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IDENTIFYING AND ASSESSING POLITICAL WILL FOR ANTI-CORRUPTION EFFORTS

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Introduction

Historically, corruption can be found in all eras and in all political and administrative systems. Throughout history efforts have been made to combat corruption. In the nineteenth century in Great Britain and the United States for example, much of the impetus for the reform of the civil service derived from reactions to corrupt practices in government. Corruption also exists in the private sector, and has periodically been the target of reforms as well. More recently, corruption has increasingly emerged as a concern in the transitional economies of the former socialist world and in the developing nations of Africa, Asia, and the Americas. The search for strategies to combat corruption has acquired growing importance among the citizens of these countries, their leadership, and the international donor community. Accompanying this search is the need to identify effective political will to implement those anti-corruption strategies.

Fighting corruption is now central to the agendas of both good governance and economic growth. Why is this the case? Several factors contribute to its center-stage role. First of all, worldwide trends toward democratization have opened the door to citizen demands for a more active say in the “what and

how” of governance. Citizens are no longer tolerant of abuses of public trust and of the malfeasance of the past; they expect accountability and transparency. Greater information flows from the rest of the world, coupled with a freer press inside countries, have increased people’s knowledge and awareness of good governance and how responsive and responsible public servants should behave, and of corrupt practices and what can be done to address them. The rise of civil society, including international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Transparency International and indigenous NGOs such as Benin’s “Groupement Nouvel Ethique,” is another important factor. In many countries, reformist governments have come to power on an explicit platform of dealing with the abuses of the past and of improving citizens’ lives. Thus they are concerned with corruption, both in terms of governance and growth. On the international donor side, post-Cold War assistance policy no longer closes an eye to corrupt practices in exchange for geopolitical support. Aid fatigue translates into pressures to see funds well spent and impacts achieved.

Directly related to economic growth, the evidence is clear that corruption can retard investment and private sector economic activity. The unpredictable

outcomes, uncertain property rights, and variable contract enforcement that are associated with corruption constitute significant impediments to the private investment necessary to development. Further, corruption can reduce tax revenues, lower the quality of infrastructure, and skew incentives away from productive endeavors and toward rent-seeking. Governments, donors, and the private sector are confronting the fact that corruption feeds a downward spiral of ultimately unproductive economic activity, decreasing productivity, shrinking investment, and loss of confidence in the effectiveness of government. The old calculus of building corruption into the costs of doing business is giving way to a growing international coalition that has pledged to oppose corruption, recognizing it as ultimately harmful.

The current high degree of attention to corruption has led to extensive analysis in conjunction with the elaboration of anti-corruption strategies and programs. Academics and practitioners, both independently and collaboratively, have developed definitions, models, taxonomies, and explanations of corruption. These in turn have informed the development of strategies, interventions, and toolkits that have been tried out in various countries. Examples range from system-wide procedural overhauls of the civil service and public agencies; to targeted reforms of procurement, tax, and customs policies; to motivation enhancement, such as integrity seminars and public pledges to resist venality. In practice, the challenges have proven to be enormous; sustained success has been elusive. Some progress has been made, though too often resistance and backsliding have whittled away at what were promising starts, leading to disappointing results. In some countries, levels of corruption appear to have increased, for example in the former Soviet Union.

These tough lessons of experience have fed into further analysis, debate, and action programs (see, for example, Johnston 1997a). Broadly speaking, analysts and activists agree on several points. First, corruption is a complex issue with intricate linkages to other political and economic factors, both within a country and internationally. Second, tackling corruption is not a one-shot endeavor, but a challenging long-term undertaking. Third, successful anti-corruption efforts depend upon political will. This includes both the political will to initiate the fight against corruption in the first place,

and subsequently the will to sustain the battle over time until results are achieved.

The bulk of analysis and action, however, has concentrated upon tracing corruption's complexities and linkages and upon devising long-term strategic interventions to reduce and eliminate corrupt practices (see, for example, Eigen 1996, IRIS 1996). Despite the acknowledgment of its importance to anti-corruption activities, however, political will itself has received relatively little study. This paper focuses on identifying and assessing political will as it relates to the design, initiation, and pursuit of anti-corruption activities. The paper develops a conceptual model of political will that partitions the concept into a set of characteristics/indicators, and elaborates the external factors that influence the expression and intensity of political will in a particular situation. The model traces the links among the characteristics of political will and these external factors, and their resulting influence on the support for, design of, and outcomes of anti-corruption reforms. The conceptual framework for political will sketched here draws upon analysis and field experience, but it represents a preliminary modeling of the concept, in need of further refinement. This is a potentially fruitful avenue for empirical testing and verification.

Defining Corruption

In considering political will for anti-corruption activities, it is necessary to clarify-- at least at a general level-- the question of political will for what kind of reform? Corruption is a broad term, subsuming a wide variety of illegal, illicit, dishonest, irregular, and/or unprincipled activities and behaviors. Most definitions share an emphasis on the exploitation of public position, resources, and power for private gain. In practice, though, it can often be difficult to draw clear distinctions between "public" and "private," which impedes attempts to treat corruption as a clearcut category (Johnston 1997c: 8). Some definitions set aside the task of specifying exactly where "public" ends and "private" begins in favor of explicitly including the private sector in the definition: behaviors by holders of positions in the public or private sectors whereby they illegally and/or improperly benefit themselves and/or their associates, or lead others to engage in such actions and behaviors, through the misuse of the positions they hold (Asian Development Bank 1998: 5). For purposes of this discussion, the basic

definition of corruption as the misuse of position for private gain is maintained.

Efforts to be definitive regarding corruption have led to the development of various typologies and taxonomies of practices and behaviors. However, some analysts see these as unhelpful because they isolate corrupt practices from the political and institutional setting in which they occur. As Johnston points out, "Corruption is now most frequently analyzed as endogenous to political and economic development rather than as an external influence upon them. ... It is viewed as a systemic process, rather than as a discrete action or set of incidents, and evidence of its effects is sought at a variety of levels in society and in the economy" (1997c: 14). An example of this kind of process approach to analyzing corruption is Klitgaard's well-known formulation that corruption equals monopoly plus discretion minus accountability (1988: 75).

The key implication for modeling political will within a systemic process approach to defining corruption is that it highlights the impact of environmental factors on political will. Thus it becomes important to seek to assess not only the degree of political motivation for the suppression of a particular corrupt practice, for example, speed money to ensure timely delivery of public goods and services or kickbacks for preferential treatment in contract awards, but to examine the political will for addressing the related set of incentive structures that support that practice. The will to address this latter may, in fact, be more important to a sustained attack on corruption than the former.

A Conceptual Framework for Political Will

Political will is a complex phenomenon that incorporates: a) individual actors, along with their aspirations, motivations, and capacities, b) organizations, within which individuals function and on whose behalf individuals often act; c) socio-economic and governance systems, which frame both constraints and incentives for individuals and organizations; and d) the policies, programs, and activities that actors and organizations are involved with at various stages

(identification, design, implementation, and evaluation). Similar to phenomena like ownership or capacity, political will exhibits a latent quality; it is not visible separate from some sort of action. Measuring it can only be done indirectly. Evidence

of political will, therefore, is often cited *ex post facto*, from a retrospective point of view. This leads to one of the vexing methodological problems in examining the role of political will and reforms: the tendency to engage in *post hoc* circular explanatory arguments.

The conceptual framework developed here seeks to avoid this difficulty by specifying: a) the characteristics of political will in terms of a set of indicators; b) the set of environmental factors that influence political will, anti-corruption reforms, and reform outcomes; and c) the connections among these. The model builds upon four streams of analytic and applied work. The first of these looks at the design and implementation of efforts to improve public sector organizational performance (Brinkerhoff 1986, 1991). The second is a closely related stream that focuses on institutional sustainability (Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith 1990). The third stream is work undertaken in the World Bank on country commitment and borrower ownership (Heaver and Israel 1986, Johnson and Wasty 1993, Jayarajah and Branson 1995). The fourth deals with policy implementation from a process and political economy perspective (see Brinkerhoff 1996b, White 1990, Grindle and Thomas 1991, Meier 1991).

Characteristics/indicators of political will

Political will refers to the intent of societal actors to attack the manifestations and causes of corruption in an effort to reduce or eliminate them. It is defined as: the commitment of actors to undertake actions to achieve a set of objectives-- in this case, anti-corruption policies and programs-- and to sustain the costs of those actions over time. This commitment is manifested by elected or appointed leaders and public agency senior officials. The model proposed here treats political will as a phenomenon that can be described in terms of five key characteristics, which can form the basis for indicators. The characteristics of political will are: 1) locus of initiative for anti-corruption efforts; 2) degree of analytical rigor applied to understanding the context and causes of corruption; 3) mobilization of constituencies of stakeholders in support of anti-corruption reforms; 4) application of credible sanctions in support of anti-corruption reform objectives; and 5) continuity of effort in pursuing reform efforts.

Locus of initiative: This characteristic relates to where the impetus for tackling corruption resides. Does the initiative for reform come from the actor that is espousing the change? Is there an indication that the actor perceives corruption as an issue requiring attention? Or is the initiative for change lodged with an external group that has induced or coerced the actor to accept or endorse the anti-corruption issue? “Home-grown” initiative for anti-corruption activities demonstrates that reformers themselves perceive corruption as a salient issue, that they have ownership for doing something about it, and that they are willing to champion the efforts necessary to fight it. Imported or imposed initiative confronts the perennial problem of needing to build commitment and ownership; and there is always the question of whether espousals of willingness to pursue reform are genuine or not. The indicator would be a range from high to low of the extent to which initiative for anti-corruption activities lies with the reformer(s). Higher ratings indicate stronger political will for reform.

Degree of analytical rigor: This characteristic of political will entails the extent to which the reformer, or reform team, undertakes an in-depth analysis of corruption and uses that analysis to design a technically adequate and politically feasible reform program. Has the reform team sought to recognize the complexities that give rise to corrupt behavior? Has it built its strategy on a plausible model of corruption that takes into account the structure of institutions and the rules that govern them? Has it identified and developed strategies to deal with those institutions, mandates, and behaviors that either impede or promote integrity in government and/or private business? Has the team analyzed the costs of corruption and weighed those against the costs of combating particular types of corruption? Reformers who have not gone through these analytic steps, and/or who advocate actions that are clearly insufficient to address the problems (e.g., symbolic purges of a few corrupt officials), demonstrate shallow willingness to pursue change. As above, the indicators would aggregate the answers to these questions into rankings along a high-low continuum.

Mobilization of support: This characteristic of political will deals with the willingness and ability of the reformer/team to identify and mobilize support for anti-corruption activities. Has the team developed a credible vision of success, and a strategy that is participative and that incorporates the

interests of important stakeholders? Is the reformer mustering adequate and ongoing support to overcome resistance from those stakeholders whose interests are most threatened by particular reforms? Is there willingness to publicly report on progress, successes, or failures; and to take actions to strengthen the position of reform supporters versus recidivist critics? Do these support mobilization efforts take account of the long-term nature of rooting out corruption, and the need to maintain support over time? Indicators would be framed in terms of many versus few efforts, strong versus weak, and/or effective versus ineffective; with the former of each of these being associated with stronger political will.

Application of credible sanctions: A fourth characteristic of political will is openness of the reformer to identify incentives and apply sanctions, both positive and negative, in the context of reform strategies. Does the reformer seek to use the blunt instrument of prosecution (or fear of prosecution) as the principal tool for compliance? Are sanctions largely symbolic, or has careful consideration gone into devising credible and enforceable measures to induce and/or compel behavioral change? Committed reformers recognize the need to restructure principal-agent relationships, provide positive incentives for compliance with the law, publicize the positive outcomes of reform, and rehabilitate compromised individuals and institutions. In terms of indicators, the rating continuum would run from strong application of highly credible sanctions, associated with a greater degree of political will, to weak application of ineffective sanctions, signifying a lesser degree of political will.

Continuity of effort: A fifth feature of political will is allocation of ongoing effort and resources in support of anti-corruption activities. Does the reformer treat the effort as a one-shot endeavor and/or symbolic gesture, or are efforts clearly undertaken for the long-term? This includes establishing a process for monitoring the impacts of reform efforts and the means for incorporating those findings into a strategy for ensuring that reform goals and objectives are ultimately met. It also includes assigning appropriate human and financial resources to the reform program, and providing the necessary degree of clout over time to ensure that reformers can achieve results. As with the other characteristics, strong and sustained continuity of effort would signal more political will, whereas

weak, episodic, or one-shot efforts would indicate less political will.

High/strong rankings on each of the five characteristics aggregate to delineate the most powerful case for the presence of political will. Variations in individual characteristic rankings allow for a nuanced characterization of political will in a given situation. In using these five characteristics and associated indicators to identify and measure political will, it is important to treat them as an integrated whole, and not treat one or another as a proxy for all the rest. This perspective implies a couple of points. First, a low rating on one or two of the characteristics does not necessarily signal a complete absence of political will. For example, some governments have over time become progressively committed to reforms that they themselves did not initiate. Second, political will is a dynamic phenomenon, subject to shifts and modulations over time in the face of changing circumstances and events. There are interactions among these features of political will, which means that the degree of political will can-- and is likely to-- change over time. For example, the application of sanctions may reinforce the mobilization of a supportive constituency of stakeholders, thus yielding an increase in commitment to persevere with reforms.

Environmental factors

As noted above, political will does not exist in a vacuum, but is influenced by a

set of environmental factors, which also affects anti-corruption reforms and outcomes. The factors listed here include those that have been identified both in the literature and through experience as having an effect on the possibilities for reform and institutional change across a number of sectors. The discussion highlights their connections to, and impacts on, anti-corruption efforts. While each of these factors influences political will, it is not always clear or agreed upon in which direction the influences lead. There is controversy surrounding some of the factors, and relative clarity for others.

Regime type

Although definitive links between regime type and reform success have not been isolated, there is evidence from studies of economic reform implementation that open democratic or

democratizing regimes provide more opportunities to a wider range of actors to pursue change than do authoritarian ones dominated by a closed circle of elites (see Brinkerhoff with Kulibaba 1996).

Democratic regimes, to the extent that they possess effective democratic governance systems, institutionalize the basic elements of rule of law, accountability, transparency, and access. The salient factor separating the ability of democratic regimes and non-democratic regimes to combat corruption is, according to Johnston (1997c: 18), the fact that in democratic regimes, "active competition and accepted rules of accountability make it difficult for any person or group to dominate politics or the economy, and relatively clear distinctions between those two realms prevent the worst sorts of exploitation of each by the other. Politics and the economy are broadly participatory, and the vitality of each aids development in the other." Thus open democratic regimes appear more likely: a) to have leaders with some degree of political will to address corruption, and b) to create the circumstances that would allow other societal groups to both initiate and support anti-corruption activities. Closed authoritarian regimes, on the other hand, are more likely: a) to have leaders whose will to tackle corruption is limited, superficial, and/or cynical; and b) to offer few opportunities or incentives to citizens to express concerns about corruption, or risk lobbying for curtailing corrupt practices.

This does not mean that democratic regimes are less likely to have problems with corruption; democratic political systems are also vulnerable to many kinds of corrupt practices. Numerous contemporary and historical examples can be found of democratic regimes that have incorporated patronage, bribery, and so on (see Noonan 1984). Although citizens may be aware of these abuses, accountability can be limited by powerful elites, executive controls over the judicial apparatus, and complex rules and sanctions that curb criticism or remedial action by those outside government. In some countries, the blatant purchasing of votes by politicians, although illegal, occurs quite regularly (Rose-Ackerman 1997; Johnston 1996).

However, democratic regimes offer more possibilities for orderly changes in government through elections. As the case studies in Bates and Krueger (1993) demonstrate, these changes are associated with the initiation of policy reforms. Such changes can vary in the extent to which openings for change are created. Elections that sweep old governments from

power-- for example, the recent elections in Bulgaria, Romania, and Mexico-- provide greater openings than those that renew an existing government's mandate for another term. These electoral transitions can provide increased possibilities for addressing corruption as part of a reformist platform.

Social, political, and economic stability

Scholarship and practice converge in identifying social, political, and economic stability as an important factor in policy reform implementation. Divergent views emerge, however, in the determination of whether it is the presence or absence of stability that contributes to implementation success. Some analysis concludes that periods of crisis and shock provide the most opportune moments to embark on reforms; and that during such periods decision-makers confront the most powerful pressures for change, and are most likely to have the will to both contemplate and undertake substantive change, including anti-corruption measures (see Grindle and Thomas 1991). In the economic sphere, for example, typical catalysts for reform are rapidly emerging balance of payments and fiscal deficits, severe monetary instability and/or devaluation, or the collapse of major banking institutions. As in the recent Asian crisis, any single one of these factors can set off a chain reaction of snowballing economic events, leading to increased political will to make changes.

Others argue, however, that economic and political crises nearly always result in a narrowing of options, fomenting a "backs-against-the-wall" mentality among the actors concerned. The usual dynamic is to focus on short-term survival and immediate palliatives to lessen the most visible symptoms of crisis (see Kulibaba and Rielly 1994). Such situations undermine leaders' will to consider and engage in difficult reforms such as mitigating or eliminating corruption. Stability, these analysts contend, creates the conditions where governments feel stronger and more confident in their capacity to deal with serious issues. This situation is more conducive to fostering genuine political will and the undertaking of major reforms. For example, a World Bank study of structural adjustment found that political stability was vital for government commitment to implement adjustment programs (Jayarajah and Branson 1995).

Democracies, with their institutionalized transitions via elections, are sources of stability and offer periodic openings to bring in new players, who may bring increased will to tackle corruption. For example, after his election in 1995 Tanzania's President Benjamin Mkapa formed a Presidential Commission on Corruption, which began a series of service delivery surveys to assess the levels of corruption in the delivery of public services as a first step in developing a national integrity strategy (see Langseth and Galt 1996).

Extent and nature of corruption

The degree of political determination required to undertake anti-corruption reform is clearly dependent upon the magnitude of the stakes involved, thus the extent and nature of corruption exert an influence on political will, as well as on reform program design and implementation. Most typologies of corruption distinguish broadly between incidental corruption (petty graft, small-scale embezzlement, favoritism, etc.) at one extreme, and systemic corruption (large-scale embezzlement, misappropriation, etc.) at the other (see, for example, Khan 1996). There is general agreement that systemic corruption is the most difficult type to deal with successfully. Politicians may not be highly motivated to act against systemic corruption; indeed, they may perceive themselves to be relatively powerless in the face of its immensity and complexity. Successful reform strategies may not be immediately apparent and the political costs of reform, including coping with an uncooperative civil service or a hostile military, may appear prohibitive. Further, the relatively short time horizon of most politicians does not encourage devotion to long-term issues like systemic and ingrained corruption.

Other things being equal, it may be easier to generate political will to tackle incidental corrupt practices than to take on endemic corruption, which entails a larger challenge to the status quo. While this may appear to imply that it is close to impossible to envision sufficient political will for systemic corruption, policy implementation experience suggests that a series of smaller successes can contribute to building momentum and support for broader and larger changes in the longer term (see Brinkerhoff 1991). As noted earlier, crisis situations can provide an impetus to embark upon more far-reaching reforms.

Vested interests

The array of interest groups in favor of, or opposed to, reform measures is a well recognized factor in the success of policy implementation. Particularly difficult to deal with are reforms that face powerful losers, who are opposed to change and have significant resources to mobilize, and weak winners, who benefit but have little capacity to support change (see Waterbury 1989, Grindle 1991, Crosby 1997). Thus to the extent that reforms challenge strong vested interests, the likelihood of sustained political will to pursue them is reduced. This is one of the reasons that the patronage machines characteristic of systemic corruption are so difficult to mobilize against. One piece of the argument that crises are important to reform is that they break the monopoly of vested interests on power, and create opportunities for rearranging the configuration of interest groups in support of change.

Vested interests can have a strong impact on political will to address corruption. In many democratizing countries, reformist governments are politically weak, resting on broad and unstable alliances and confronting public bureaucracies and military establishments that are suspicious of, and resistant to, change (see, for example, Harsch 1993). In such situations, political will can often be shifting and ephemeral, rising and falling in response to efforts to keep the coalition together. Maintaining a supportive coalition can call for numerous trade-offs and compromises, and can sometimes fuel factionalism and paranoia (Theobald 1990), thus making it difficult to pursue a sustained anti-corruption program. Hostile vested interests can isolate and neutralize weak reformers. An element of the argument that stability is important for serious reform is that stable coalitions relieve government of the need to constantly pay attention to satisfying this or that interest group, and contribute to the conditions under which government has the strength and will to proceed sufficiently far down the reform path to achieve real results.

Civil society and the private sector

The strength, development, and configuration of civil society and of the private sector is another factor influencing political will. Particularly to the extent that political space exists for non-state actors to organize, express their views, and play a role in the policy process, civil society organizations can be important stakeholders in anti-corruption efforts. In many developing and transitional countries, though, the political space is small and/or civil society is

relatively small and weak. Thus civil society's potential as an influencing factor is, at present, more promise than proven fact. Within systems of democratic governance, civil society can serve as one of the watchdogs that reinforce accountability and transparency of government. This function can encourage political will among public sector reformers as well as give birth to committed reformers within civil society and the private sector. A strong civil society helps to correct imbalances in power between state and society, which can contribute to corruption (Johnston 1997b).

A vibrant civil society can play a significant role in building political will in the fight against corruption not just by exercising a watchdog function and serving as a countervailing force to government excess. It can also encourage reform motivation by legitimizing political leadership, and by providing political leverage to reformers seeking to pursue change. This kind of role is particularly important for sustaining political will over time, assuring that promises made will be kept. Further, civil society can contribute to anti-corruption reform design and implementation as an activist force for change. It can address impropriety by drawing on the expertise of accountants, lawyers, academics, NGOs, business leaders, religious influentials, and citizens. In Venezuela for example, a local NGO, "Agrupacion Pro Calidad de Vida," has organized country-wide workshops, teaching Venezuelans how best to minimize corruption (Coronel 1996).

In addition to the business associations that are part of civil society, private sector firms can also influence political will. Particularly, large multinational firms that make public pronouncements that they will not invest in countries whose governments tolerate corruption can potentially make a strong impact on public decision-makers' motivation and reform programs. There is a nascent but growing international movement among private sector firms, reinforced by organizations such as the International Chamber of Commerce, to condemn corruption and to develop codes of conduct and other self-regulatory measures. For companies subject to U.S. law, the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act adds a strong incentive to resist corruption.

Donor-government relations

The international donor community has also played a role in forcing earnest attention to corruption issues by recipient countries. To the extent that

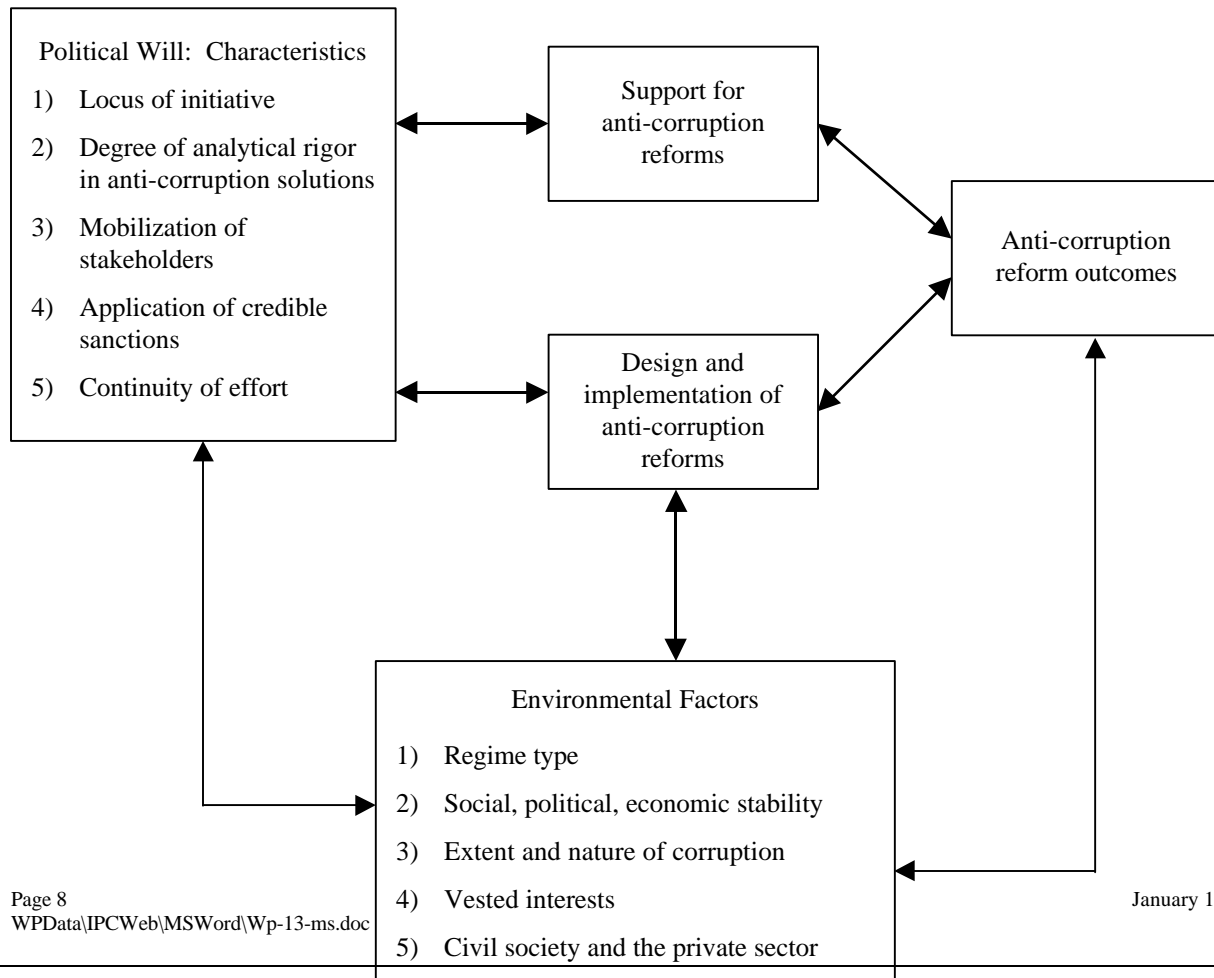
governments perceive that continued access to donor funds depends upon serious efforts to address corruption, donor-government relations constitute a source and/or a reinforcement of political will. The World Bank's public sector reform programs frequently contain components to combat corrupt practices, and USAID's efforts to promote democracy and democratic governance focus on strengthening the rule of law and fighting corruption. In the past several years, actions on the part of a number of donors and international organizations have augmented the focus on corruption. For example, officials of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund announced stronger anti-corruption policies for lending at their fall 1996 annual meetings. The UNDP has started a Programme on Accountability and Transparency to focus on corruption and good governance (see UNDP 1999). In response to a call to outlaw transnational bribery and illicit enrichment by the Organization of American States, 21 member governments signed the Caracas Convention in 1996 pledging action on these fronts. Both the United Nations General Assembly and the Organisation for

Economic Co-operation and Development have proposed and approved commercial anti-corruption declarations and conventions. The Asian Development Bank is in the process of issuing a new anti-corruption policy. These trends send a clear signal to recipient countries regarding corruption, and should serve to strengthen political will.

Political will and reform outcomes

Figure 1 brings together the identifying features of political will and the environmental factors, and traces their relationships with each other, and with reforms and reform outcomes. This figure captures in

Figure 1. Political Will for Anti-Corruption Reforms: A conceptual Framework



a schematic the essence of the conceptual framework that the paper proposes. Like any model, this one simplifies the analytic and operational terrain. For example, in emphasizing political commitment to engage in reform, the model gives limited scope to detailing the organizational variables that relate to reform implementation, something that other frameworks accord much attention to (see, for example, Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith 1990, Mazmanian and Sabatier 1989, Crosby 1996).

As the figure shows, political will, characterized in terms of the five features described above, impacts directly upon support for anti-corruption reforms and upon the design and implementation of reform policies, programs, and activities. In turn, appropriate design and effective implementation, reinforced by ongoing support, lead to the achievement of reform outcomes. These relationships are not unidirectional. Producing results and achieving targets can serve to reinforce support for reforms; or in the negative case, lack of results can reduce support for change. Experience with outcomes also provides feedback for managing the implementation process, which can then inform design, either redesign of an existing program or new design of a program for further reforms in the future. Over time, changes in level of support and in design/implementation can exert an influence on political will, either in the direction of enhancing or dampening will for anti-corruption reforms, depending upon the specifics of the situation.

Influencing political will, support for reform, reform design/implementation, and outcomes are the environmental factors outlined above and shown in the figure. These factors combine to configure the economic, institutional, and socio-political context where analysis and action take place. As the discussion indicates, these influences are relatively complex and only partially understood. Prior to the start of anti-corruption reforms, the environmental factors constitute an elaboration of initial conditions that will facilitate or constrain the level of political will at the outset, and will impinge upon reform program design. Once reforms have begun, these environmental factors impact upon support for reform, the implementation process, and eventually upon outcomes. Again, the relationships are not one-way; these variables can exert an influence on the environmental factors too. For example, positive reform results can-- depending upon the particular situation-- reduce the grip of vested interests, increase the power of civil society, and/or enhance stability.

Strategies for Building Political Will

There are several uses for the model of political will developed in this paper. The most obvious use of the framework is as an assessment tool for the identification of the presence or absence of political will in advance of undertaking the design and/or implementation of anti-corruption reforms. Following identification of the presence of some

degree of political will, the assessment can be fine tuned by using the five characteristics and their indicators to rate its strength. Beyond detection and ranking, either as an *a priori* exercise or at some point during a reform process, the framework has several more operational uses.

First, the framework can help to evaluate one of the key questions asked about political will; namely, is it genuine? A principal challenge in the examination of political will is the need to distinguish between reform efforts that are intentionally superficial and designed only to bolster the image of political leaders for transitory gain, and substantive reform efforts that are based on real commitment to implement substantive, sustainable change. As noted, intent can be difficult to assess; and the elaboration of political will into the five characteristics provides a basis for being more clear as to what actors are committed to do in order to address corruption.

Second, the framework can serve as a monitoring device during the reform implementation process. The indicators and the environmental factors can be used to track the evolution of political will over time, marking increases and decreases. These results can furnish useful feedback to reformers and help to refine implementation strategies.

Third, the components of the model point to a number of strategic avenues to pursue that can result in the creation and/or strengthening of political will. These avenues are enumerated from the perspective of an outside party, such as an international donor or a technical assistance provider, seeking to promote anti-corruption reforms within a country. They fall basically into two strategy categories: direct and indirect influence. In actual practice, these strategic approaches are often pursued in combination, blending efforts and both direct and indirect influence, some taking a head-on path, others a more oblique route.

Direct influence on political will

Direct influence strategies target the five characteristics of political will. Starting with the locus of initiative for reform, donors can choose to work with actors that already have indicated a willingness to undertake anti-corruption activities, or they can seek to build local ownership for external initiatives. The idea here is to identify and support reform champions who can and will take the lead in pursuing change; the presence of a policy champion

is a recognized feature of successful implementation across all sectors (Brinkerhoff 1996a).

Donors traditionally offer technical assistance, which relates most closely to two of the characteristics: degree of analytical rigor in anti-corruption solutions and application of credible sanctions. A danger to avoid is the tendency for the technical correctness of solutions to become the driving preoccupation, rather than a mix of technical fit and political feasibility. To the extent that solutions and sanctions become externally determined or dominated, the locus of initiative begins to slide away from indigenous actors, with the risk of reducing political will. Experience suggests that effective technical assistance blends external expertise with explicit attention to assuring that initiative for action remains in the hands of the local champions (see Spector and Cooley 1997).

Donors can also undertake measures relating to the other two characteristics: stakeholder mobilization and continuity of effort. Assistance can be provided to reformers to help identify key winners and losers, develop coalition-building and mobilization strategies, and design publicity campaigns. Donors and/or donor-supported technical assistance providers can sometimes usefully fulfill a role as neutral brokers or convenors that can facilitate stakeholder mobilization (see, for example, Kulibaba 1997, Langseth 1998). Regarding continuity of effort, donors can be instrumental in providing the financial resources that allow for ongoing attention to anti-corruption efforts, and can also support monitoring and reporting efforts that contribute to continuity.

Indirect influence on political will

Strategies in this category seek to build or bolster political will by focusing on the environmental factors that have an impact on the level of political will. In some cases, the intent of the intervention may not target political will explicitly, but may exert an influence nonetheless. Donor-supported public sector programs, such as structural adjustment, support for democratic elections, legislative strengthening, civil service and governance reforms, and judicial/legal

reforms (rule of law), can variously affect regime type; social, political, and economic stability; the extent and nature of corruption; and vested interests. Successful program outcomes can lead to changes in the environmental factors linked to political will. For example, efforts to increase parliamentary oversight of executive agency operations can augment the ability of important stakeholders to mobilize to fight against corruption, and can clear the path for new reform champions to emerge. Another example is the reform of public procurement practices, which can furnish the basis for credible sanctions for corrupt practices, thereby strengthening the political will for their application.

Programs that target civil society and the private sector can also serve to create conditions that reinforce political will for anti-corruption reforms. Support to civil society watchdog groups, establishment of citizen “observatoires” that monitor government agency performance, advocacy training, investigative journalism training, and so on can all contribute indirectly to strengthening political will. Regarding the private sector, a good example of an indirect approach to tackling corruption comes from the West African livestock sector, where private sector associations were helped to mobilize around regulatory procedures governing cross-border trade. An extended dialogue and negotiation process, informal at first, but progressively structured into formal committees, led to a change in incentives to engage in corrupt practices, and led to increased will to suppress those practices (Kulibaba 1997, Holtzman and Kulibaba 1997).

Finally, as noted above in the discussion of donor-government relations, there are the strategies of direct dialogue with government leaders about corruption and of the promulgation of anti-corruption policies and practices associated with obtaining donor funds and with public sector operations. These can establish a climate conducive to toughening political will to confront corruption.

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