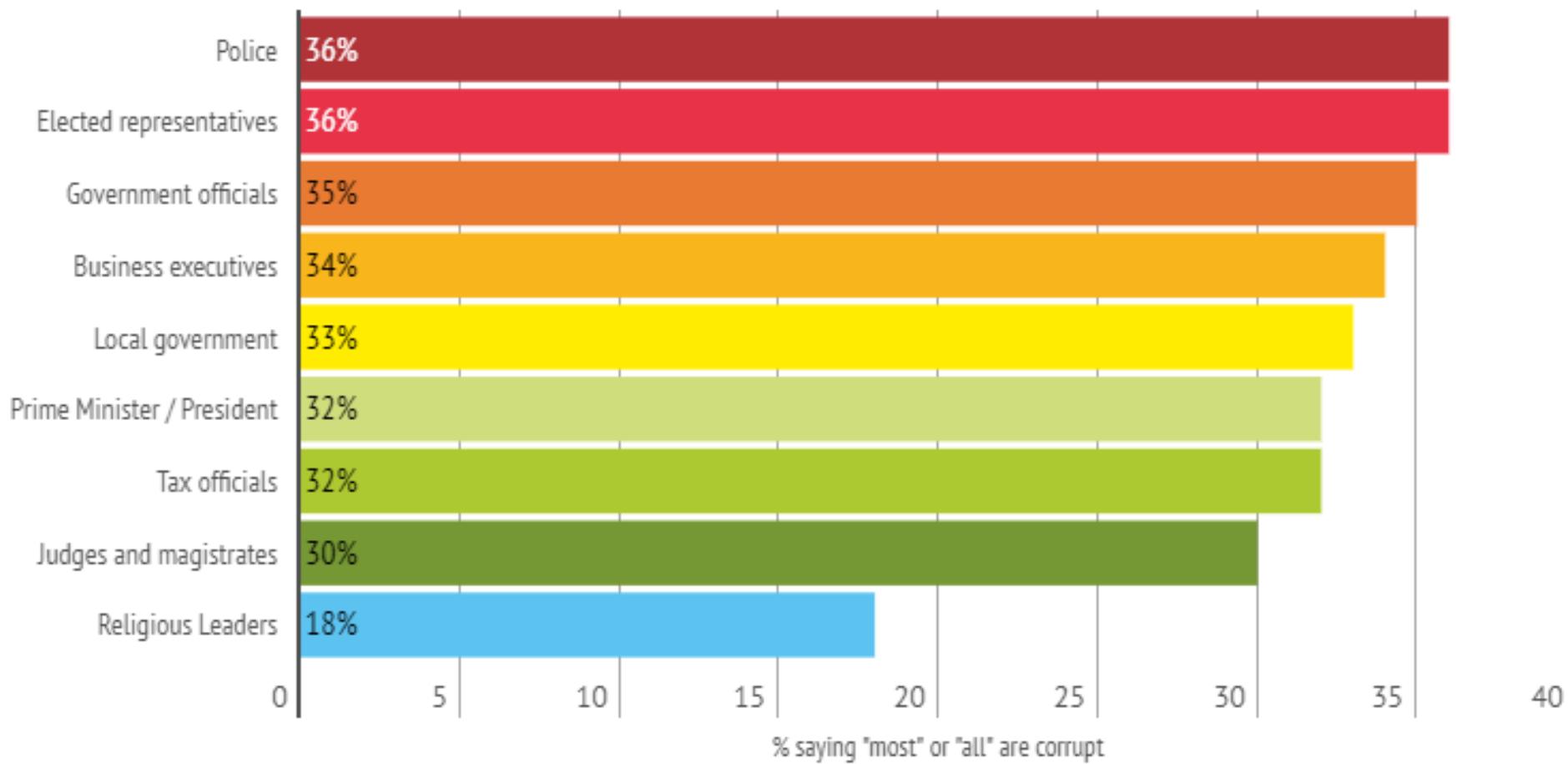
Transparency International (2017)

- 162,000 interviews in 119 countries (2017-2017)
- Notable results:
 - 25% of people pay at least one bribe annually to a public official
 - 57% think their governments fight corruption badly (esp. Middle East and Africa)
 - 54% agree that citizens can make a difference in fighting corruption (the region with the fewest citizens agreeing was Eastern Europe, whereas Latin Americans felt very empowered to make a difference)

HOW CORRUPT ARE DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONS AND GROUPS IN SOCIETY?

- GLOBAL AVERAGE

- GLOBAL AVERAGE



Five necessary components of social change

1. Discipled followers of Christ: *Mobilizable mass movement for integrity and transparency*
2. Church as model society: *Believably model integrity and transparency*
3. Christian worldview: *Educate for a new mentality about integrity and transparency*
4. High-performing network: *Effectively change cultural consensus about corruption*
5. Virtuous and sacrificial leader: *Authentic spokesperson for integrity and transparency*

Five necessary components of social change

1. Discipled followers of Christ: *Mobilizable mass movement for integrity and transparency*
2. Church as model society: *Believably model integrity and transparency*
3. Christian worldview: *Educate for a new mentality about integrity and transparency*
4. High-performing network: *Effectively change cultural consensus about corruption*
5. Virtuous and sacrificial leader: *Authentic spokesperson for integrity and transparency*

Characteristics of discipled followers

1. Think with Christ's mind (I Corinthians 2:16)
2. Creatively and skillfully obey everything Christ commands (Mt. 28:19-20)
3. Fearlessly and courageously challenge status quo (Joshua 1:9; Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5)
4. Pray with expectant hopefulness (James 1:5-6; Luke 1:45)
5. Full of integrity (Ephesians 4 and 5)

Five necessary components of social change

1. Discipled followers of Christ: *Mobilizable mass movement for integrity and transparency*
2. Church as model society: *Believably model integrity and transparency*
3. Christian worldview: *Educate for a new mentality about integrity and transparency*
4. High-performing network: *Effectively change cultural consensus about corruption*
5. Virtuous and sacrificial leader: *Authentic spokesperson for integrity and transparency*

What do we mean “church as a model society”?

1. Church demonstrates a better way to make a society: “a showcase of the Kingdom”
2. *“God’s) intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 3:10)*
3. Church has the greatest power to bridle the culture of corruption!

Questions for pastors and church leaders

Why do many of us permit ourselves and our churches to be centers for religious corruption?

1. Are we afraid to preach against corruption because our biggest donors are themselves corrupt?
2. Do we think that the church and its property belongs to us and not to Christ?
3. Do we refuse to take bribes from those who want jobs with us?
4. Do we renounce all sex outside of marriage?
5. Do we refuse to participate in cover-ups of corruption involving fellow pastors?

Five necessary components of social change

1. Discipled followers of Christ: *Mobilizable mass movement for integrity and transparency*
2. Church as model society: *Believably model integrity and transparency*
3. Christian worldview: *Educate for a new mentality about integrity and transparency*
4. High-performing network: *Effectively change cultural consensus about corruption*
5. Virtuous and sacrificial leader: *Authentic spokesperson for integrity and transparency*

Christian worldview: Selected themes

1. Creation-Fall-Redemption-Restoration narrative
2. Christ, His Kingdom, and His redemptive work on the Cross
3. Humans : *Imago Dei* and Cultural Mandate (Genesis 1:26-28)
4. New Heaven/New Earth: “I make all things new!” (Rev. 21:5)
5. Our moral responsibilities in pursuit of common good (Gal. 5:13)

Five necessary components of social change

1. Discipled followers of Christ: *Mobilizable mass movement for integrity and transparency*
2. Church as model society: *Believably model integrity and transparency*
3. Christian worldview: *Educate for a new mentality about integrity and transparency*
4. High-performing network: *Effectively change cultural consensus about corruption*
5. Virtuous and sacrificial leader: *Authentic spokesperson for integrity and transparency*

Desirable team attributes

1. Leader (respected by everyone, influential, servant-hearted, good listener, values team members)
2. Technical analysts (e.g., lawyers)
3. Researchers (uncover evidence)
4. Lobbyists with good political skills and networks
5. Insiders who fully understand the problem (e.g., civil servants)
6. Trendsetters (willing to take risks, unafraid of change)
7. Financiers/fundraisers (connections to potential funders)

Five necessary components of social change

1. Discipled followers of Christ: *Mobilizable mass movement for integrity and transparency*
2. Church as model society: *Believably model integrity and transparency*
3. Christian worldview: *Educate for a new mentality about integrity and transparency*
4. High-performing network: *Effectively change cultural consensus about corruption*
5. Virtuous and sacrificial leader: *Authentic spokesperson for integrity and transparency*

Why are such leaders essential to social change?

1. Example: Their sacrifice inspires others (Mark 10:45)
2. Can mobilize prayer (e.g., Daniel 9 and Nehemiah 1)
3. Empathy: Feel the deep wounds of those they lead (Hebrews 4:15-16)
4. Skill in mobilizing masses (Lenin, Mao, Hitler, MLK Jr., Sermon on the Mount)
5. They are visible icons

Five necessary components of social change

1. Discipled followers of Christ: *Mobilizable mass movement for integrity and transparency*
2. Church as model nation: *Believably model integrity and transparency*
3. Christian worldview: *Educate for a new mentality about integrity and transparency*
4. High-performing network: *Effectively change cultural consensus about corruption*
5. Virtuous and sacrificial leader: *Authentic spokesperson for integrity and transparency*

Strategies to Bridle Corruption in Uganda

1. Pastors, teach that:
 - a. As sin, corruption damages our humanity
 - b. Christian conversion involves repentance from corruption
2. Churches must:
 - a. Develop curricula that emphasizes personal achievement, models integrity, and eschews corruption
 - b. Regularly highlight those who possess integrity
 - c. Create internal systems that ensure corruption does not enter the church
 - d. <https://learn.tearfund.org/en/resources/series/why-advocate/why-advocate-on-governance-and-corruption>
3. National leader: Vigilantly root out corruption in his life and the nation
4. Civil society organizations: Lead campaigns to end public corruption
5. Citizens:
 - a. Enlist to help with anti-corruption campaigns (petitions, etc.)
 - b. Hold politicians and bureaucrats accountable for transparency! (Does reliance on foreign remittances undermine this responsibility?)
 - c. Do not elect politicians simply because they promise “It’s our turn to eat!”

Strategies to Bridle Corruption in Uganda

4. Artists: Develop films, music, dance, and sculpture that teach a Christian worldview
5. Educators:
 - a. Develop and teach anti-corruption/pro-integrity curricula
 - b. Develop curricula that systematically teach a Christian worldview
6. Government leaders: Commit to build strong anti-corruption institutions:
 - a. Legislation to outlaw corruption and increased transparency
 - b. Legislation to increase economic freedom and ease of doing business
 - c. Executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government must be separated
 - d. Taxation system so that legislators are accountable to citizens
 - e. Judiciary must hold accountable those who violate the laws
 - f. Integrity Groups and other mutual accountability mechanisms that reinforce integrity