

# Corruption in Kenya

Individual Attitudes and Actions Towards Corruption in  
Nakuru, Kenya

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# Abstract

Kenya is one of the most corrupt countries in the world due to a long legacy of corrupt leaders. It is so visible that it is impossible for a citizen or even a visitor to deny its presence. By travelling to Nakuru, Kenya, my aim was to explore individual attitudes and actions towards corruption and to see if these attitudes and actions affected the survival of the patron-client theory. Another aim was to try out and develop the theory to the relation police-citizen. By using a qualitative method where I conducted in-depth interviews with 16 respondents from two different social standings, the lower class and upper middle class, I could chart differences. The main findings showed that no matter what social standing they belonged to they all saw corruption as something negative and destroying for the country's development. When it came to their personal experience their views differed, while the respondents in the lower class participated in corrupt acts out of survival the respondents from the upper middle class participated in it as an easy way out. Concerning the survival of the patron-client theory, did the acts of the respondents' make that the theory survived and it could be develop to the police.

*Key words:* Corruption, Kenya, Attitudes, Patron-Client, Police  
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# 1 Introduction

I am sitting in a matatu,<sup>1</sup> and it is warm and overcrowded, as always. But no one seems to bother. This is how it is; they are all used to it. As we get closer to a police check point the matatu stops and some of the passengers have to step out, since the car is overcrowded. Even though we now are the allowed number of 14 passengers I see how the conductor is folding 100 Kenyan shillings<sup>2</sup> into his palm. When the matatu stops he gets out from the vehicle and goes and greets the police. I see how they are having a small talk, laughing and then he gets back into the matatu. Now, his palm is empty. I always wondered what they were talking about and what they were thinking when money was exchanging palms. I especially wondered what the conductor was thinking since this is something he has to go through every single day<sup>3</sup>.

## 1.1 The problem with corruption

Corruption is a problem that exists everywhere around the world, in some countries more than others and it was not until a few years ago that the international donor community recognized corruption as one of the main responsibilities for the failure of development in Africa (Médard 2002:379).

Corruption hinders economic development and it slows down the democratic process and stability in a political system. The money gained out of corruption does not trickle down to the people nor is it used to make smart investments, instead is it used for private gain to import luxurious goods (Thelander 2005:29).

Corruption in Africa can be seen as both systemic and generalized, systemic since it is more a rule than an exception and generalized since it is not limited to just one sector. Jean-François Médard speaks of it as a “culture of corruption” in Africa (Médard 2002:379).

According to Alan Doig and Robin Theobald countries that have a high level of petty corruption show a very low level of trust for the public sector which makes it hard to unite the society. It also affects the poorest in the society when they have to pay for a service which is supposed to be free (Doig & Theobald 2000:5-6, Compare Thelander 2005:14). Corruption is seen by the broad mass, as something negative and not wanted and it should be fought against (Thelander

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<sup>1</sup> Public service vehicle

<sup>2</sup> 100 Kenyan shillings = 10 Swedish krona

<sup>3</sup> My own personal experience of travelling in a public service vehicle several times a week in Kenya

2005:29). A World Bank study conducted in 2002 stated that the world spends 1 trillion dollar per year on bribes (Nwabuzor 2005:121).

## 1.2 Purpose of the study and research questions

When doing research about corruption to find out what to write about I found that most studies about corruption is done at macro level and there is only a handful studies done at micro-level. Inspired by a report presented by the World Bank I chose the purpose of this thesis to examine the individual attitudes and actions towards corruption in Nakuru, Kenya. The report named "*Individual Attitudes Towards Corruption: Do Social Effects Matter?*" was based on cross country data where they investigated 35 countries. The results showed that women, employed, less wealthy and older individuals were more averse towards corruption. It was also shown that social environment plays a major role. In societies where individuals tend to be more forgiving for a corrupt act they are also less averse towards corruption (Gatti *et al.* 2003:14).

I was motivated by this report since Kenya was excluded among the 35 countries, but is one of the most corrupt countries in the world (transparency.org). The research questions are:

- What are the individual attitudes and actions towards corruption in Nakuru, Kenya?
  - Is there a difference between people in the lower class and the upper middle class respectively?
  - Is there a difference between men and women respectively?
- How do their actions affect the survival of the patron-client networks among the Kenyan institutions?

The first question has a descriptive character since I want to describe the individual attitudes towards corruption and not explain or value them. The second question has an explaining character where I intend to explain why and if their actions affect the survival of the patron-client networks (Teorell & Svensson 2007:22, 278).

The choice of subject is both internally and externally relevant. Internally relevant since corruption is a subject concerning many researchers in the area of political science, and by making a study at micro-level I will be able to contribute with my knowledge in the area and hence create cumulatively. It is externally relevant since it constitutes a hinder in the development progress around the world (Teorell & Svensson 2007:18).

## 1.3 Delimitations

Since the questions are very broad and the time to conduct the study in Kenya was limited to about ten weeks the study had to be delimited. I therefore chose to only focus on one city, Nakuru, which is the third largest city in Kenya with approximately 337 200 inhabitants (mongabay.com). I chose Nakuru since it was there I had all my contacts, due to volunteer work in 2007.

I also chose to delimit the study to two groups in the society, the upper middle class and the lower class. The definition was made according to their standard of living and their occupation. The reason why I chose to focus on these two social standings is that there are big differences between the rich and the poor in Kenya. In addition, the fact that the World Bank report stated that less wealthy were more averse towards corruption than people with higher income affected my choice. Another limitation is my focus on gender.

When conducting the interviews I had two large themes, one was about meetings with the police and the other theme was about meetings with the health care. But throughout the interviews it turned out that it was only the lower class that gave experience of meeting with the health care.

In Kenya a person can choose between visiting the public hospitals or the private hospitals. The public hospitals are supposed to be free of charge while the private can be quite expensive. For a poor person this means that they have to go to the public hospital. A lot of corruption occur in these hospitals due to the low payment among the employees but also because the hospitals are bad equipped. The people in the lower class have to part with some money to be attended in the hospitals while the people from the upper middle class have enough recourse so they do not need to go to these hospitals.

The people from the upper middle class had therefore no stories to tell about visiting hospitals and therefore I chose to only focus on meetings with the police, since both groups had experience from meetings with them and it made it possible for me to compare their attitudes and actions with each other.

## 1.4 Material and critique of sources

Since the aim was to make different attitudes and actions towards corruption visible I only needed to use the interviews as primary material and not making surveys and participatory observation. To be able to get an understanding of what corruption and patronage-clientelism is, I need to have background information about the polemic. This secondary material will be constituted by different specialist literature and scientific articles, but also reports from Transparency International Kenya (TI Kenya) and from different internet sources (Teorell & Svensson 2007:87).

I conducted 26 interviews between April and June 2009 in Kenya, and the time for each interview was approximately 30 to 60 minutes. Some interviews even lasted for 1,5 and 2 hours. 16 out of the 26 interviews were used to write this thesis. The reason why only 16 interviews were used is because some became incomplete when the respondents did not talk as much as I hoped for about each subject.

In addition to make interviews with ordinary citizens I also aimed to make a few interviews with representatives with knowledge in the area, this to give weight to the interviews from the grass root level. However I only got one interview with a represent from Transparency International Kenya (TI-K), but the interview could not be used since this was just an introduction to their work. The second interview that was supposed to be conducted after the interviews with the respondents was cancelled. I tried to also get interviews with people doing research about corruption at Nairobi University and representatives from Kenya Anti-Corruption commission (KACC). Even though trying to contact them through email and phone, both still while being in Sweden and when I had arrived to Kenya I had no success in getting interviews with them. However, during the same time I did my study, TI-K conducted a survey about bribery in East Africa. The report, *The East African Bribery Index 2009*, has been a great value for me throughout this thesis due to the lack of comments from people with knowledge in the area.

A conclusion drawn from the interviews was that the men were more talkative than the women, no matter what social standing they belonged to. However, the women in the upper middle class did talk more than the women in the lower class. The women in the lower class were house wives and Rasma Karklins argues that housewives rarely have reasons to go outside since the men take care of them (Karklins 2005: 45). Therefore it is more likely that the men have more experience of corruption than the women and hence had more stories to tell. But, as stated in the *Corruption Barometer 2009*, it is not said that women would be less corrupt than men, they are just less likely to come in contact with institutions such as the police where demands for bribes are quite high (*Corruption Barometer 2009:7*)

## 2 Method and theoretical framework

### 2.1 Methodological considerations

In this thesis have a qualitative method with the technique of semi structured interviews been used. This method was found most suitable since I conducted a field study where the purpose was to explore individuals' experiences, values and attitudes towards corruption in depth (Divine 2002:197-199). The choice of method also gave the opportunity to seek deeply information about one respondent (Teorell & Svensson 2007:267).

The method of semi structured interviews was found to be the most adequate for the purpose since the questions in a semi structured interview are not tied up to a certain order like it would be in a structured interview. With semi structured interviews I was able to reverse order depending on what answer the respondents gave and he/she was not tied up to certain answers as they would be if a survey was conducted. This type of interview also gave the respondents the opportunity to talk freely about each subject (Teorell & Svensson 2007:89-90). The questions gave the respondents' opportunities to tell what they think are the most important dimensions of corruption. An interview guide was used to be sure that all the subjects I wanted to chart were covered (Devine 2002:198). The interview guide consisted of twelve broad questions where the follow up questions varied depending on what answer the respondents gave. Inspiration for the questions was taken from Karklins book *The System Made Me Do It - Corruption in Post-Communist Societies* and from own experience of being in Kenya before. The interview guide can be found in appendix 1.

Before I travelled to Kenya I had in mind that the individual interviews could be complemented with focus groups. This since working with focus groups can make it easier for respondents to talk about their thoughts when they are with people they know, and not just sitting with an interviewer and interpreter. It could also be easier to find deep drawing patterns that may be hard to catch with only individual meetings (Teorell & Svensson 2007:90). However, at place in Kenya I realized that this was not a possible option and I was settled with just doing individual interviews.

Asking questions among both the upper middle class and lower class in Nakuru made it possible for me to chart a pattern and make their attitudes towards corruption visible (Esaiasson *et al.* 2007: 259). It also made it possible to see if there are any differences between the social standing and gender and to try out if the patron-client theory works outside voting (which is something that will be developed in section 2.2).

### 2.1.1 Selecting respondents

When selecting respondents I used a strategic selection when dividing them into four groups; upper middle class, lower class and man respectively women. But when it came to select respondents within each group a random selection was used (Teorell & Svensson 2007:83-84, 265).

Since I only speak English and not the second official language Swahili nor any of all the local tribe language, I had to use an interpreter while conducting the interviews in the lower class. The interpreter was Kenyan and this made it possible for us to go to the estates and find respondents. To obtain as varied answers as possible I chose to visit four different estates in Nakuru. The diversity of stories told by people living in different estates showed the importance of conducting interviews in different places and also made it more interesting. When we came to the estates and met the inhabitants we talked about why I was in Kenya and why I was in their estate. I most of the times got a friendly treatment, but sometimes I was not welcomed and I met suspiciousness.

When conducting interviews in the upper middle class there was no opportunity to walk to their estates to find respondents, since the security in those area are quite high and every house is surrounded by high fences, sometimes even with electric fences. I therefore used some of my contacts in Nakuru to help me find respondents and when I had conducted a few interviews I started to use snow ball sampling by asking the respondents to suggest new respondents for the study (Esaiasson *et al.* 2007:216).

When meeting the respondents the first time and asking if they wanted to participate in my study I found it important to promise them confidentiality, since corruption is a very sensitive subject in Kenya. I also found it important to inform them about the purpose of my project (Teorell & Svensson 2007:21). I have due to the importance of confidentiality changed their names in this thesis. The respondents in the lower class are named; Beth, Tabitha, Leah, Simanza, Diba, Shaban, Simon and Joel. In the upper middle class they are named; Catherine, Mary, Faith, Peris, Sammy, Amos, John and Lewis.

### 2.1.2 Operational discussion

Using a qualitative method with semi structured interviews affects the validity in a positive way. Validity is often defined as you measure what you intend to measure. Making long interviews instead of short structured interviews made it easier to really measure peoples' attitudes and actions towards corruption since I did not try to control their answers. They were able to speak freely and that affected the validity in a positive way (Teorell & Svensson 2007:56-59).

Concerning the ontology this thesis has the perspective of realism, since the reality is not affected by the people and the reality is independent from me as a researcher. I cannot affect the fact that corruption exists (Lundquist 1993:67). When it comes to the choice of epistemology I take a subjective stand, since the purpose is, as mentioned above, to chart people's attitudes and actions towards

corruption. Fiona Devine says; “the in-depth interview is about listening to people talking in order to gain some insight into their world-views and how they see things as they do” (Devine 2002:201). The purpose is not to search for objective answers. According to Teorell & Svensson there are two types of interviews but this thesis focus on the one that catches the respondents’ subjective values (Teorell & Svensson 2007:89).

Even if the purpose is to chart patterns and not generalize the result to the whole Kenyan population, a researcher should always strive towards generalization according to Teorell & Svensson. The researcher should try to find respondents that reflect the population on the issue he or she intends to make the research about (Teorell & Svensson 2007:68-69). Devine argues that it is hard to generalize results from qualitative studies, but it is also said that findings that come out from interviews are rarely that misleading to what most people think about the phenomenon (Devine 2002:207). I believe that having four groups to compare between will at least give a glimpse of what some parts of the Kenyan population think about the problem with corruption in their country.

## 2.2 Theoretical framework

According to Arvind K. Jain theories of corruption are a way to make it easier to explain and measure the level of corruption in a society. In his article “*Corruption a review*” he states that there are two dominant approaches to capture corruption; an agency model and resource allocation model (Jain 2001:85). However, in this thesis a patron-client theory will be used since the Kenyan institutions are built-up through these ties and I find it interesting to find out if it is possible to try out and develop this theory to other fields than voting (Diamond 2008:145).

The importance of finding the right theory is stated by the fact that theories make it possible to generalize and simplify the reality, which leads to cases investigated in the future can be compared to each other (Teorell & Svensson 2007:48).

### 2.2.1 Patron – client theory

Two of the most notable researchers in the area of patrimonialism, Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle, argue that African institutions have come to be characterized with neopatrimonialism. This is a system where one person is ruling (the “big man”) and ordinary people have no rights or privileges except those that the ruler gives them (Bratton & van de Walle 1997:61). Further, they argue that neopatrimonialism weakens the formal rules and institutions, but it does not necessarily destroy them. When neopatrimonialism has internalized an institution it continues to live on even after the death or retirement of the first generations of individual leaders. Thus, neopatrimonialism reproduces over time (Bratton & van de Walle 1997:63).

Larry Diamond also discusses this issue and argues that one of the reasons why most sub-Saharan countries are said to be neopatrimonial is that on the surface they have laws and constitutions and look like a modern bureaucratic state. But on the inside they are ruled by a “big man” who has personalized his power through patron-client ties (Diamond 2008:145). He describes these ties that they:

[...] radiates out and down from the biggest “big man” – the autocratic president – to his lieutenants and allies, who in turn serve as patrons to low-level power brokers, and down to the fragmented mass of ordinary citizens, who are trapped by their dependence on local political patrons (Diamond 2008:145).

To define the relationship between patron and client I have chosen to use Luigi Manzetti’s and Carole J. Wilson’s explanation from their article “*Why do Corrupt Government Maintain Public Support*”. They define it as;

[...] an informal relationship between two actors enjoying asymmetrical socioeconomic power where the patron has the upper hand because he or she controls the kind of resources that his or her clients pursue but often cannot receive otherwise (Manzetti & Wilson 2007:953).

This kind of pattern exists in societies with weak institutions where a small number of politicians control the biggest resources in the country. This implies that if the people want some help from the politicians they have to promise to vote for that politician. In return the politician will help the client (Manzetti & Wilson 2007:953). To this has to be added that the patron and client come from two different social groups. They both benefit from their relation, but it is always on the condition of the patron (Roniger 2004:353).

The patron-client relationship exists above all in societies where poverty constitutes a big problem. Researchers have noticed that poor and uneducated are not as interested in political promises that have an outcome in public goods for the long term, as educated people are. For poor people it is most important that their basic needs are “dealt with immediately”. They have a long experience of being neglected and they know they cannot trust the state’s institutions, which are often controlled by patron politics (Manzetti & Wilson 2007:954). When state institutions are weak, patrons take advantage of this by stepping in and being the only source that provides basic goods for people from lower social standings. Patrons take advantage of the fact that the institutions are weak, ineffective and corrupt. This system will give them higher status among the clients who have to vote for them if they want their problems to be solved (Manzetti & Wilson 2007:955).

As mentioned, I would like to develop this theory to other fields than voting and especially to see if it can be implemented on the police in Kenya. As Manzetti & Wilson argue, poor people are not able to see very far ahead since they need to take care of their basic needs immediately. Therefore they continue to be in the clientelistic network where the patron helps them with their basic needs. At the same time did the World Bank report state that less wealthy are more averse

towards corruption. These two assumptions seem to contradict and by making interviews with people from both upper middle class and lower class in Nakuru I could chart a pattern what their attitudes and actions towards corruption are and which of these two statements can be applied to the respondents. At the same time I could see if it was possible to develop this theory to the relation police meeting citizen.

## 3 Definitions

### 3.1 What is corruption?

Corruption is a word with many dimensions and meanings which makes it difficult for researchers to find a common definition about it. Jain says: “how corruption is defined actually ends up determining what gets modeled and measured” (Jain 2001:73). However there are many opinions about it but many researchers have defined it as “the misuse of public office for private gain” (Ampratwum 2008:77). When writing this thesis I found Christian Aid’s definition of corruption suitable; “The misuse of positional power – public or private – to benefit narrow interests rather than the public good” (McDonald 2008:5).

Even though it is often seen as something that exists only in the public sphere, it can also be seen as something existing in the private sphere. This since the word in the last few years has been involved in several scandals in the private sector (Thelander 2005:7).

Jain defines three types of corruption that can be found in a society, but I will only mention two of them since I do not find the third definition relevant for this thesis. The first he describes is grand corruption which is acts done by the political elite. They use their power to gain private profit, and he also sees this corruption as the most destroying for a society (Jain 2001:73-74). The second type of corruption is bureaucratic corruption, also known as petty corruption. In this type it is the dealing between the bureaucrats and the public or the political elite (Jain 2001:75).

### 3.2 What is a bribe?

Throughout the interviews the respondents talked about corruption as bribes, giving *kitu kidogo*<sup>4</sup>. When scholars are talking about petty corruption, it is always seen as the small transaction between the individual and public junior officers and not to what impact it has on the country’s economy (Lambert-Mogiliansky *et al.* 2007:352). Petty corruption involves small sums of money, but it can also be favors. It can be seen as a social activity that is controlled by many rules and

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<sup>4</sup> Swahili and means to give a little something

norms (Blundo & de Sardan 2006:5). A bribe can for example be paid to get a service which is supposed to be done for free, or a bribe can be paid to speed things up (Jain 2001:75). The transactions can involve licensing requirement, applying for a passport, driving license, the filing of appropriate tax returns (Lambert-Mogiliansky *et al.* 2007:352). Those who lose on it are the poor citizens living in a poor society (Riley 1999:190). The junior positions can be civil servants and police officers (McDonald 2008:5).

In Joakim Thelanders book *Korruption – En begränsad litteraturgenomgång*, can Michael Reisman's definition of bribes be found and he describes three different types of bribes; transaction bribes, variance bribes and the outright purchases. The first is a bribe that is given to speed things up or make the proceedings easier, not to get anything illegal done. He gives the example of a custom official that receives a bribe so he can speed up the process of getting a certain thing over the border (Thelander 2005:14).

The second definition, variance bribes, is about to get the recipient to disobey the rules that exist. For example a custom official receive a bribe to let drugs cross the border (Thelander 2005:15).

When it comes to the last definition, the outright purchases, it is no longer about to buy a certain service. Instead it is about to buy the recipient so he gain the giver instead of his own organization (Thelander 2005:15).

There is a problem with defining exactly what a bribe is, this since it in many cultures can be interpreted as a gift instead of a bribe (Thelander 2006:18). However, in this thesis a bribe is seen as something illegal and can be interpreted as either a transaction bribe or a variance bribe.

## 4 A review of corruption in Kenya

### 4.1 Corruption from independence until today

Kenya became independent from Great Britain in 1963 and Jomo Kenyatta became the president. During the years Kenyatta's rule became marked by rising intolerance, corruption and high-level political assassinations (Chege 2008:127). The constitution from 1963 made the president's office very strong and made it possible for the president and his political friends to use this power for their own benefits (Johnston 2005:170-171).

Kenyatta ruled until his death in 1978 and he was succeeded by Daniel arap Moi (freedomhouse.org). Due to these former presidents has Kenya a long legacy of corruption. Michael Johnston describes in his book *Syndromes of Corruption – Wealth, Power and Democracy* that corruption became “a smash-and-grab operation” during Moi's time, which led to that the development progress halted. Moi weakened state institutions and created good opportunities for corruption which gained himself and his personal favorites. For a citizen it was a very hard task to claim in court that his land was stolen by one of the top politicians, and he was very unlikely to win. (Johnston 2005:169-170).

Moi could through a strong system of patronage distribute jobs, administrative decisions and money often along ethnic lines. If there were someone that opposed Moi, he used repression and violence. An example of that was his Foreign Minister, Robert Ouko, who in 1990 opposed the corruption in the government and he ended up being murdered (Johnston 2005:171).

During Kenyatta's time had corruption been, as Johnston writes; “consisted of padding budgets, or of percentage paid as kickbacks and bribes, in connections with legitimate development projects”. But during Moi's time these projects were instead created mostly to benefit Moi and his allies (Johnston 2005:172).

When Mwai Kibaki and his party entered into power in 2002 people had great beliefs in them, since their electoral platform was to fight corruption, jump-starting the economy and creating 500 000 jobs a year, improving public services, and making constitutional reforms that would redistribute power from the all-powerful presidency (Chege 2008:128).

Kibaki started out well and he created for example the Anti-Corruption and Economic Crimes Act. He also made changes in the judiciary and created Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission (KACC) (freedomhouse.org). Even though KACC has investigated more than 3000 cases are their results of successful prosecutions are very few. According to Freedom House has it only investigatory power and no prosecutorial power (freedomhouse.org). A very clear sign how Kibaki has failed in his anti-corruption attempt is when John Githongo, the head of KACC, had to

escape to Great Britain since he found out that ministers inside Kibakis government were involved in corruption scandals (Wrong 2009). The official version however is that he resigned, when he could not do any meaningful reforms (freedomhouse.org).

Today Kenya is ranked as 146 out of 180 at Transparency International Corruption Perception Index 2009 (transparency.org). It is also estimated that an average urban Kenyan pays 16 bribes to both public and private institutions in a month (tikenya.org) and in TI Corruption Barometer report its estimated that 37% of the Kenyan population did pay a bribe in 2008 (Corruption Barometer 2009:32).

## 5 The common view about corruption

This chapter summarizes what the respondents' thoughts and attitudes towards corruption are. Karklins argues in her book that personal experience of corruption depends on what the daily life of a person is. It is from media that the common citizen finds out about institutional or high-level corruption, but also through own experience, family members and friends (Karklins 2005: 45, 51). For the respondents their thoughts are mostly gained through personal experience but also from what they heard from family members, friends, colleagues and of course from media (Beth, Simon, Diba, Joel, Simanza, Tabitha, Shaban, Leah, Amos, Sammy, John, Lewis, Peris, Catherine, Faith, Mary).

### 5.1 The respondents' knowledge and attitudes towards corruption

During the interviews the respondents were asked what they knew about corruption in Kenya and what they thought was the general opinion about it. Almost all the respondents, no matter what social standing they belonged to, saw corruption as something common but bad. They all gave pessimistic answers and none of the respondents were happy about it. They said it is something they sometimes are forced to do (Simanza, Leah, Tabitha, Simon, Diba, Joel, Shaban, Peris, Faith, Mary, Sammy, John, Lewis). Joel from the lower class described it as;

It is out of trouble or problems that force us to do it. It is not something we do by out of will. There are circumstances that push us; you go to the hospital and you want medicine. You see you are the one in need here; you are the one with problems so you have to give it out to get the medicine. So it is all about problems that are forcing us to do it. But it is our general view; it is not something we are proud of. What our problems are forcing us to do. Corruption destroys us, but it is the situation that forces us into doing it. When you are in need and need help you just have to do it (Joel).

Simon from the same social standing agrees that it is the circumstances that push him to pay bribes. He does not do it out of will, because he wants to do good things. However he cannot avoid paying bribes since he has a family to support. If he tries to not pay a bribe he will be put in jail and then he cannot support his family. To be able to get out from jail, he has to pay a bail which is more expensive than paying a bribe. He said he is not proud of what he is doing but this is what life has pushed him into. Further he argued that the petty corruption is just

making him poorer and poorer and every day it is draining out of him (Simon). Steven P. Riley argues that “petty corruption is obviously not petty to those who experience it” (Riley 1999:191), a statement that easily can be implemented on Simon’s words.

The respondents saw no ending in corruption since they believed the government is doing nothing to prevent it and it does not help the people. They also argued that the government benefits from the people, while it should be the opposite. There is no trust for the government and corruption can be blamed on poverty. Corruption has deep roots and is difficult to treat (Beth, Simanza, Leah, Simon, Diba and Joel).

Peris, from the upper middle class, tried to describe that it is hard for the people to control corruption since Kenya is a very corrupt country and it is the leaders that are motivating to corruption, she said “they are leaders in corruption” (Peris). Beth from the lower class said that it all starts from above and there is nothing they can do about it. It is too big for the small person to avoid and it is the common citizen who is getting the whole burden of it (Beth). From the upper middle class Catherine added that while the government is trying to fight corruption it is the individuals in the government who are doing corrupt acts (Catherine). John from the same social standing argued that corruption should not be there, but it is there and it is a way of life and according to him corruption is the only way to get through with things (John).

Shaban, from the lower class, on the other hand described that the low trust for the government may depend on the fact that the president, Kibaki, is not only a president; he is also a business man and this creates conflicts. He argued that a president should be satisfied with his position as a president and not being involved in different suspicious business deals (Shaban). Karklins results from her study in the post-communist countries showed that the attitudes among the people were that they did not believe in being honest, and they justified and excused their participation with corrupt acts that the leaders also practiced it and were corrupt (Karklins 2005:59-61). Also some of the respondents tried to justify their own corrupt actions or just explain why corruption exist by saying if the president and the high officials do it, why cannot we do it (Leah, Shaban, John, Catherine, Faith, Mary).

Even though the respondents see corruption as something negative and blame the government for doing too little in the fight against it, they also blame the population since they part in corruption when they pay bribes. Diba from the lower class said that it is the people themselves at the grass root who encourage corruption and he described it as;

Us when we give them we encourage them, but us if we could deny them we could have ended it. But now because we have made them used to it and we deny it they become our enemy. To maintain the friendship you keep on giving them. You maintain a calm environment. You maintain a friendship. But if we would have stopped that would have ended the whole thing. We have made them used to us giving (Diba).

Amos and Lewis, both from the upper middle class, did also argue that it is the people who encourage too it. Amos sees corruption as a two way thing since it is not only the person who receives the bribe that is corrupt; also the person who gives it out is corrupt (Amos). Lewis said;

[F]rom the person who is giving out the bribe he is probably one of the culprit. He is trying to bail himself out, something wrong is done. If I would bribe an officer obviously I would know that I have done something wrong, that is when I would do it. If I knew I have not done anything wrong, I would not bribe him (Lewis).

Sammy, also from the upper middle class, called it as people sometimes volunteer to corruption even though they are not supposed to, but it has become so rooted in the society. He said; “[...] once you get corrupt, morally corrupt, even your children will see you doing that and will think it is the right way to do things” (Sammy).

Several respondents in the upper middle class described corruption as a disease and a virus (Sammy, Peris, Faith, Mary). Faith described it in these words:

Corruption in Kenya has just become like a disease and it is contagious [...] For you to get a job, for you to travel on our roads, for you to even be set free in the prison, for you to get documents, for you to just get any fair treatment you have to be corrupt, you have to bribe (Faith).

For many of the respondents in the lower class, every day was a struggle for them when they need to pay bribes. However, for the respondents in the upper middle class it was more a short cut. Sammy said; “I think people think it is ok because it is an easy way out. For example if 100 shillings can get you out of prison or make you not go to prison you rather give out. It is easy. It makes things easier for people” (Sammy). To this can John’s statement be added; “if you can get away with it, do it” (John). I got the impression that these two men seemed to have a very laid back attitude towards corruption in Kenya, even though they also said that corruption in Kenya was bad.

Mary from the upper middle class described corruption as it is killing the nation. She said everywhere you go; they will most likely ask you for money even before they give you the service. She told how she had to pay a bribe of 1000 shillings to her driving school teacher when she was taken her driving license. On the question how it felt to be forced to pay she answered:

It does not feel good because it is unfair. You have the right to have a driving license without being asked for money. As long as you have paid for your lessons and you have passed the test you are supposed to be given the driving license. If you do not make any mistakes it is our right to get a driving license (Mary).

In Kenya there is a big problem with bribing the police, which will be developed in the next chapter, and according to Karklins does it undermine the public safety when the police are being bribed. But, when asking for a bribe to give out a

driving license it is not only the public safety that is at stake, but also the rule of law becomes undermined (Karklins 2005:21).

Both Jain and Karklins argue that the common citizen is more angry towards grand corruption and at the same time they are more accepting towards petty corruption since they often involve acts done by themselves or their friends (Jain 2001:81, Karklins 2005:5-6). To this statement can Beth's thoughts be added since she said even if she knew that someone in a junior position was receiving bribes she would not report that person. Maybe this person does it because she needs to sustain herself; maybe she is a mother and needs to feed her children. If she loses her job, she will lose her income and then she cannot sustain herself and her family. Since Beth also is a mother she could not live with making another mother suffer, even if that mother was doing something illegal (Beth).

## 6 Meetings with the police

The police are the most corrupt institution in Kenya and *The East African Bribery Index 2009* estimates that 63.4% of those who had been in contact with the police during the past year did pay a bribe. Out of those who refused to pay a bribe were 10.4% denied help while 59.2% got the service they asked for when they had paid (TI Kenya 2009:21-24). This chapter will describe the respondents' meetings with the police, and the experience they gave differed from each other. For some of the respondents they talked about meetings they had experienced on their own, while for others it was just stories they had heard about from others. In this section the answers have been divided according to their social standing and their gender.

### 6.1 The lower class

For a poor person who lives in the slums of Nakuru, a daily visit from the police is not very uncommon. The stories from the respondents in the lower class were therefore about the police doing patrols in their estates, almost every day.

#### 6.1.1 Men

All the four men in this social standing told how the police come to their estates and do patrols. They explained how they get hold of the citizens and then accuse them of things which they have not done (Simon, Diba, Shaban, Joel).

Simon told how the police do patrols during daytime in his estate and how he has had some rough time with them. They can come to the estate, walk into his house, take him to the station and then accuse him of things that he has not done. To be able to be set free he has to pay them a bribe. He argues that the behavior of the police can be seen as police harassment, since they accuse people of things which they have not done and they have to pay the police for them to let the person go. Simon said that if he for example gets into a fight with someone and he goes to the police to get help, they will first tell him he has to pay something little. He said even though he could prove who the criminal was; they want money first before they catch the culprit. Further he argued that sometimes they even want the informer to fuel their car so they can go and catch the criminal (Simon).

Diba described how the police get hold of citizens in his estate that are outside during evening hours. He gave the example if someone is coming from a shop and the police get hold of that person, they will tell him to pay something little and if he refuses to do that they can arrest that person and accuse him of being a thief or

a drug dealer and if a woman is caught she can be accused of prostitution (Diba). Shaban argued that these evening visits are a big problem since the criminals are not out at that time. When they are out during night hours the police have since long gone left the estate and either sleep or just relax somewhere else (Shaban).

For Diba who needs to be outside during evening hours, since he is working for an organization that take care of people with different illnesses, he is often stopped by the police. When he gets stopped he shows his working ID to prove that he needs to be outside since he needs to see a patient. He never part with any money since he is against corruption and he rather spend the night in prison than paying a bribe (Diba).

Shaban gave a story how he tried to help a friend getting her phone back that she had lent to a boy, who he also knew. The boy, who was broke, was supposed to return it but instead he used it as payment when he was gambling. The lady reported the boy to the police and he ended up in jail. When Shaban came and helped she did not have any problem with releasing the boy as long as she got her phone back. Shaban and the lady went to the gambling place and he paid the boy's debt and got the phone back. He then went to the police station to release the boy. When Shaban told the police that the lady had no problem letting the boy go since she had got her phone back, the police told him that they were three of them who had done the job and he had to pay 500 shillings to each of them if they were going to release the boy. Since Shaban was not able to give that much he negotiated with the police and he was able to pay 1000 shillings and then he was suppose to come back with the remaining money. He never paid the remaining 500 shillings. On the question what he felt about paying that money he answered he did not feel good about it since he had solved the problem with getting the phone back to the owner (Shaban).

### 6.1.2 Women

It is not just the men who are experiencing harassments from the police in the estates. Tabitha told how she had escorted a friend to the matatu when she was stopped by the police. The police accused her of breaking a window and they took her to jail. Tabitha had to wait until the owner of the window came and when she came she told the police that Tabitha was not the one destroying the window. For a police this is bad since the charges now were on them. What they did was to convince the owner to say it was Tabitha who had broken the window. They managed to do this since they had got hold of her before and for her to stay out of trouble she had to do what they told her to do. This led to that the police wanted 10 000 shillings in a cash bound, but Tabitha was just able to pay 2000 shillings. They let her out so she could go and find the remaining 8000 shillings, however she never went back and when she sees the police today she always takes another route (Tabitha).

For Simanza her story was when she was coming home late from work and was stopped by the police in her estate. She tried to show them her ID and her working ID to prove that she had to be outside walking since her job involves

working late evenings. But the police was very stubborn and did not want to let her go unless she paid. It ended up that she had to pay the police a bribe of 1200 shillings. She said if she would not have paid, they would have taken her to jail and she had to spend a night there. She thinks it is better to pay the police, since if they take her to jail they can change the charges so it looks that she has done something bad. Simanza also said that if they take her to jail, she will have to pay a lot of money in cash bound to be released, so she prefers to pay a bribe instead of being taken to jail. Further she argued that there is no option in running away from the police since they have dogs that will chase after her if she runs. The police can even search through her pockets and get hold of her salary. A salary that she depends on, that is supposed to pay for the rent; to feed her child and pay the school fees. She said that the petty corruption is the one that is really affecting her (Simanza).

Another example when the police are asking for bribes is when it comes to the local breweries<sup>5</sup>. Beth told how drinking local beer is something illegal but very common among the residents in the lower class, and the people who brews the beer goes to the police station every month and pays something small. This so when the police do their patrols in the estate they get hold of them, but as soon as they reach the station they release them. This is because even the police are enjoying the local beer (Beth). Beth and Simon were living in the same estate and she told me how he was working in the local brew to get money for his children so they can go to school. During Simon's interview he did not talk much about his work, however he said that before he came to the interview he had paid 700 shillings to get away with the police from the brewery (Simon).

## 6.2 The upper middle class

Compared to the lower class the respondents in this social standing have a lot of experience with the traffic police. All the respondents thought it was bad to give out a bribe, but for many of them it was a short cut and a way of getting things done easier. They have double moral standards. But also the fact that the legal system concerning traffic offenses is bad and retrogressive affects their behavior of paying bribes to the traffic police (John, Peris).

### 6.2.1 Men

For many of the respondents in the upper middle class they were travelling a lot on the roads and Amos told how he is against paying bribes and he rather go to

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<sup>5</sup> A place where they brew a cheap type of beer, it is brewed under unhygienic conditions in the estates and villages all around Kenya

court than paying a bribe. He explained how he was travelling on the highway between Mombasa and Nairobi and was stopped by the traffic police who wanted to get some money from him. They got really irritated on him since he refused to pay, but Amos said he had done nothing wrong so why should he pay? The police told him if he did not give them something he will have to go to court tomorrow. But instead of writing a court paper the police took Amos to the side and once again started to ask for money. Amos then told the police that he will not part with any money and eventually they released him and he did not pay anything (Amos).

When asking Amos whether he get the same help even if he does not bribe he answered yes. He explained how he tell the people who are asking for bribes; “[...] that whatever they are asking for its illegal and a lot of people suffer because they are ignorant[...] I tell them you can’t ask that from me, I pay my taxes”(Amos).

In addition to Amos was John who explained that he paid bribes because he had been raised in the system (John). John told how he often travels between Nakuru and Nairobi, a distance of approximately 150 kilometers. On the way back to Nakuru he has to travel down a hill with no speed limit signs and the police stood at the foot of the hill. They stopped John and accused him for over speeding, and he was told to pay 5000 in cash bill due to over speeding. But instead he paid 1000 shillings in a bribe and he said;

[...] once you have bribed you forget about the cash bill. It is like you have never been stopped. I did not even see the cash bill. This happened on a Saturday, so I had to go to Nakuru and then go back to Naivasha on Monday appear in court. I will use fuel to go to Naivasha and back, I will wait 2-4 hours to enter the court and all I had to do was to go in and say I am guilty. Because I am guilty. But than an expense I wish not to undertake because fuel itself is over a 1000 shilling. I might instead just pay a 1000 shilling and get away with it then take the hassle (John).

John explained how the police always threaten to take you to the station, and if you get there you will be put in the criminal record, which is something many want to avoid. John was very honest during the interview about how much and how often he paid bribes and I did not get any feelings that he had any intentions to stop it. He said that corruption is the only way to get through with something. “It should not be there, I agree. I might not practice it, but it should not bet there”. On the question if there ever where situations when he refused to pay the police he answered yes, when he for example is broke. He explained that there is a mentality with the police and if he tells the policeman let’s do it the legal way he does not get anything because he is going through the legal route. When John tells the police lets go to court, the police let him go (John). The answer raised a question why this person pay so many bribes when he knows he can get away with it without paying anything and he actually knows what he is doing is wrong and he has the opportunity to not part in it.

From Sammy the story was told how he was traveling in a matatu when going home from university. The car was stopped by a police and Sammy explained how the police always find something wrong on the car even if it is a brand new

car. The police told the driver he did not have any first aid bag and because of that he had to step out of the car. It ended up that the driver told the police that he was very busy and gave him 200 shillings. John concluded this statement with; “[...] here in Kenya people volunteer to corruption” (Sammy).

## 6.2.2 Women

For the women it was also about meetings with the traffic police and Peris told about two meetings she had had. One was when she was travelling in a matatu on her way to work and the other when she was driving from Nairobi to Nakuru. She explained how the matatu was stopped by the traffic police because they did not wear any seatbelts. The problem was that the matatu did not have any seatbelts, but the police did not care about that. The police asked for something small from the passengers, but they refused to pay him and instead the police took all the passengers to jail. It did not help that they complained and they had to pay a bail to get out from jail. Peris had to stay there for seven hours and later she found out that the reason why they were taken to jail was that the police had not got their salary on that day so they had “operation collecting money” (Peris).

Then she told how she was driving from Nairobi to Nakuru, just like John, and when she was going down the hill she was stopped for over speeding. The police told her; you either pay us 3000 in cash bound or you give us 1000 shilling and we forget about this. Peris explained because of the inconvenience that she has to go to court in Nairobi and since she lives 150 kilometers away it is sometimes easier to pay a bribe. She used the same argument as John did; she pays because of inconvenience (Peris).

However, for some respondents they seemed to be able to get away from the police without having to pay a bribe or get a cash bill. Catherine, who said she is against corruption, do never pay and claimed that she get the same help without paying. She told about a meeting she had had with the traffic police due to over speeding. She told the police that she had already given them 1000 shillings the previous day, so she was not going to give them another 1000. But she had actually never given them any money. They believed her and told her to go because they knew she was going to make a scene (Catherine).

Faith described how the police harass the people for petty things so that they will end up giving the police a bribe. It can be everything from 50 shillings to 500 shillings. And about the traffic police she gave this quote:

On the roads I have had meetings with the traffic police. They want you to follow the rules that are there on the roads and that is true and very correct but they always want to get something in return. Maybe you are on the wrong but they do not want to go by the law. If you are on the wrong they should treat you according to the law. Now they require you to pay to be set free (Faith).

## 6.3 Summary

There are some very clear patterns when it comes to meetings with the police, and the respondents have been in situations where they have been asked to pay a bribe or been expected to pay a bribe. Out of the 12 stories presented in this chapter differences in the attitudes and actions are found between the social standings, but no differences was charted between the genders.

The main difference was that the respondents in the upper middle class never risked to be deprived of their liberties when refusing to pay a bribe to a policeman. Though Peris is an exception, but I believe this would not have happened if she had travelled in her own car. Even though a person in the upper middle class is over speeding and actually is breaking the law he never risks ending up in jail. The only thing that person will have to do is to go to court and pled guilty. While the person in the upper middle class bribed the police to avoid going to court in another district the poor person in the lower class paid a bribe to avoid getting in jail and being accused of things that he/she had not done. Riley argues that the poor do not get the services they need, while the rich person gets advantage (Riley 1999:191).

He also argues that petty corruption can be seen as a reverse Robin Hood, “instead of robbing the rich to give to the poor, the relatively rich public officials and others gain while the losers are often the very poor and marginalised living on the periphery of society” (Riley 1999:191). It could be stated that for the poor person more is at stake when they meet the police, they pay out of survival because they do not want to end up in jail. As mentioned in previous chapter; “petty corruption is obviously not petty to those who experience it” (Riley 1999:191), for the poor person paying bribes is really destroying them, while it for the rich person is an easy way out.

As shown in this chapter, corruption is a matter of how much money people have. Jain argues in his article that corruption does affect the inequality in a society and is a cause to both poverty and inequality (Jain 2001:97).

Only Amos and Catherine argued that they get the same help even though they refuse to pay bribes. But, according to *The East African Bribery Index 2009* did only 20% of those who refused to pay a bribe get the service they were seeking. In addition 92% of those who paid bribes got the service they had bribed for, (these are the numbers for all the Kenyan institutions together) (TI Kenya 2009:15).

## 7 What should be done about the problem with corruption in Kenya?

It has sometimes been argued that petty corruption “grease-the-wheels” in the bureaucratic process since it can speed up processes and therefore promote economic growth. However most researchers in the area see it as more likely to be a “sand-in-the-machine”, where it slows down the process and it is very often that small payments in petty corruption lead to demands for higher payment. According to Jain petty corruption has a strong negative effect on the economic development of a country (Jain 2001:92-93). In this chapter an account will be given of where the respondents think the fight against corruption should start and if raising wages could be a solution in the fight.

### 7.1 Where should the fight against corruption start?

All the respondents agreed that corruption destroys the development progress in Kenya and according to *The East African Bribery Index 2009* did only 14% of the respondents believe that the government’s efforts to fight corruption are effective (TI Kenya 2009:57). The opinions differed among the respondents in this thesis concerning which corruption they saw as the worst and where the fight against corruption should start, both within and between the social standings and gender. The lower class did not talk as much as the upper middle class did when it came to the question where the fight against corruption should start and that is why the lower class section will be shorter than the upper middle class section.

#### 7.1.1 Lower class

Among the respondents in the lower class there were no positive thoughts about the future of corruption. They all said that it was destroying them and the Kenyan economy (Beth, Simanza, Tabitha, Leah, Simon, Diba, Joel, Shaban). Beth told how she believed there will be no development; it will only be the rich who develops (Beth). Instead of the rich being the one who develops did Shaban argue that he believed it was just the police that will develop from corruption and the common man would end up losing (Shaban).

Joel was the only respondent who thought the fight should start from the grass root; however he did not specify why it should start from there (Joel). Simanza, Tabitha, Leah and Shaban thought that the fight should come from the top and

Tabitha exemplified it with a mother and said; “if you clear the mother [the grand corruption] it will eventually lead to that you even will kill the kids [the petty corruption]” (Tabitha). Shaban made the same comparison, however he made the statement with a father instead. He argued that to be able to fight corruption you have to start with the father, since he is the head of the family. So he thought they should start with the president (Shaban). Leah argued that it is the grand corruption that leads to the petty corruption and therefore should the fight start with the grand corruption. She argued that there is this mentality among the citizens that if the officials do it why cannot they do it? (Leah).

### 7.1.2 Upper middle class

When asking Peris which corruption she thinks is the worst she answered “What difference does it really make?” What she meant was that if her boss for example is corrupt, it will trickle down to her in some way anyway (Peris).

Among the respondents in the upper middle class half of them, Amos, John, Catherine and Mary thought corruption should be fought from the top, since it is them who are dealing with most of the money. They said corruption destroys the country and it cannot progress. Amos expressed it as;

[I]f I am in charge and already corrupt. If I tell my juniors it does not stop. It should start from the most top and going downwards to finish it. It is possible but it will take time. It is not a one day thing. It requires training, counseling and education (Amos).

Further he argued that money gained from corruption is not used for good purposes. Since the policemen that receive a bribe will end up using that money to go and drink or even prostitution, because they do not put any weight on that money since it is not their own (Amos).

John said that corruption destroys since the funds the government should get from law breakers and taxes are going into other pockets. He also argued that petty corruption just involves small sums, while grand corruption involves millions of shillings. He thought the fight against corruption should come from the top since it is mentally; “if my president does it why shouldn’t I?” (John).

To this statement can also Catherine’s thoughts be added since she also said that there is this mentality that if she sees a person bribing, why should she not? She thought grand corruption was the worst and therefore should the fight come from the top. Catherine believed that to be able to get a change it needs to be a change in the government. She argued that the people in the government have been there for such a long time and been corrupt themselves, so they cannot fight it. Therefore it should be a change of people in the government so they can be able to fight it (Catherine).

Mary also agreed to this statement, that it is the people at the top that is supposed to be the role models and if they cannot stop it, the others will not do it either. She also argued that they are the ones dealing with most of the money and

that is why they should stop first. Everybody wants to survive, that is why corruption exists (Mary).

Faith, one of the four respondents who claimed corruption should be fought from the grass root, believed that if the people cannot change corruption themselves, if they cannot say no to corruption the people in the top will never say no to it. “So if they tell you to pay for a certain fee and you refuse they will definitely realize that corruption is dying and it is up to us to create a way to stop corruption”. The people should refuse to pay and say no to corruption completely (Faith). Peris agreed and said;

Corruption destroys the development progress, because when there is corruption it means that services are not given effectively, efficiently. Someone is not working. I think right now when we talk about Kenya; we ourselves at the bottom, we have to say we are not condoning this anymore. We have to change the way the system works and we have to fight against it. We are more than the people in the government so we should try and fight corruption from the bottom and going up, because if we are saying no then they will not have a choice. But if we wait for them there is too much money there and too much power. People just want to stay in power and use the funds. So if we wait for them it will never work. I believe that people on the ground should be the one who sets the pace. We stop bribing, let’s start with stop bribing and it will trickle down to the police force (Peris).

Lewis argued that petty corruption is the worst since what is happening at the top they do not get to see it, but what is going on at the grass root they know because it is going on in front of their eyes. He said; “everybody is going through petty corruption, because everybody is given out here and there. We don’t know how many things are going on”. He gave the suggestion that the fight should start with the officers, that there should be anti-corruption teams, first of all on the highways they should give out special notes to the drivers and try making the drivers to commit their mistake on the road when they are caught and pay immediately instead of going to court the next day far away from their home (Lewis).

Sammy believed that corruption can go away but it will take time and a lot of training, this since, as he said; “you found your parents doing that you think it is the right way to go. That is how corruption has in craved itself”. He argued that the fight against corruption should start from the grass root since:

[...] the corruption will not go to the upper people because the people in power will always use the people who are under to do the corrupt things for them, when they are the ones who benefits from that. You see, you will never find the commission of police to go and ask for a bribe but I’m sure he eats some of the money from his juniors (Sammy)

He also said that if all was done the right way, if all the cash bills that were supposed to be paid in court were actually paid, the government would get a lot of money and maybe they could have done something meaningful with it (Sammy).

### 7.1.3 Summary

All the respondents, no matter what social standing or gender they belonged too, believed that corruption destroys the development progress and this is something Karklins points out in her book. Corruption destroys the development progress for a country and makes it hard for the country to become a democracy. She states that the citizens lose their trust for the representatives and government when they interact in corrupt acts. It is also hard to maintain good governance when the officials undermine the trust from the people by being involved in corrupt dealings (Karklins 2005:6). Further she argues that there needs to be something more positive than corrupt politicians to be able to fight corruption. They have to believe that the system of government works, if so they will be motivated to fight corruption (Karklins 2005:165). The respondents in Karklins' study believed that there was nothing they could do to eradicate the grand corruption, because the fight should come from the leaders at the top (Karklins 2005:59). This is also something half of the respondents in the upper middle class and half of the respondents in the lower class did say, they believed that corruption should be fought from the top. However, five of the respondents did say that if they started out with the petty corruption it would eventually lead to the disappearance of grand corruption.

According to Karklins it is important that the citizens feel motivated in the fight against corruption (Karklins 2005 see chapter 9), but what can be shown from *The East African Bribery Index 2009* is that there is little motivation among the population in Kenya. Only 6% of the respondents in the survey said that they would report if they had been asked to pay a bribe and only 2% out of those who bribed the police reported to the authority. The reasons people used for not reporting was; they did not believe anything would be done, fear of being intimidated by the authorities and lack of knowledge where to report the case (TI Kenya 2009:17). The report shows the importance of reporting corruption cases, since when no one report nothing will be done about the problem with corruption in Kenya.

## 7.2 Raising wages, a solution to a big problem?

During the interviews once and a while the subject about wages came up. Five of the respondent, two from the lower class and three from the upper middle class said that corruption in Kenya can be blamed on the low wages (Beth, Shaban, Peris, Sammy, Lewis). Beth argued that people are not satisfied with what they get and they are greedy for more (Beth). Shaban also said that it is all about satisfaction, that if the police would get higher wages they would not ask for bribes (Shaban). From the upper middle class they also talked about satisfaction and Peris argued that if a person has food on the table and is able to pay the bills, there is no need for asking for bribes. She argued that the wages are too low today and she believed one solution could be to raise them, since it is out of survival the

police are corrupt (Peris). Lewis also said that they have expenses to take care of and they will not stop until they are paid well. He believes it is an easy way for the police to get money (Lewis). Sammy said that the police see it as an income since their wages are too low and he believed that the reason why people are so corrupt is because of the bad economy in the country (Sammy).

The five respondents are discussing a very big issue about the Kenyan economy. At the same time they do not like paying bribes, they have an understanding of why for example the police are asking for bribes; they are paid too low. But, according to Jakob Svensson raising wages is not the solution to the problem. In his article "*Eight Questions about Corruption*" he argues that the correlation between raised payment and reduced corruption is ambiguous. Some cross-country studies do say it reduces corruption while some other says it does not. Svensson argues that it is only under certain conditions that bribe-taking can be reduced through higher wages, and he is pessimistic if such strategy will work in developing countries. He argues that if it will work the bribe that is being offered cannot be seen as the person's wages and if the wages are being raised it should not be a too high raise. For this to be able to be fulfilled it needs to be a well-functioning state, which is rarely in developing countries (Svensson 2005:32-33). Jain has also been looking at some empirical test where the result showed a negative correlation between higher wages and corruption. The researchers, who made the test, rejected the hypothesis "that higher pay leads to reduced corruption in the short run" Jain 2001:82). So, even though the respondents saw raising wages as a solution, the scholars in the area do not see this as a sustainable solution.

# 8 Patron-Client relationship

## 8.1 Developing the theory

One of the aims with this thesis was to try out and develop the patron-client theory to other fields than voting. To be able to do so I find it important to once again remind the reader about the definition of the theory:

[...] an informal relationship between two actors enjoying asymmetrical socioeconomic power where the patron has the upper hand because he or she controls the kind of resources that his or her clients pursue but often cannot receive otherwise (Manzetti *et al.* 2007:953).

After conducting all the interviews and writing this thesis a pattern can be seen that makes it possible to develop this theory to other fields than voting. This since the theory is about asymmetrical relationship where the client is dependent on the patron and that the Kenyan institutions are built up through patrimonialism that weakens the formal rules and institutions.

The patron, the police in this thesis, uses the fact that the Kenyan institutions are weak. They use the poor to pay since most of them cannot afford to go to jail and they use the rich because they want an easy way out and wish to avoid go to court. Christian Aid's definition of corruption can be implemented on the police since they have positional power and are asking for bribes which gains narrow interest. I would therefore argue that these actions make sure that the theory works outside voting, since there is an asymmetrical relationship between the patron (police) and client (citizen) when the police are asking for money to let an innocent person go.

The core in the theory is about unequal relationships and I therefore argue that it works outside voting. In the lower class the unequal relationship is about how the police use the people to pay bribes so they will not end up in jail. They pay out of survival and Simon and Simanza are good examples, since they argued that it was cheaper for them to pay a bribe than end up in jail and being accused of things they did not do. For the poor person they end up in interdependence with the police, while the poor gets its freedom the police get money. However this is a freedom the person was never suppose to be bereft of from the beginning.

When it came to the local breweries, which is an illegal act, a patron-client relationship can also be seen. The client goes to the police and bribes him so he can continue on with the illegal act. The owner of the brewery can continue with its business and the police once again get some extra money. Even though the act

is illegal, the relationship is still on the personal benefit for the police when overlooking illegal acts for personal gain.

The patron-client relationship was not only something that could be implemented in the lower class; equal patterns could also be seen in the upper middle class. Even though it still is an asymmetrical relationship the rich person do not lose as much as the poor. This since they do not need to pay to be able to sustain their family. They pay to get an easy way out and to save time and avoid going to go to court.

But, when it for example comes to when John and Peris over speeded it can actually be seen as a win-win situation, this since they did something illegal and instead of wasting time and go to court they paid less in a bribe than they would have done in a cash-bill. It will be a win-win situation as long as the law concerning traffic offences is the way it is. However, for most of the situations it is almost always the police who gain on it.

It would be possible that this theory could be developed to other institutions than the police, but that would be a subject for another thesis.

## 9 Conclusion

Corruption has been in Kenya for such a long time and is deeply rooted in the Kenyan society. As written in the beginning of this thesis it is hard to make any conclusions or generalization from a qualitative study, since it does not represent the population in the same way as a quantitative study. Even though generalizations cannot be made, some patterns can be charted and I would argue that these attitudes and actions at least sheds a little light of what the majority of the urban population in Kenya thinks about the problem with corruption.

The aim of this thesis has been to make the respondents' attitudes and actions towards corruption visible and to see if there are any differences between gender and social standings. Another aim was to see if these attitudes and actions affected the survival of the patron-client theory. The stories presented by the respondents' shows that there is a negative view of corruption; but they see it as a way of life that they sometimes has to go through. They see it as a common act and there is a mentality that if they (the politicians) do it, why cannot we (the people) do it? This is a risky mentality because if everybody is thinking like this corruption will never end in Kenya.

By examining the respondents' attitudes and actions towards corruption divergences could be found between the upper middle and lower class, however no differences could be found between genders. I believe in order to chart differences between genders a broader survey than the 16 interviews performed is needed.

The main findings throughout this study between the social standings was that the respondents in the lower class part in corruption out of survival, while it for the respondents in the upper middle class was more of an easy way out, to speed things up. The respondent in the upper middle class never risked to be deprived of his liberties while it for the respondent in the lower class was either to pay a bribe or end up in jail and be accused of things that he/she had not done. However, there is one exception and that is when Peris ended up in jail for not having the seat belt on in the matatu. Though, I would argue that this would not have happened if she had been travelling in a car by herself.

Even though they all see corruption as something bad it is the people in the lower class that gets most affected by its presence. Since paying bribes they are not supposed to pay affect their daily life, they have to struggle to support their family. This is not something the person from the upper middle class needs to go through even if they are forced to pay a bribe they were not supposed to. They never get affected the same way as the person in the lower class.

The second question was to find out if their attitudes and actions affect the survival of the patron-client relationship. As shown in previous chapter the theory can be developed to other fields than voting and I argue that these attitudes and

actions contribute to the survival of the patron-client relationship since it is the police that have the upper hand over the population when they ask the people to pay bribes. For the poor person it is out of survival he pays and he is therefore stuck in this asymmetrical relationship out of will. For the rich person he is stuck in this relationship because he saves time by paying bribes. Both social standings attribute to the survival of this theory, however they do it out of two different reasons.

Manzetti and Wilson claimed that poor people are not able to see very far ahead since they need to take care of their basic needs immediately. I would argue that this is the reason why some of my respondents in the lower class did pay bribes. For example some of them said that they did it out of survival and it was the circumstances that pushed them to pay. The World Bank report did state that poor people were more averse towards corruption than rich and as argued in the beginning this statement contradicted with Manzetti's and Wilson's argument. But after conducting the interviews a pattern could be seen that the lower class were against corruption, but they saw no other option than paying a bribe to fulfill their needs and when paying a bribe they favor the survival of patron-client networks and hence foster corruption.

As Doig and Theobald argued that in societies with high level of petty corruption it is hard to unite the people. By just looking at the 16 interviews presented in this thesis so many different views can be found and there was no common census where the fight against corruption should start. They all had different opinions and to be able to unite everybody in the fight against corruption there has to be a strong mechanism that unites them. Having a corrupt government does not make it easier in the fight against corruption and I believe the government cannot solve this on its own. There has to be a strong and active civil society that informs and educates the people at the grass root so they know what their rights are and how they can contribute in the fight against corruption in Kenya. There has to be a change in everybody's minds.

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# Interviews

## Lower Class

2009-05-09, Beth  
2009-05-09, Simon  
2009-05-12, Diba  
2009-05-12, Joel  
2009-05-13, Simanza  
2009-05-13, Tabitha  
2009-05-14, Shaban  
2009-05-15, Leah

## Upper middle class

2009-05-26, Amos,  
2009-05-28, Joseph  
2009-06-11, John  
2009-06-12, Lewis  
2009-06-17, Peris  
2009-06-18, Catherine  
2009-06-22, Faith  
2009-06-22, Mary

# Appendix 1

## Interview guide

Name:.....

Age: .....

Married:.....

Children:.....

Occupation: .....

1. In the last year have you had any contact or meetings with the police?
2. In the last year have you had any contact or meetings with the health care?
3. What do you know about corruption in Kenya
4. What do you think is the general opinion about corruption in Kenya?
5. How would you define corruption/bribery?
6. How do you get knowledge about the existence of corruption in Kenya? Are there any special sources that make you more aware of it?
7. Is corruption or bribery something you discuss with your family and friends?
8. Do you know anyone who has experienced corruption?
9. Have you been asked to pay a bribe?
10. How common do you think it is that someone like you has to pay a bribe?
11. Do you think corruption helps or destroys the development progress in Kenya?
12. Where do you think the fight against corruption should start?