

**Title: Africa's Elites Ways of Commodifying Politics to Valorise Economic Rent**

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### Inspiration

*"Dictatorship was never part of the indigenous African political tradition...nobody declared himself 'chief for life' and his village to be a one party state in indigenous Africa"*<sup>1</sup>

*"Whilst developing countries have to check corruption, we are also entitled to demand the developed world does not thrust corruption upon us."*<sup>2</sup>

*"Sitting in Government are sophisticated thieves."*<sup>3</sup>

*"I know the door through which I came into politics and I know the door I should use to go out of politics. I thought I was Robert Mugabe and not Julius Nyerere. I do things my own way, the Robert Mugabe way."*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> George BN Ayittery, Why Structural Adjustment Fail in Africa, TransAfrica Forum, I June 1991

<sup>2</sup> Jerry Rawlings, president of Ghana, un millennium summit 7 September 2000  
[www.responddanet.com/english/previous\\_quotes\\_week.htm](http://www.responddanet.com/english/previous_quotes_week.htm)

<sup>3</sup> Thabo Mbeki, **TIME**, 24 May, 1999, p.50

<sup>4</sup> Robert Mugabe, in **Africa Business**, "IMF is a Monster-Mugabe", June 1999, p.16

## 1. Abstract

This paper starts with incredulity first. Whilst doing some research for this paper, I came across members of the top political elite from Zaire to Nigeria often taken as 'kleptocrat extraordinaire'<sup>5</sup> to be also in the forefront in denouncing rent-seeking and corruption with an equal 'extraordinaire' flair and completeness at the same time. Some might ignore their stance as cynical and self-serving and try to ignore them and move on to other concerns. Others might condemn the fraudulent behaviour and adding what can one expect any ways from such immoral and unethical characters and pass on to other things.

But I did not think it is that simple.

Here is at the core the typical elite behaviour that has not changed and continues to influence the way Governments are run in Africa. It is a shared behaviour which may be expressed blatantly by some, but all the same shared and acted upon by all the others. It is the existence and perpetuation of persons on top with such behaviour that made outsiders to devise policies to deal with what they are presented with and not to aim high and wish to call and change the very elite behaviour that has wrecked so much havoc in Africa and to Africa. What the despots denounce in words, they practice in real life actions. With such a schizophrenic behaviour comes an elite world inhabited bereft of a much larger conviction and commitment to ideals like national development, national liberation and justice and fairness to all the citizens of a given African country. At the core of rent-seeking is this bifurcation in elite behaviour of continuing acting on corrupt behaviour as normal whilst denouncing it in words at the same time. Such a yawning gap between words and actions creates a real hazard to society and economy to undergo a healthy social and economic development. It is this lie of fighting corruption in words whilst practising it to enrich oneself and ones friends with rent that is at the core of the elite's failure to make a difference and reveal any positive spirit for realising a national developmental agency in Africa.

This paper reflects on this dilemma in order to address how a rent-seeking cleansing can be attempted to align the elites as part of the solution rather than the problem of African economic and political development.

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<sup>5</sup> Adam Hochschild on Mobutu Sese Seko, New Yorker, 24 March 1997 p.6

## 2. Introduction: Rent-seeking and Corruption in Africa

The fact of being a proven criminal and having the power of impunity to declaring innocence without any moral and political consequence from such a bizarre action is what manifests as elite behaviour at the core of Government that continues to plague the African continent even after Mobutu and Abacha and other proven kleptocrat extraordinaire have left Africa for good. We still have the elites that denounce corruption in words like the Mobutus and carry on practising corruption in real life.

For the record: This is what General Sani Abacha said to come to power: "There is inadequacy of food at reasonable prices for our people... Health services are in shambles... Our educational system is deteriorating at an alarming rate... Workers are being owed salary arrears of eight to twelve months yet our leaders revel in squander-mania."<sup>6</sup>

This is also what Mobutu said: In the Congo (Zaire then!), "everything is for sale, everything is bought in our country. And in this traffic, holding any slice of public power constitutes a veritable exchange instrument, convertible into illicit acquisition of money or other goods, or the evasion of all sorts of obligations. Worse, even the use, by an individual, of his most legitimate right is subjected to an invisible tax, openly pocketed by individuals. Thus, an audience with an official, enrolling children in school, obtaining school certificates, access to medical care, a seat on a plane, an import license, a diploma, among other things, are all subject to this tax which is invisible, yet known to the whole world."<sup>7</sup>

The kleptocrat extraordinaire knows best how those assigned or appointed to serve the public do at the point of providing service by demanding payment for private gain in exchange for carrying out what should be the execution of public duty. They have created a kind of market transaction that elicits private gain as rent for doing public duty. Who can know this better than a Mobutu? At a magnitude and scale that is unimaginable Congo's rich mineral wealth has been plundered and what the people received has been only the curse of warfare, death and tears throughout the infamous reign of the Mobutu regime with his motto of only one party, his own; to rule as the one and only chief, himself; as the state incarnated in one person, himself again; until he dies. But he died out of power not in power leaving behind the warning to others who wish to die in power, may you also not meet the Mobutu exit! All those members of the elite who behave with unbelievable schizophrenia may not need just psychological help, the longer they persist

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<sup>6</sup> Radio broadcast in overthrowing Shagari in a coup in 1983 quoted in STANFORD J Ungar., *AFRICA, The People and Politics of an Emerging Continent*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985, p.146

<sup>7</sup> Thomas M. Callaghy, *the State- Society Struggle: Zaire in Comparative Perspective*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1984 P 190 quoting the speech given by Mobutu in 1977 where Mobutu castigated such corruption as 'le mal Zairois' Mobutu is reported also to have said: "It is better to die of hunger than be rich and a slave to colonialism" (slogan) quoted from Philip Gourevitch, "The Vanishing, *The New Yorker*, 2 June 1997, p.51

to stay in power, the more they may be ending becoming psychiatric cases being a menace to the people, country and nation they happen to impose their despotic control over for an indefinite time.

Paul Biya adds his version: “corruption is an obstacle to the interests of the majority of our people... we have to fight corruption to a standstill...”<sup>8</sup> He is still in power. Bongo will be nearly forty years since he is in power. Robert Mugabe says he is not a Julius Nyerere and has no intention to do a Julius Nyerere in leaving power. His plan of how he would leave power is his and his alone to decide not the will of the people of Zimbabwe.

If a Nyerere or a Mandela denounces corruption, one can live with that because these are leaders that have not shown excessive appetite to prolong their tenure, amend the constitution, pilfer the national wealth and did not express a wish as chiefs to die on the ‘throne’ of power. But to hear those who have been the top rated corrupt members of the elite lecturing the people by a denunciation of what they claim as corruption by others whilst exonerating them-selves is nothing but a bare-faced and shameless behaviour for which there is no easy remedy or cure.

That is to say, if those who have been acknowledged to be ‘kleptocratic extraordinaire’ also denounce corruption with such vehement rhetoric whilst being in the forefront of being themselves despotic and corrupt, how would it be possible to open the politics and economics of Africa to become free from such warped elite behaviour? No one should condone corruption not least those who are the most corrupt? If both Satan and the angel speak with the same vehemence in denouncing corruption, how would it be possible to distinguish elite behaviour for remedy and reform in order to address and identify who is the corrupted and who is the corrupter and focus even more on the underlying social relations that sustain this dilemma in order to create conditions for the social-engineering of elite behaviour for rooting out corruption from Africa’s soil? If the elites can say something and do something else, if their speaking diverges dramatically from their action, their words from their commitment, their feelings from their thinking, their actions from their behaviour, how is it possible to overcome the psychopathic sickness of such elite manipulation by employing linguistic and communicative violence regarding opposition to corruption in words whilst being ever eager and at the forefront in practising the vice they condemn so profusely? The very political elite is not a development agent but a factor in heavily distorting and undermining Africa’s political economy for nearly half a century after de-colonisation?

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<sup>8</sup> Interview on Cameroonian Television on 19. 02.87 reported by the Ministry of Information and Culture, p.25  
Interview by Eric Chinje

If there is incoherence in thinking, doing, speaking and feeling about public service, how and who is best able to deal with elites that say something and do something else, denounce something whilst being at the forefront of committing the crimes they denounce, express emotion and outrage or strong feeling against corruptive behaviour whilst thinking and being the embodiment of corruption themselves by using language to distance them from that they readily commit as crime. How to deal with emotion that borders on lunacy and reason misused and abused to the self-interest of elites whose orientation to govern is anchored in misgovernment. In an Africa's elites' Orwellian type psychotic world, killing is taken as exemplifying living, crime is innocence, despotism is democracy, misgoverning is governing, human wrong is human rights, rule of law is rule of might, public service is public theft, rent-seeking is profit-making and practising corruption whilst denouncing it in words is public-service. All these hyperboles are done by committing violence against reason, justice, normal communication, language and grammar in the warped world of ruling elite behaviour.

The role of the elite in Africa in economic development is indeed a great challenge. In this paper we propose the argument that public service must be decommmodified to reduce the temptation of joining politics or seizing power in order to extract rent for the elites and those well connected to the elites in power through patrimonial, clientistic and other forms of personalised social connections.

If a corrupt elite positions itself in the forefront as the fighter of corruption, if a criminal both commits the crime and at the same time claims the moral upper hand as a fighter of crime, if a drunkard claims to be sober when he is intoxicated, if a bandit claims to be innocent when it is easy to show he is a robber, if those who stash public money in foreign banks themselves claim to fight those who scramble to apportion to themselves what remains un-stolen, and all have the power and protection by their military and their foreign allies to remain at large, one wonders about the difficulties and stress involved in fathoming this cognitive and behaviour dissonance in the first place and the internal and external social arrangements and interactions that sustain it, let alone in knowing how to go about dealing with this outrageous hypocrisy that even goes to the extent of appropriating not only a nation's resources but even the language with which to make sense of that day light mobilisation of both behaviour and language to legitimise robbing.

Admittedly a criminal assuming if the person comes out of the criminality cognitive behaviour or world and practice in the first place may be very useful to help in the fight of other criminals to de-criminalise them. Those who have been corrupt may know the ways of how to assist in de-corrupting the highly corrupt elite that is in denial of its misdeeds and gross dereliction of duty for promoting public services by becoming the power of example rather than the epitome of corrupt power. But what is not comprehensible is for those who are at the apogee of the corruption ring to claim also to fight corruption without

changing an iota of their own corrupt behaviour and practice. If the politics, the rule of law, the press, the institutions, the norm and other relevant national efforts cannot deal with the problem and expose such fraudulent behaviour, those who can rob are at large unhindered either by fear of God, Law or Conscience, the country is in trouble having fallen to a reckless lawless environment where property owners may lose their property, those who build new factories or organise farms might lose willy-nilly such innovations at the whim of corrupt rulers and their networks of kleptocrats more than being protected by rule of law. At once such a situation denies a nation both a political and economic environment or context, and an intellectual, cultural and moral encouragement and incentive appropriate to generate a process of sustainable economic development.

Where does such elite behaviour come from in the case of Africa? Are there factors both internal and external in Africa that stimulates corrupt elite behaviour than inhibit it? How can the conditions that stimulate corrupt elite behaviour be changed to more responsible elite behaviour?

### **3. The State as a Prize to be captured by Rent-Seekers**

Half of a century of independence has not brought any of the African economies to the status of the developed economies. In fact Africa is often depicted as the continent with the most disasters, the continent that is absent in the knowledge map of the world, a continent which had comparable levels of economic growth to South Korea in the early 60s but has lagged far behind the latter to a point prospects for catching up is not seen as possible though it may be desirable.

There are many explanations for the failure of African countries to complement their political independence with a sustained level of economic development and economic independence. There are broadly two types of explanations. One is externally based, the other internally based. Of the externally based explanations, some attribute the failure of African development to the legacy of colonialism. "The process of decolonisation was... reluctant, repressive and opportunistic."<sup>9</sup> The decolonised countries inherited laws and institutions that were not suited nor adapted to the realities, needs, traditions and aspirations of the local circumstances. Even the state came to be seen as a 'soft state' being weak or lacking strong expression of national interest by the elites steering it.<sup>10</sup>

Others ascribe it to the persistence of neo-colonialism. Internally based explanations attribute to the persistence of fragmentation, the persistence of conflict and tribal competition and above all to the elite manipulation of differences in ethnicity, language,

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<sup>9</sup> Fatten quoted in Gould and Mukenda, *Bureaucratic Corruption in Africa: Causes, Consequences & Remedies: International Journal of public Administration*, Vol.12, no.3, 1989, pp.427-57

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p.434

religion and region to advance selfish interests. A number of analysts ascribe elite competition to undermine the emergence of robust institutions and the crippling of the processes necessary to inscribe the rudimentary structures for sustainable governance.

Both the internal and external conditions for current elite behaviour play equally big role. Very simply when elites stash away public money in foreign banks, it is possible to have created a prohibitive external environment to prevent them from doing so. But the external corruptive actors encourage the elites and even advise them how to continue to evade controls to keep away public money for their own use.

Mobutu oversaw the plundering of the Congo for thirty years, but according to a Congolese medical doctor I had an opportunity to meet and discuss in South Africa, he died with the embarrassment that there was no money to buy the appropriate sized coffin to bury him. One wonders where did all the money stashed in Swiss banks go and the houses I saw are Mobutu's from Geneva to the Riviera, where did they all vanish? Neither Mobutu's family nor the people of the Congo got anything. The coffin for Mobutu has to be bought by the King of Morocco according to my informant. This is how the Economist and other commentaries try to capture his dastardly legacies: "Mobutu inherited the Belgian Congo; the empire created by King Leopold of the Belgians, and treated it similarly. They both created gargantuan fantasies for themselves out of its vast wealth and neither had the slightest concern for the inhabitants."<sup>11</sup>

Mind you the Congo Basin has resources to supply the entire electricity needs of the African continent. Africa is like a revolver, the Congo basin is like the trigger, whoever controls the Congo Basin controls Africa. That is how Franz Fanon used to describe the Congo. The place has no peace to this day reminding us the road ahead to fix Africa's many ills remain arduous and tortuous. It has been suggested with peace, stability and non-corrupt government, the Congo's hydropower can harness electricity that can fuel the economy of much of Africa helping to increase labour productivity and raising the standard of living of not only the people in the Congo but also the people in the rest of Africa.

The concept of the post-colonial state in Africa needs to be revisited to understand why elite behaviour has focused on scrambling to seizing the state rather than serving the people, country, nation by making with lawful governance the state to be a producer of public service rather than an instrument of elite thieving. The state was bequeathed as a colonial hangover that ended up intoxicating the elite whilst being a big burden on the peoples, countries and nations of Africa. The state is not a nation builder. It is an elite builder. It is not people empowering, it is a people repressor. It is not an economic

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<sup>11</sup> The Economist Review, The Economist, 15 July 2000, p.5

developer; it is a promoter of underdevelopment. It is not a developmental state, it is a failed state. It is not a site for public service; it is an attractor of public vice. The appellation to describe the African state is indeed legion: the criminal state, the renter's state, the failed state, the patrimonial state, the predation state, and so on and so on. The main problem is that the state has been more rent-seeking agent than a developmental agent. The focus has been if the state is not an effective development agent, who can take its role or how can its ineffectiveness as a development agent can be rectified. Such issues have dominated public discourse rather than accepting the state is there whether one likes it or not and ways of inculcating habits, norms, rules and regulations to make it an effective dispenser of public service rather than a private rent allocating agent has dominated public debate on the state in Africa.

The state passed through a number of periods when its role had different significance for Africa's economic development. The early 60s until the 1973 world oil crises was a period when there was strong reliance on the state to ply a developmental role in economic growth. Import substitution, public ownership, Para states and civil servants in public administration using economic planning to help their internal and foreign friends dominated this period.

After the world oil crises many African countries went into severe debt and it was not possible to raise financial resources from the private capital markets. The IMF and the World Bank became super powerful in dictating how African economies should be managed based on their ability to dispense grants and loans.

In the 1980s structural adjustment through what is known as the Washington Consensus... some know call it the Washington confusion dominated African economies. At the centre of this Washington consensus is the celebration of the market, the rise of NGOs, the private sector, the divestiture of public assets and the liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation of the economy by weakening the state. This was the period when the state was seen more as a burden rather than help in the economy. It was the period of the minimal state and the promotion of the market as a substitute. The consequence from this was that the things the state should do like spending on education, health; infrastructure and providing the conditions for economic development were severely undermined. The social problems multiplied.

After 1989 there was an effort to bring back the state but improve state capacity through discourses of good governance. It is not getting markets and prices right, but also it became now fashion to get Government right. This shift to build state capacity brought the capacity building ministries in many African countries. Like the Taliban created the

ministry for the prevention of vice and the promotion of virtue, the World Bank also created ministries for state capacity to improve state governance in much of Africa.

In reality whether one has a ministry of capacity development or not, the state remains largely as an asset by the elite for capture. As long as its main attraction as a prize to be captured by competing elites continues, its rent-seeking role will not be removed. What is needed is to remove that which makes the state as the site of rent-seekers. It should no longer be a site to attract rent-seekers. It must be the site to attract creative public service seeking elites that are de-elitized in the proper sense from aiming or plotting to use the state as a rent-allocator or distributor.

The main reason is in the constellation of actors and structures that brought the African-post colonial state in the era of colonial freedom made the state a prize for capture but not an agent for national economic development. The fact that African post-colonial state evolved as a prize to be captured has not been changed. What needs to change is this rent-seeking attracting state role.

Real decolonisation means making the state developmental. De-colonisation struggles did not shape the post-colonial state as a developmental actor. The state attracts rent-seekers not creative elites that occupy the moral high ground to undertake public service with public ethics. Often the political independence struggle ended up inheriting a state shaped and forged by the colonising empire that left hurriedly with most of the anti-colonial struggles still in a state of confusion regarding what to do next. Very often the settlements did not bring clean anti-colonial breaks. They retained colonial bureaucracies and structures and often rejected traditional modes of governance. The resources to run these bequeathed structures necessitated the invitation of the former colonial powers whose indirect rule continues to disrupt elite unity at the local level. The former colonial powers continued to devise selection of their favourite elites. If those they did not favour come, they supported those who wanted to foment coups and counter coups... Many African post-colonial states ended up being embroiled in the vicious cold war super power games that crippled many states and continues to do so even long after the Cold War has ended.

#### **4. Ways to bring about Cleansing the State from Rent-Seekers**

There are two major approaches to bring about major re-reorientation from rent-seeking to public service seeking. The first is to make it impossible to commodify political connections for private gain by using the state as a prize for valorising economic rent. Ways must be found to make it impossible to use the state to commodify political connections into economic rent.

One way is the creation of an open, transparent, accountable, responsible, responsive, efficient, equitable, just, fair and effective social arrangement that permit elites to enter into free competition and come out with their plan to deliver in a fixed period. If the elites do not deliver what they promised, they run into punishment. If society creates a system where human governance is to be judged by standards of effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness and responsibility and not by how many BMWs, Audis, Mercedes Benz and other worldly possessions, there will be a real opportunity to move from a rent-seeking elite into creative and legitimate elites that can put their role and success by how well advances in economic development have been made. The issue then becomes what social arrangements are needed to undermine rent-seeking behaviour and bolster creative elite behaviour for bringing about sustainable economic development.

At the heart of this transformation is the creation of social arrangements that genuinely embed as culture, norm, habit, routine and law democratic circulation of the elite where no elite stays no more than eight to ten years at the helm of running a state. This is particularly necessary in Africa to create social arrangements and systems that will not by law permit any group of elites from self-inviting themselves to over stay their terms of stay. If there is both an African consensus and a global consensus that no elite would be tolerated to violate this norm, and no player both in Africa and outside Africa can permit any elite to overstay, a real limit or necessary condition to change rent-seeking behaviour at the core of elite behaviour would likely obtain.

Add to this the use of modern information and computers and communication technologies to improve services and participation of citizens to valorise oversight over elites that happen to be saddled into power with all the temptation to move into rent-seeking.

If democratic social arrangements are complemented with the use of ICTs to foster democratic governance, the opportunity to change the state from a site of rent-seeking into a site for creative public-service seeking will grow by considerable margin.

## **5. Combining H-Governance with E –Governance to Change Rent-seeking Elites into Public Service Orientated Elites in Africa**

Perhaps no where is more necessary to find application to solve the numerous and varied social and economic problems with new technologies, inventions and innovations than the African continent. The information, computers and communication revolution (the ICT revolution as it has come to be called) has opened vast opportunities to meet intractable challenges and difficulties that Africa has been confronted with since the 1960s in novel

ways. One of the thorniest of the difficulties in Africa has been the persistence governance crises. This has created a situation for human wrong to be committed against the people rather than their human rights to be protected. Those who are at the helm to steer people and society ended up exacerbating the economic, knowledge and governance crises rather than promote human development and comprehensive wellbeing.

How to find ways to deal with this intractable dilemma of persistent governance crises has become a priority concern by various internal and external stakeholders. The ICT revolution has been seized upon to help in improving the overall governance landscape in the African continent. Whilst ICT can help, its usefulness lies more when it plays a complementary role to human governance (h-Governance) improvement than when it takes a stand alone role to fix intractable problems that have endured for prolonged period.

Today in Africa the twin problems of despotism and corruption have not been eradicated from the African soil. All means necessary including the ICT revolution must be deployed to deal with these persistent problems that have undermined Africa's vast possibilities to emerge as a powerful, prosperous, wealthy, healthy and strong civilisation. It is indeed embarrassing that after over half a century of political independence, no African state has joined the status of a fully developed economy. Much of the reason for this lack of success is attributed to the lack of a predictable system of governance to mobilise citizens' energies and innovations to steer society, economy and the community to full prosperity and development.

Governance in Africa has been constructed from the community local level to the continental levels. Unfortunately from the local to the continental levels, the governance crises persist. A conscious and deliberate process of re-engineering the system of governance has not been fulfilled satisfactorily. There is a need to use all means available to tackle the long overdue governance crises in Africa in order to put it within the logic of a sustainable system. The central objective is to combine means with the goal of getting an irreversible governance system that work to stimulate sustained human and economic development by eradicating poverty and promoting comprehensive well being as a priority of priorities in Africa.

There are broadly three routes to get to grips with the governance crises in Africa. One way is to continue with what can be described a business as usual padding along of an 'h-governance route,' that has not been fruitful to date judging by nearly 50 years of post-colonial freedom. Since the African wave of political independence in the early 60s, we have had that h-governance approach which ended up producing on balance more corruption and despotism than good government and democratic fair dealing.

An important innovation is the onset of the ICT revolution in information, computers and communication technology also to influence governance in Africa that has brought considerable potential to subvert dictatorship and increase citizen participation in various ways in the lives people have reason to choose and value. ICTs are regarded as the third major revolution after the agricultural and industrial revolutions and they have opened a new e-governance space or route that has huge potential to improve citizen participation, equity, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, responsibility, effectiveness and efficiency in the manifold transaction between service suppliers and service recipients. In Africa, the full potential of the ICTs is not fully realised yet.

The third route is a judicious combination of h-governance with e-governance. In the end as long as ICTs cannot replace h-Governance and they are meant in fact to improve the latter, and conversely h-governance cannot replace ICTs, what becomes important is to deal with what is strong and weak on each side and address the weaknesses of both sides in order to combine the strengths of both sides. Such a creative combination is what is likely to bring staff effectiveness and accountability, institutional transparency and citizen participation in the end. The dual (h- and e- governance) is there to stay. What is needed is to appreciate with close analytical scrutiny the weaknesses from each side of the dual governance and also the strengths. The overall objective should be to combine and accelerate the process of governance improvement all over the continent from the locality to the continental spheres by using the dual socio-technical combination to best effect.

Governance must be rooted at the local and the municipal core of the African experience. It is at the local level where the services must be rich and where improvement of services, decision making, performance, effectiveness, efficiency, transparency accountability and participation of citizens in the local affairs that matter to them are relevant. This choice of the local and the municipality as the site of research, in many ways, is very appropriate in order to examine and appreciate the tangible impacts of ICTs in improving the services to citizens by undertaking primary data on what changes have actually taken on the workings of municipal administrative systems and staff responses and training as a result of the introduction of the new technology. The key is to know how to combine the Pan-African level of service provision with different local municipalities that ICTs facilitate. If the research site would have commenced from the continental, the micro- details that the local municipal site provides would have been easily overlooked. The research move to build quality governance indicators from the local, to the national, regional and continental is likely to be both specific, inclusive and aggregative generating in the end very useful insights how to circulate best practices excavated and learned from the work that links ICTs application to Africa's varied governance landscape.

There is an argument that Pan-African unity can be facilitated better if there is local self-recognition and active service provision. In fact the way to overcome the tragedy of failed states in Africa is to promote actively local-level governance whilst promoting the 'Africaness' of all the existing states. This is one way that has been suggested to help reconstruct Africa's governance architecture from clear up the post-colonial myopia. The relics of the arbitrary maps of post-coloniality have been a source of governance crises in Africa. A way out of this crisis is to create cross-border municipal self-governance that permits ease of mobility and effective public service delivery. More widely, a number of analysts have suggested that the best way to get around this dilemma is to improve participation, services and effectiveness at the locality. The idea is to make municipal governance the core for service delivery. Analysts suggest that the more effective municipal governance becomes the easier to forge a stronger Pan African unity. The argument is that municipal government is easier to define and there may be little opportunity to expand corruption networks as it has been for the states that emerged after de-colonisation where the elite competed to capture the booty that the state symbolised misdirecting focus and energy in the direction of often violently to seize state power.

## **6. Concluding Remark**

Rent-seekers see the African post-colonial state as a prize to be captured. This state of affairs has changed little since decolonisation. In fact the way decolonisation happened built this opportunistic elite behaviour as one of the outcomes of the decolonising experience. The elite that captures the state inhabited a bifurcated self-serving ethically barren, public service shunning and rent-allocating and accumulating practice with a language that denounces all these by those who are the first to practise the vice of despotic rule, and corruption.

The important challenge facing African economies is how to bring about a rent-seeking clean up by creating social arrangements that can decommodify politics, and change the role of the state from being seen as a prize to be captured to an institution that holds the steering capacity to deliver public services. The key is to distance economic rent valorisation from state capture by elites that have little or no concern for habituating a public service ethos, culture and system in public life.

Africa's elite ways of commodifying politics to continue valorising economic rent can be challenged by spreading democratic culture and a system of social arrangement where there is zero tolerance for elites to continue being in power after a limited term of service that must be enforced by both internal African public and external global consensus. It sounds abstract and naïve to recommend this, but there is no way the elite rent-seeking behaviour can be seriously challenged unless both internal and external or domestic and international corruptors and the corrupted, rent-seekers with rent able resources come

together and agree on a plan of how to change the elites or make it impossible for them to continue rent-seeking behaviour.

Another additional weapon is to try to change human temptation by technological alternatives. The ICT revolution has brought alternatives of e-governance that can be used to dilute and limit rent-seekers from continuing to extract economic rent at the prize of sustaining economic development by allowing the state to emerge as a powerful developmental agent for economic transformation.

Rent-seeking clean up can take place in Africa if all means necessary are used to make the state a force for economic development by finding ways to bring the creative class in the forefront by saying good bye to the rent-seeking corrupt elite in Africa once and for all.

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9. Interview on Cameroonian Television on 19. 02.87 reported by the Ministry of Information and Culture, p.25 Interview by Eric Chinje
  
10. Fatten quoted in Gould and Mukenda, Bureaucratic Corruption in Africa: Causes, Consequences & Remedies: International Journal of public Administration, Vol.12, no.3, 1989, pp.427-57
  
11. The Economist Review, The Economist, 15 July 2000, p.5