

Politicians' Attributes and Institutional Quality in Africa: A Focus on Corruption

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Abstract: I examine the linkage between politicians' attributes (socio-demographic features, educational attainment, experience, and political ideology) and the control of corruption in Africa. I collected sample data of political leaders from 39 African countries for the period from 1996 to 2010, and estimated a base line model – including covariates, such as size of government, economic development, legal origin, and level of democracy – using the Fixed Effect model. The result indicates that the politicians' attributes matter significantly in explaining the extent of control of corruption in African countries. This result is robust when considering alternative specifications.

Keywords: Africa, corruption, institutions, politics, politicians' attributes

JEL Classification Codes: H11, K2

Quality institutions are the foundation of sustainable development. They provide structures for protecting economic transactions and relationships against opportunistic behavior. In economic relationships, the overt and implicit rules of social interaction both constrain and liberate economic agents and provide the security of expectations so vital to successful planning by households, businesses, public-sector units, and non-government organizations (NGOs) (Hodgson 2006). As institutional theorists have noted, institutions exist to ensure the regulation of social and economic interactions in a form that provides incentives or constraints for individuals' actions (e.g., Acemoglu and Johnson 2005; Glaeser et al. 2004; Hodgson 2006; North 1990, 1991; Williamson 2000).

There is a growing body of literature that has empirically examined the effect of institutional quality on varying aspects of the economy. They include the work of

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Natalia Catrinescu et al. (2009) who conclude that financial resources will be more likely to translate to economic growth in countries with higher quality institutions. Elizabeth Asiedu (2006), Evans Osabuohien and Uchenna Efobi (2013) and Per-Olof Bjuggren, James Dzansi, and Ghazi Shukur (2010) agree with this finding. From another perspective, Augustin Fosu (2011) links the quality of institutions to the terms of trade, implying that better institutional quality will induce more advantageous terms of trade. From yet another point of view, George Abed and Sanjeev Gupta (2002), as well as Fabio Mendez and Facundo Sepulveda (2006), note that poor institutional quality can affect economic growth by increasing poverty because it affects the ability of poor societies to take advantage of existing development opportunities.

Institutions are not formed in a vacuum. Studies have observed that the institutional qualities of countries are formed by the intermixed influences of education, income, colonial heritage, natural resources, and globalization (Collier 2008; Dong and Torgler 2013; Fosu 2011). I take a different view point by examining the role of political leaders in driving the formative stages of institutional qualities in African countries. My main objective, therefore, is to examine the relationship between some attributes of political leaders and institutional quality in African countries. Some of the attributes that form my focus include the socio-demographic attributes, the educational attainment, as well as the experience and the political ideology of the political leaders. These four attributes will likely affect the value judgment of political leaders, which will reciprocally inform the quality of policies that are proffered for institutional development. My argument is based on sociological and political economics literature that has established a linkage between some socio-demographic features, the education and experience of individuals and political leaders, and the effect of these factors on their decisions regarding policies or some other forms of action (Bourdieu 1984; Dollar, Fisman and Gatti 2001; Efobi et al. 2013; Elias 1994; Jochimsen and Thomasius 2014; Reskin and Denise 2005).

More specifically, I focus on an key aspect of institutional quality – corruption. Corruption is a major institutional failure in most African countries and it has been blamed for the slow developmental process of these countries (Ackah, Turkson and Opoku 2013; Fosu 2011). I emphasize the urgency for an empirical investigation of factors that affect this aspect of institutions because corruption erodes the capacity of the state to efficiently deliver services with available resources. The Economic Commission for Africa (2009) predicts that many African countries are faced with the risk of not achieving their Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), largely because the resources meant for social development projects, such as education, healthcare, rural roads, and electrification, are diverted for personal use. The spillover effect of this will be an incidence of rising poverty and an unfavorable environment for investment and business, which will further disincentivize foreign investors.

Due to the high rate of corruption in Africa and pressure by the international community, many African countries are beginning to develop anti-corruption measures in the form of anti-corruption agencies (e.g., in Nigeria). At the same time, regional economic communities are developing frameworks to combat corruption, an

example of which is the corruption prevention framework derived from the 2003 African Union Convention.¹ Despite these efforts, it cannot be denied that some African countries are still “caught in the web” of corruption. For instance, in the period 1996–2008, African countries scored between –0.63 and –0.62 compared to the world average of –0.03 and –0.02 in the control of corruption index of the World Bank’s World Governance Indicators.² Likewise, the 2011 and 2012 surveys of Transparency International (2012) on the extent of corruption in countries reveals that more than 80 percent of African countries are ranked among those with high incidence of corruption.

Consequently, I address four main questions: What is the linkage between the socio-demographic features of political leaders and the extent of corruption in African countries? To what extent can the educational attainment of political leaders influence the rate of corruption in African countries? How can the experience of political leaders affect a country’s level of corruption? To what extent can the political ideology of African political leaders affect the level of corruption in their countries? My primary motivation for focusing on political leaders is that there is scant evidence on the influence of political leaders regarding the extent of institutional development of countries, especially African countries. There are no quantitative data that capture the quality of political leaders and its relationship to institutional quality. This makes it difficult to examine related issues, especially those that are focused on the personal attributes of political leaders. Another motivation is that the institutional frameworks, which constrain individuals’ opportunistic behaviors/actions, are either weak or non-existent in some African countries. In such a situation, it becomes paramount to understand the personal attributes of those at the levers of power. Political leaders are public “managers,” who are supposed to be “helping hands” in maximizing social welfare by informing policies and enforcing them, and by fulfilling their moral obligations to citizens. As Donato Masciandaro and Marc Quintyn (2008) and Uchenna Efobi et al. (2013) note, political leaders are involved in designing and implementing supervisory functions in order to improve the overall efficiency of public resource allocation. Therefore, it will be relevant to focus on those specific attributes of public agents that matter for the institutional development of African countries. My third motivation is that it is an acknowledged fact that there are certain peculiarities in the politics and leadership of African countries. For instance, African politics – as that of some other developing countries – is patrimonial and spoils-orientated in nature, and political power is centralized in an individual, who applies it for self-interest (Jo-Ansie 2007). Therefore, the situation presents an interesting case

¹ In the 2003 African Union convention, ten articles were put forward as anti-corruption actions. Article 13 addresses the jurisdiction of member states over corruption and related offences. Article 14 considers minimum fair trial guarantees. Article 15 deals with extradition matters. Article 16 provides directives on procedure for the confiscation and seizure of the proceeds of corruption and onward repatriation. Article 17 discusses issues relating to bank secrecy. Article 18 considers procedures relating to cooperation and mutual legal assistance.

² The World Governance Indicators are scored as –2.5 (poor institutional performance) and +2.5 (best institutional performance).

for the study of political leaders' attributes, since most African political leaders are "powerful" and can influence public policies for private gain.³

I use a novel dataset of the personal attributes of political leaders from 39 African countries for the period 1996–2010 in the estimation. In a nutshell, my result reveals that the attributes of the politicians are able to explain the extent of corrupt practices in African countries. This is owing to the fact that the leaders direct the affairs of the state, and the quality of leadership will explain the extent of institutional development in the countries, *ceteris paribus*. To that end, I organize the article as follows: In the next section, I discuss the relevant literature concerning the role of personal attributes in explaining value judgments of political leaders. In the third section, I describe the estimation procedure and the data collection procedure. In the fourth section, I present the main empirical results and discuss the implications. I offer conclusions and some policy recommendations in the final section.

Related Literature

Corruption, especially public sector corruption, is the misuse of public office for private gain. It includes occurrences like unilateral abuse of power by government officials, embezzlement and nepotism, and other practices involving exchange of economic benefits, such as bribery, extortion, and fraud (Chetwynd, Chetwynd and Spector 2003; USAID 1999). For corruption to materialize, there must be the presence of bureaucratic discretionary power, association of such power with economic rents, and the probability of being caught and penalized (Jain 2001).

Bureaucratic discretionary power in allocating public resources and rendering services is a vital prerequisite for public corruption (Dong and Torgler 2013; Justesen and Bjornskov 2012), and this is prevalent in settings where bureaucrats have an unchecked discretion in deciding on the beneficiaries of public resources and services. In such settings, the bureaucrats allocate public resources based on their judgments and not on procedures that allow for equitable dealings. Consequently, the actual incidence of corruption will occur when such powers are attached to economic rents. However, the probability of being caught and penalized is the cost associated with the actual corrupt practice, and it creates a deterrent to its continuity.

Literature on the causes of corruption identifies three categories: economic, political, and socio-cultural causes. The economic causes of corruption focus on the interventionist role of the state, which breeds an environment of corrupt practices (Del-Monte and Papagni 2007). This fosters the thinking that profits in a regulated state are determined more by government policies than by management or entrepreneurial skills. In such situations, the government creates economic rents, stemming from its interventions, and applies discretion in the allocation of public resources and services. Daron Acemoglu and Thierry Verdier (2000) suggest that an improvement in the monitoring of public officials will suffice in reducing the extent of corruption. However, this is not sufficient because effective monitoring depends on

³ See Augustin Fosu (2011).

the efficiency of available institutions. The dilemma is that public officials are involved in designing institutions, and their benevolence in designing effective institutions cannot be verified.

Some authors have contributed to this train of thought. Raymond Fisman and Roberta Gatti (2002), for example, provide evidence that in a situation of improved fiscal decentralization corruption is drastically reduced. Go Kotera, Keisuke Okada, and Sovannroeun Samreth (2012) further analyze the determinants of corruption for 82 countries (1995–2008), and resolve that the government size is a major determinant of corruption. They also emphasize that the level of democratic practice is a major determinant of corruption. Their result is plausible since the level of democracy in a country will bring about accountability and transparency of government, and, consequently, the system of checks and balances will culminate in proper management of public resources (Jalles 2011; Montinola and Jackman 2002; Triesman 2000). Alfredo Del-Monte and Erasmo Papagni (2007) use data from twenty regions in Italy, for the period 1963–2001, to reach the conclusion that the major causes of corruption include economic variables, such as government consumption and level of development.

The political causes of corruption stem from the structure of the political system in a country. This includes the government and institutions that are prevalent in a country. The system of government includes the presence of political competition among bureaucrats, which creates an environment promoting transparency and accountability. For instance, a democratic government is expected to be less corrupt than a dictatorship because of the extent of transparency, accountability, and public responsibility that is expected from the former (Asiedu 2006; Collier 2010; Fosu 2008, 2011). This is connected to the procedure of elected leadership in a country, since it affects the extent of competition and the overall accountability of the public officer. This was also consented to by Habiba Barka and Mthuli Ncube (2012) and Jonathan Powell and Clayton Thyne (2011), who argued against dictatorship governance structures because those mostly emanate from military coups and have adverse consequences for the political system of a country. Some of these consequences include the mismanagement of public resources, corrupt practices, and various other outcomes of poor governance. Jalles Joao (2011) concurs that the institutional setting in a country matters in determining corrupt practices, and emphasizes the significance of democracy and political stability as determinants.

The socio-cultural causes of corruption hinge on the social and cultural frameworks of a country. For instance, some countries that are patriarchal do not encourage female participation in leadership positions, and this affects their institutional development and corrupt practices. There is a relative consensus that the involvement of women in the political setting of a country reduces the level of corruption⁴ because women tend to be more frugal in spending and more trustworthy in handling public resources. Likewise, women are less likely to engage in opportunistic behaviors and more likely to expose such behaviors. In essence, the

⁴ David Dollar, Raymond Fisman, and Roberta Gatti (2001).

inclusion of women in government is expected to be a disincentivizing factor for corrupt practices. From another perspective, Bin Dong and Benno Torgler (2013) relate the extent of corruption to the quality of educational attainment, the historic influence from Anglo-American church universities, and the representation of women in a country's legislature. Similarly, Rafael La Porta et al. (1999) link the extent of corruption in a country to historical and cultural factors.

Some other causes of corruption that are popularly identified in the relevant literature include: per capita income and level of economic development (Olken and Pande 2012; Triesman 2007); remittances and other forms of foreign financial flows, such as foreign aid (Alesina and Weder, 2002; Berdiev, Kim and Chang 2013); and the (non)availability of natural resources (Asiedu and Lien 2011; Collier 2010; Collier and Hoeffler 2009; Fosu 2011).

The conclusions on the causes of corruption vary by researchers – at least, for cross-country studies – based on the scope of the sample involved, the measure of corruption, and the estimation technique (Triesman 2007). The role of political leaders has typically been neglected in the count of factors that can explain the extent of corruption in a country. A possible reason for this is the lack of available data measuring the quality of leaders.

However, there is an emerging body of knowledge that has taken interest in relating politicians' attributes to such economic outcomes as fiscal performance and debt sustainability. Some contributors to this literature have reached the conclusion that the best approach to ascertain the quality of the political leaders is to consider their attributes (Efobi et al. 2013; Hayo and Neumeier 2014; Jochimsen and Thomasius 2014; Mikosch and Somogyi 2009; Moessinger 2012; Somogyi 2010). They argue that the attributes of political leaders can explain their value judgments and the quality of policies that are promulgated for economic progress. For instance, Marc-Daniel Moessinger (2012) concludes, from the study of political leaders in Europe, that the age of the political leaders matter in defining the quality of their decisions due to the fact that the experience of an individual can be ascertained by their age. Thus, he reaches the conclusion that an older political leader tends to be better experienced in managing the affairs of the state. He also finds that the experience of a political leader has a significant impact on the quality of his/her decision-making.

Heiner Mikosch and Frank Somogyi (2009) observe that the economic and political experience of leaders also matters in defining the quality of their policies. They argue that the experience of political leaders, acquired in both the economic and political settings of a country, shapes their views and judgments in bringing forth constructive policies for better economic outcomes. Other authors that have underscored the linkage between the experience of political leaders (economic and political experience) and the quality of their policies include Beate Jochimsen and Sebastian Thomasius (2014), and Bernd Hayo and Florian Neumeier (2014).

Interestingly, the literature on politicians' attributes goes beyond the experiences of political leaders and extends to other socio-demographic dimensions like gender, marital status, family size and background, education and cultural affiliations. In a previous work, I and co-authors (Efobi et al. 2013) focus on 39 African political

leaders, concluding that their socio-demographic features (including marital status and educational attainment) have a significant influence on the quality of their public policies. Axel Dreher et al. (2009), reaches the conclusion from a global survey that the education level and profession of political leaders can significantly explain their drive toward policy reformation. Moessinger (2012) concurs, while Stefano Gagliarducci, Tommaso Nannicini, and Paolo Naticchioni (2010) point out that the quality of service rendered by politicians is connected to their previous profession or economic engagement. They predict that when the political and market sectors are not mutually exclusive, a tradeoff will exist between the quality of elected officials and the time they devote to public office. In essence, a politician's previous engagement will affect his/her current output in a political office. Robert Barro (1974) earlier submitted that politicians with children will tend to have lower budget deficits due to the implication of a high debt burden on future generations.

Worthy of note is the fact that these studies⁵ agree that political leaders do not have absolute authority to inform policies without the consent of the legislature. However, they argue that, despite the inclusion of the legislature in policy reforms and implementation, political leaders play a paramount role in "driving" reforms. Despite the rising interest in this area of research, attention has inadvertently been diverted away from the control of corruption as an outcome of effective policy. Most of the relevant studies have concentrated on economic outcomes, such as fiscal sustainability, debt relief, and effective management of public resources. These contributions are appreciable, but, considering the situation of African countries, especially with the patrimonial nature of their political system and prevalent corruption,⁶ there is the urgency to examine the extent to which the attributes of political leaders matter. Through this study, therefore, I give my contribution by focusing on the attributes of heads of states/presidents of African countries, and their effect on the extent of corruption.

Estimation Procedure and Data

To achieve my objective, I developed an empirical model based on the approach of Kotera, Okada, and Samreth (2012). They estimated a baseline regression model that explains corruption using government size and democracy as main variables as well as GDP per capita and legal origin as covariates. The empirical model is displayed as:

$$\text{Corruption}_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Government_Size}_{it} + \beta_2 \text{Democracy}_{it} + \beta_3 \text{GDP_PerCapita}_{it} + \beta_4 \text{Legal_Origin}_i + \mu_i \quad (1)$$

Kotera, Okada and Samreth's (2012) model is applicable to my study for three reasons: First, it is one of the most recent macro-studies that focuses on the determinants of corruption and uses panel data analysis in reaching their conclusions.

⁵ See Beate Jochimsen and Sebastain Thomasius (2014), Marc-Daniel Moessinger (2012), Uchenna Efobi et al. (2013), and Bernd Hayo and Florian Neumeier (2014).

⁶ See George Ayittey (2012) and Van-Wyk Jo-Ansie (2007).

Second, the covariates that were applied in their model are viewed as the most consistent in explaining the extent of corruption across countries and are robust to alternative measures of corruption (Triesman 2007). This makes them suitable for the empirical model of this study, since a robust estimate is expected. Third, the inclusion of the main variables (government size and democracy) in Kotera, Okada and Samreth's model has an important implication, especially for Africa. African countries have been noted for bloated government, resulting from the desires of political leaders to reward loyal supporters and extended family members (Jo-Ansie 2007). Interestingly, some of the countries in this region incur huge expenditure, the bulk of which goes to the administration of government (Efobi and Osabuohien 2012). This has an important implication for corruption. Alberto Alesina and George-Marios Angeletos (2005), along with Kotera, Okada, and Samreth (2012), conclude that an increase in government size will provide an opportunity for political leaders to engage in political rent-seeking and corrupt practices. On the other hand, the increase in corrupt practices in most African countries is attributed to the extent of the development of their democratic practices (Fosu 2008). It is expected that democratic institutions ensure executive restraints that enhance public service effectiveness and reduce corruption (Alence 2004). Likewise, democracy provides a system of accountability, as well as checks and balances, which constrain public officials from practicing opportunistic behavior, at least, to an extent. This kind of governance is still in its infancy in Africa.⁷

Since the focus of my study is on the attributes of African political leaders and the way it impacts corruption control, I extend Kotera, Okada, and Samreth's (2012) model to include politicians' attributes as an explanatory variable. Thus, the empirical model for my study is:

$$\text{Corruption}_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Politician_Attributes}_{it} + \beta_2 \text{Government_Size}_{it} + \beta_3 \text{Democracy}_{it} + \beta_4 \text{GDP_PerCapita}_{it} + \beta_5 \text{Legal_Origin}_{it} + \mu_{it} \quad (2)$$

The identifiers i and t signify country and time, β is the estimated coefficient and μ the error term. The variable corruption measures the extent of *corruption* in my sample countries during the period. I use the control of corruption data, as published by the World Governance Indicator (WGI). I value the data using the scale -2.5 to +2.5. This implies that higher (positive) values signify less corruption, while the opposite is true for negative values. However, the data is transformed by subtracting the value for each country from 2.5 in order to ensure that a higher value signifies more corruption.

Politician_Attributes,⁸ the main explanatory variable, captures four attributes of political leaders that are of interest to me: (i) socio-demographic features; (ii) level of

⁷ See Habiba Barka and Mthuli Ncube (2012).

⁸ To verify the correctness of the personal attributes data, it is prudent to ensure that some of the politicians' attribute are not misreported. The data from a country's website or biographical data of a political leader was further verified with information from other web sources. In the case of consistency of information, the country was included as part of the sample. However, when there was a discrepancy, the particular political leader, and consequently the country, was dropped from the sample.

educational attainment; (iii) experience; and (iv) political ideology of the political leader. The first attribute is socio-demographic features. In this category, age (measured in number of years since birth), marital status (e.g., monogamy=1, polygamy=2), gender (male=1, female=2), and number of children (total number of biological children of the political leader) stand out. The age of the political leader reflects his/her life experience, and there is a general consensus (e.g., Moessinger 2012) that age also affects the quality of policies put forward by a political leader. The marital status of a political leader is a new variable I include because of the existing sociological consent that the family is a conservative institution constraining unorthodox sentiments and behaviors. This is expected to affect political participation of individuals and their response to political matters (Fendrich and Axelson 1971; Parsons and Bales 1955). Some authors note that political participation and zeal for national transformation fades away when young adults begin to get married and accept parental and occupational roles. Relating this to my study, a monogamous political leader is expected to have a proclivity to reduce corruption compared to a polygamous leader. The third measure, number of children of a political leader, captures the extent to which the decisions and policies of a political leader include the consideration of future generations.⁹ This will have an impact on the extent of corruption in a country since politicians with more children are expected to direct their policies toward reducing corrupt practices, considering possible adverse implications for future generations. Finally, the gender variable was included following the submission of some political economists (e.g., Dollar, Fisman and Gatti 2001) that the inclusion of women in politics will result in qualitative policies for national progress.

The educational attainment of a political leader includes the level of education he/she has and his/her course of study. Educational attainment is measured as the highest level of formal education and I coded it as: primary school education=1, secondary school education=2, university degree and other forms of tertiary education=3, and post-graduate degree=4. The education attainment variable reflects the influence of the quality and extent of a political leader's formal training on policy outcomes, such as extent of corruption. It is expected that better educational attainment will enable a political leader to come up with more sound reforms and policies to ensure judicious management of public resources and to reduce the incidence of corruption. The second measure is a political leader's course of study in a university. In this study, the interest is on economics-related courses.¹⁰ In essence, any political leader that has taken courses on economics, finance, business administration, and accounting is assigned 1, and 0 otherwise. This educational category is of interest to me because political economy literature has asserted that politicians who study economics have the tendency to be frugal and to follow established procedures in managing the affairs of state (Efobi et al. 2013; Moessinger 2012; Somogyi 2010). This

⁹ See Robert Barro (1974).

¹⁰ I made an attempt to include the law profession as another category, but the data for political leaders with legal profession is scant and I had to drop this variable.

implies that they are likely to be more imaginative in implementing policies that will result in effective management of public resources. Consequently, the effect on corruption is immeasurable.

The experience of a political leader was captured using four measures: years in office (number of years a political leader has stayed in office as head of state or president); political experience or years in politics (measured as the number of years a political leader has been involved in national politics); fiscal experience (captures the political leader's previous experience that relates to fiscal matters); and international relations experience (captures a political leader's exposure to international affairs and politics). Fiscal experience relates to the political leader's previous experience with multilateral financial organizations like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the African Development Bank, and other national experience pertaining to fiscal issues, such as serving as a finance minister, in central bank governance, and as head of committees on budget matters. If a political leader has a previous fiscal experience, he/she is assigned a number of 1, and 0 otherwise. The international relations experience of a political leader can be in the form of previous employment in multi-national non-financial organizations like the United Nations, as a diplomat, and engagements in regional economic organizations, such as the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). This fourth variable is assigned a value of 1 if a political leader has previous international relations experience, and 0 otherwise.

The tenure in office of a political leader reveals the extent to which politicians are disposed toward reform policies that reduce corruption. In most African countries, politicians with longer tenure in office tend to have relative power and control, and usurp the legislative process to foster private agendas (e.g., Ayittey 2012; Jo-Ansie 2007). Likewise, the peculiarity of African politics suggests that political leaders with long involvement in national politics tend to foster corrupt practices. This is based on their ability to build loyal cohorts as a result of their long political history, and then institutionalize corrupt practices. Fiscal- and international relations experiences, on the other hand, are expected to strengthen the capacity of a political leader to influence policies for reducing corruption. This is because these forms of experience will expose a leader to the skills required for managing public resources and implementing effective reform policy (Efobi et al. 2013; Moessinger 2012).

The fourth attribute of a political leader, political ideology, was identified using two measures: the political spectrum and the means of gaining power of political office. Political spectrum shows the political leader's leanings – whether left, center, or right-wing, as popularly identified in literature. This will reflect on the direction of the policy that the political leader will likely implement with regard to managing public resources (Moessinger 2012). The relevant literature generally agrees that political leaders, who belong to left-wing political parties, tend to be more reform-minded, unlike those who belong to right or center-wing political parties (Somogyi 2010). Moessinger (2012) also notes that leftist political leaders are more interested in policies that affect the poor. Therefore, the likelihood of propagating policies that effectively utilize public resources for the societal good is increased with left-winged

politicians in power. This variable is measured as left=1, center=2, and right=3. The second measure of political ideology is captured by the means of gaining political office. In Africa, most political leaders gain power by any of three means: by appointment, *coup d'état*, and democratic means, such as election. The first measure (by appointment) is prevalent in situations where the head of state dies in office, and the interim head of state is appointed by the "ruling council," which is expected to be in power until a proper presidential election takes place. A vivid example of this is Nigeria in 1998, when the then military head of state died in office and an interim military head of state had to be appointed until the new democratic election in 1999. *Coup d'état* is not a better alternative to appointment because studies have concluded that this approach is clearly associated with corruption and other forms of poor governance (Barka and Ncube 2012; Powell and Thyne 2011). The third, democratic approach of gaining power is prominently upheld as the system that ensures public accountability and good governance (Asiedu 2006). Therefore, the means-of-gaining-power variable regards the third approach that is measured as a dummy variable, where 1 is for political leaders that gain power through democratic means, and 0 otherwise.

Covariates

The covariates include the following: (i) government size, defined as the general government final consumption as a share of GDP; and (ii) the extent of democracy, constructed as a democracy index that was derived by a simple average of the political right and civil liberty data as presented in the Freedom House dataset. A higher value for this variable signifies a better democratic country. (iii) GDP per capita is the real GDP per capita at purchasing power parity in 2005 U.S. dollars, and (iv) legal origin is a dummy variable that signifies the type of legal system adopted in a country, with Anglo-Saxon common law being given a value of 1 and 0 otherwise. Countries with a mixed legal system (e.g., Gambia, Nigeria, South Africa, and Seychelles), where common law and other systems of law are practiced, are categorized as 1 because common law is still the prevalent judicial practice. (As former British colonies, these countries have a history of common law, in one form or another, which cannot be denied.)

Estimation Technique

The baseline regression model (equation 2) is estimated using the Ordinary Least Square-(OLS) regression with country-fixed effects and heteroscedasticity-corrected standard errors. This estimation approach is relevant because it controls for unobserved country heterogeneity that is likely to occur due to time-invariant country characteristics, such as prevalent institutional setups in the sampled countries. For example, there are cultural factors and norms that are incompatible with corrupt practices, and in countries where such norms exist the rate of corruption is likely to be affected despite the role of political leaders. Furthermore, some countries have

anti-corruption policies, which are put in place to control corruption. These are likely to affect the level of corruption in these countries regardless of political leaders. Since these heterogeneities are likely to influence the level of corruption in the sampled countries, it is essential to apply a technique that adequately controls for this in the estimation process. A preliminary Hausman test was conducted to validate my preference for the country-fixed effect technique.

The fixed effect model is presented as:

$$\text{Corruption}_{it} = \alpha + \beta \text{Politician_Attributes}_{it} + \lambda X_{it} + C_i + T_t + \mu_{it} \quad (3)$$

where the vector X_{it} contains the control variables, C_i and T_t , representing country and time-fixed effects. In addition, μ_{it} is the error term, α is a constant, and β and λ are parameters.

Data

The sample consists of political leaders from 39 African countries for the period 1996–2010. The sample countries include: Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Congo Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo DRC, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The countries were selected based on data availability. I present detailed definitions and sources of data for each of the variables, the descriptive statistics, and the correlation matrix in Appendices 1, 2, 3, and 4. The correlation matrix (Appendix 4) is of interest because it shows the basis for the combination of the main explanatory variables in the model. Appendix 4 shows that there is no potential for a multicollinearity problem among the indicators of the attributes of political leaders. This implies that in the case of combining all the variables in a single model the risk of imprecision of the estimates is reduced.

Main Empirical Results, Discussions, and Implications

I present the result from the correlation analysis in Appendix 4. The table shows that potential multicollinearity could not be identified among the variables. However, I followed a stepwise form of regression in reporting my estimations, where each category of the politicians' attributes are reported separately. This is to clarify the discussions of my main result.

I present the estimates of my baseline model in Table 1. As stated earlier, I utilize the Fixed Effect (FE) model, so the probability value of the F-Statistics and the Hausman test reveals the efficiency of this technique over the Random Effect (RE) model. A preliminary examination of the outlook of my covariates reveals that they were all significant at varying levels. The exception to this is legal origin, which was significant in some columns (columns 1 and 3), but had contrary outcomes in other

columns (columns 5). In essence, these variables behaved as expected, thereby justifying their inclusion in the model. The signs and significance levels of per capita income, democracy, and size of government reiterates the theoretical underpinnings that countries with improved per capita income (economic welfare), better democracy, and increased government size will experience a reduction in the level of corruption. This result is not affected by possible simultaneity¹¹ that was likely to occur between the covariates and the explained variable (corruption). Appendix 5 affirms the relevance of including these covariates at their contemporaneous values because the estimates remained consistent (especially signs and level of significance) with those of Table 1. In essence, the issue of simultaneity is downplayed, and does not cause much concern for my empirical analysis. The correlation analysis even reveals a low level of association between the variables.

Taking stock of the signs and significance levels of the main variables of interest, Table 1 reveals that the fiscal and international relations experience of political leaders, as well as the means of gaining power matters the most in the sampled countries. These variables have the highest level of influence on corruption and are significant in most of the columns. The varying significance levels, especially for fiscal and international relations experience of a political leader imply that the significant impact of these variables on corruption is determined by the inclusion or exclusion of other variables, thereby revealing their volatile nature. However, the range of influence of these variables (0.304 for fiscal experience; 0.262 and 0.242 for international relations experience; and 0.103 and 0.134 for means of gaining power), makes them indispensable when considering the level of corruption in Africa.

African political leaders with fiscal and international relations experience are most likely to initiate policies that reduce corruption. This is not farfetched since such leaders have acquired the necessary skills and relevant information to improve their capacity of bringing forth and implementing policies that reduce corruption. Such political leaders tend to be more accountable to a wider community of stakeholders (both local and international), and are more likely to target the reduction of

¹¹ The simultaneity issue can occur owing to the theoretical conclusions that corruption has an effect on the level of economic growth, government size, and the quality of democratic process in a country. For instance, corruption is noted to affect economic growth through a number of channels like discouraging private investment, reducing the efficiency of public investment expenditure (Del Monte and Papagni 2001), altering government spending on growth-enhancing sectors (Kotera, Okada and Samreth 2007; Mauro 1997), limiting small and medium enterprise development, and affecting the inflow of foreign capital (Asiedu 2006; Asiedu and Lien 2011). Based on these arguments, it would be negligent to absolutely abandon this fact, so the lagged values of the covariates are included in the model and then re-estimated. The result is presented in Appendix 5 and not much difference is experienced, especially with the signs of the variables. It is important to state that there is a budding argument against the use of lagged variables in solving the simultaneity issues plaguing economics research (Reed 2013). However, the main argument is embedded in the fact that these problems are exacerbated when the suspected endogenous variable is characterized by serial correlation. In this study, I conducted a preliminary analysis, where I used the "estat hottest" test for heteroskedasticity and the output revealed a *chi* value of 0.50, with probability value of 0.4777. This means that the combination of the covariates did not suffer from the possible serial correlation which impedes the usage of lagged variables to control for simultaneity.

corruption than act otherwise. A possible reason for this is that in the process of gaining these experiences, African political leaders would have built a reputation and goodwill that they desire to protect when they get to public offices. Based on this, they tend to put in place policies that will bring about national transformation and reduce corrupt practices. Pertinent to the state, these experiences include working for multilateral financial and non-financial organizations, such as the World Bank, IMF, the United Nations, and the African Union.

Another attribute of political leaders that has the potential of significantly reducing the level of corruption in the sampled countries is the marital status of a political leader. From Table 1, the possibility of initiating policies that will reduce the level of corruption increases between 0.056 and 0.085 if the political leader tends to practice monogamy. The theoretical justification for this finding hinges on the sociological consensus (e.g., Fendrich and Axelson 1971) that family responsibilities reduce the extent of political participation. The expectation is that a polygamous family furnishes more responsibility for the leader and affects the extent of his/her engagement in policies that will result in national transformation – in this case, corruption. Another possible explanation for this finding is that African politicians tend to be more corrupt when the number of close dependents/relations is increasing. As Van-Wyk Jo-Ansie (2007) clearly states, the neo-patrimonial state of African politics breeds corruption since political leaders are obliged to use national resources to cater to their dependents'/relations' needs or ambitions.

Observing the signs and significance values for the number of children of political leaders, the result in Table 1 (columns 1, 3, and 7) reveals an increased possibility of corruption within a country with the growing number of children a political leader has. This result contradicts my expectation that politicians with more children tend to consider future generations in policy-making. However, as stated earlier, the reality of African political systems asserts itself yet again. More dependents give rise to corrupt practices within the political system as political leaders grant political appointments or favorable contracts to their wards as a matter of common practice in some African countries. Furthermore, instances have been recounted of political leaders that accumulate wealth for future generations, and, in some cases, concentrate on advancing the wellbeing of their children at the expense of the state in African countries. These occurrences breed corruption within the political system.

Not surprisingly, the possibility of breeding corrupt political systems increases with political leaders that have longer political experience. The result reveals that the length of time African politicians have been in national politics will alter the extent to which they influence the political atmosphere of the country. In essence, the likelihood of being corrupt is higher because longer involvement in national politics grants politicians greater influence over political structures, who may usurp constitutional rights for private gain. Among the cases in point are Muammar Ghaddafi of Libya, Paul Biya of Cameroon, and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, who have had over forty years of experience in national politics each, and who influenced the spread of corrupt practices within their respective countries.

Table 1. GLS Estimations (Fixed Country Effects)

Explained variable: WGI corruption	1	2	3	4	5	6
Real GDP per capita	-0.254 ^a (0.000)	-0.236 ^a (0.000)	-0.281 ^a (0.000)	-0.236 ^a (0.000)	-0.229 ^a (0.000)	-0.233 ^a (0.000)
Democracy	-0.166 ^a (0.000)	-0.177 ^a (0.000)	-0.185 ^a (0.000)	-0.164 ^a (0.000)	-0.164 ^a (0.000)	-0.184 ^a (0.000)
Size of government	-0.525 ^a (0.000)	-0.529 ^a (0.000)	-0.428 ^a (0.000)	-0.505 ^a (0.000)	-0.461 ^a (0.000)	-0.476 ^a (0.000)
Legal origin	0.179 ^a (0.000)	0.083 ^b (0.044)	0.185 ^a (0.000)	0.121 ^a (0.001)	0.149 (0.130)	0.085 ^b (0.048)
Age of pol. leader	-0.001 (0.604)		0.011 (0.831)			
No. of children of pol. leader	0.024 ^a (0.000)		0.022 ^a (0.000)			
Marital status of pol. leader	-0.085 ^c (0.073)		-0.056 ^c (0.100)			
Pol. leader's education	0.035 (0.268)			-0.013 (0.654)		
Economics-related degree	-0.026 (0.741)			-0.036 (0.575)		
Years in pol. office	-0.003 (0.425)				-0.001 (0.700)	
Years in national politics	0.040 ^c (0.060)				0.050 ^a (0.003)	
Fiscal exp. of pol. leader	-0.169 (0.166)				-0.304 ^a (0.003)	
Pol. leader's intern. exp.	-0.262 ^a (0.003)				-0.015 (0.775)	
Pol. spectrum of pol. leader	0.061 ^a (0.000)					0.032 ^c (0.059)
Means of gaining power	0.103 ^c (0.068)					0.134 ^b (0.011)
Constant	5.579 ^a (0.000)	5.828 ^a (0.000)	6.063 ^a (0.000)	6.695 ^a (0.000)	6.389 ^a (0.000)	6.454 ^a (0.000)
R ²	0.709	0.665	0.671	0.632	0.665	0.649
F-Statistics	44.450 (0.000)	180.860 (0.000)	86.100 (0.000)	101.050 (0.000)	87.260 (0.000)	109.830 (0.000)
Hausman	10.520 (0.786)	8.960 (0.062)	19.520 (0.007)	9.090 (0.169)	5.250 (0.731)	7.550 (0.273)
Observation	286	365	293	356	361	362
Countries	39	39	39	39	39	39

Note: The values in parenthesis are the probability values of the estimates. ^a, ^b, and ^c signify the level of significance at 1.0, 5.0, and 10 percent. The variable gender of the political leader was dropped because all political leaders in the sampled countries were male.

The fourth column of Table 1 contains the estimates of the fourth attribute, political ideology. It reveals that the political leanings of a leader and the means of his/her gaining power have a significant influence on corruption in a country. The sign of the political ideology variable reveals that political leaders who have leftist leanings are likely to reduce the extent of corruption in a country. This is not unlikely as this category of ideology is prone to favoring policies geared toward the poor (Moessinger 2012), and can put in place structures to ensure that resources are properly managed to enhance the wellbeing of the poor. The means-of-gaining-power variable revealed a surprising outlook: the coefficient was positive and significant. This implies that political leaders who are elected to government are not able to reduce the level of corruption in a country. Although this finding is surprising, it is not out of place considering that many African countries have political systems that are sponsored by “godfathers” and cliques that demand recompense for having “their” candidates elected to power. In fact, many African countries have experienced vote-buying, financial politicking, and election rigging for the purpose of getting a particular politician into office (Efobi et al. 2013). Paul Collier (2010) and Paul Collier and Anke Hoffler (2009) note that such practices erode checks and balances and value judgments in a country’s electoral process, as a result of which corruption thrives.

Robustness

Robustness checks were carried out to examine the consistency of the estimates for the results in Table 1. The first check is the measure of corruption. The relevant literature argues against the use of measures of corruption, as published by Transparency International (Corruption Index), World Governance Indicators (Control of Corruption), and the International Country Risk Guide (ICRG). This is because they are based on a survey of the perceptions of individuals about the level of corruption in a country. Dani Rodrik (2004) specifically notes that these data captures perceptions of domestic and foreign investors rather than any formal institutional settings, while Edward Glaeser et al. (2004) report that of all the three datasets, the ICRG is the most problematic. However, recent evidence shows that high correlation does exist between the perception of corruption that is based on experts’ opinion and the actual occurrence of corruption. Therefore, the measures of corruption are reliable in reflecting recent states of corrupt practices in a country (Banerjee and Pande 2009). In this light, my measure of corruption should be able to express the extent of corrupt practices in African countries. To verify this and be consistent, however, I conducted a re-estimation of the corruption dataset, as reported by Transparency International (2012). I rescaled this measure of corruption so that a higher value signifies more corruption. The re-estimated result is presented in Table 2.

My estimates of the variables in Table 2 display a similar outlook as those in Table 1. This implies that the signs of the coefficients and the significance levels of the variables in Table 1 are not regulated by the measures of corruption adopted to capture the main explained variable. That means – whether corruption is captured by

Table 2. GLS Estimations (Fixed Country Effects) When CPI Is Used to Measure Corruption

Explained variable: Corruption perception index (CPI)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Real GDP per capita	-0.537 ^a (0.000)	-0.579 (0.000)	-0.596 (0.000)	-0.589 (0.000)	-0.602 (0.000)	-0.560 (0.000)	-0.541 (0.000)
Democracy	-0.345 ^a (0.000)	-0.327 ^a (0.000)	-0.398 ^a (0.000)	-0.340 ^a (0.000)	-0.329 ^a (0.000)	-0.333 ^a (0.000)	-0.361 ^a (0.000)
Size of government	-0.042 ^a (0.000)	-0.057 ^a (0.000)	-0.057 ^a (0.000)	-0.058 ^a (0.000)	-0.049 ^a (0.000)	-0.055 ^a (0.000)	-0.039 ^a (0.000)
Legal origin	0.500 ^a (0.000)	0.325 ^a (0.000)	0.545 ^a (0.000)	0.275 ^a (0.000)	0.383 ^a (0.000)	0.269 ^a (0.001)	0.418 ^a (0.000)
Age of pol. leader	-0.009 ^b (0.028)		0.224 (0.242)				
No. of children of pol. leader	0.016 ^a (0.052)		0.018 ^b (0.025)				0.015 ^c (0.062)
Marital status of pol. leader	-0.270 ^a (0.000)		-0.354 ^a (0.000)				-0.230 ^a (0.004)
Pol. leader's education	0.207 ^a (0.000)			0.112 ^b (0.020)			0.190 ^a (0.000)
Economics-related degree	0.182 (0.139)			-0.038 (0.699)			
Years in pol. office	0.002 (0.680)				-0.006 (0.220)		
Years in national politics	0.013 ^a (0.000)				0.014 ^a (0.000)		0.010 ^a (0.000)
Fiscal exp. of pol. leader	-0.300 ^b (0.048)				-0.305 ^b (0.024)		-0.585 ^a (0.000)
Political leader's intern. exp.	-0.482 ^a (0.000)				0.038 (0.654)		
Pol. spectrum of pol. leader	0.076 ^b (0.023)					0.083 ^a (0.005)	0.096 ^a (0.001)
Means of gaining power	-0.012 (0.906)					-0.001 (0.989)	
Constant	12.413 ^a (0.000)	13.186 ^a (0.000)	12.901 ^a (0.000)	13.041 ^a (0.000)	12.944 ^a (0.000)	12.840 ^a (0.000)	11.957 ^a (0.000)
R ²	0.830	0.737	0.753	0.739	0.767	0.737	0.808
F-Statistics	75.930 (0.000)	218.17 (0.000)	109.97 (0.000)	142.00 (0.000)	128.33 (0.000)	143.70 (0.000)	104.43 (0.000)
Observation	245	295	293	285	290	286	293
Countries	39	39	39	39	39	39	39

Note: The values in parenthesis are the probability values of the estimates. ^a, ^b, and ^c signify the level of significance at 1.0, 5.0, and 10 percent. The variable gender of the political leader was dropped because all political leaders in the sampled countries were male.

The World Governance Indicator or Transparency International – that the behavior of the variables of interest (politicians' attributes and the covariates) does not change.

This consistency is found in all the variables, except for the age of the politician, which became significant, but still maintained a negative sign, as in Table 1. The means-of-gaining-power variable was also not consistent as it became insignificant in Table 2 unlike its value in Table 1. In summary, the behavior of the politicians' age and means-of-gaining-power variables are sensitive to the measure of corruption in focus, while the other variables are not affected.

I also considered the exclusion of the year of general election from the sampled period. Checking this was paramount following the existing empirical evidence that African countries experience the most corruption during national elections. Collier (2008) notes that, during election periods, corrupt practices like bribery, embezzlement by incumbent government officials, and exchange of votes for cash, are rampant in many African countries. Jo Ansie (2007) provides an insight into the cases of Nigeria, Malawi, and Uganda, where amendments of constitutional rulings and exchange of bribes of up to US\$270,000 were made to benefit incumbent political leaders. In some other cases, incumbents have engaged in corrupt practices by using national resources to fund their reelection campaigns. To avoid the possibility of being influenced by corrupt occurrences in this period, I re-estimated the baseline and reported the results in Table 3.

Table 3 establishes the consistency of the main empirical estimates presented in Table 1. This is based on the consistency of the signs and significance levels of the covariates and the main variables. Marital status of the political leaders was the only variable that behaved differently. Its level of significance was not verified from all the columns in Table 3. However, it maintained a consistent negative sign, as in Table 1. This development did not raise much concern because the sign of the variable in both Table 1 and Table 3 were consistently negative. Yet, the marital status of the political leaders may not really matter, except when considering election years, which display the extent of political participation and the zeal for national transformation (Fendrich and Axelson 1971; Parsons and Bales 1955). In essence, the other variables remained consistent and were not influenced by the inclusion/exclusion of the electoral year.

It is further possible that measuring the attributes of political leaders and corruption in Africa over a period of time may result in inconsistent interpretation of the result if one does not take into account the time period for which politicians have been in office. For example, if the extent of corruption in a country started low, but gradually increased over the course of a leader's tenure, the conclusion may be that his/her characteristics were associated with corruption, even though current levels of corruption could be a spillover from previous regimes. Therefore, for better predictions, it will be necessary to expunge all political leaders who have less than a three-year tenure from the sample in order to have a clearer view of how a politician's regime affects corruption. The re-estimation of the baseline model is presented in Table 4.

From the estimates in Table 4, it is clear that there is not much difference with the results shown in Table 1. Interestingly, the variables economics-related degree and number of years spent in political office were now significant, but still maintained negative signs, as in Table 1. In essence, a conclusion can be drawn that the results are not significantly affected by the inclusion of politicians who had shorter tenures.

Arguably, only the impact of their course of study and number of years in political office were different, especially the levels of significance. However, the signs remained the same.

Table 3. GLS Estimations (Fixed Country Effects) When Election Year Is Excluded from the Sample Period

Explained variable: WGI corruption	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Real GDP per capita	-0.240 ^a (0.000)	-0.231 ^a (0.000)	-0.276 ^a (0.000)	-0.236 ^a (0.000)	-0.230 ^a (0.000)	-0.232 ^a (0.000)	-0.263 ^a (0.000)
Democracy	-0.152 ^a (0.000)	-0.164 ^a (0.000)	-0.171 ^a (0.000)	-0.156 ^a (0.000)	-0.157 ^a (0.000)	-0.184 ^a (0.000)	-0.149 ^a (0.000)
Size of government	-0.427 ^a (0.000)	-0.535 ^a (0.000)	-0.493 ^a (0.000)	-0.543 ^a (0.000)	-0.499 ^a (0.000)	-0.510 ^a (0.000)	-0.410 ^a (0.000)
Legal origin	0.214 ^a (0.000)	0.138 ^a (0.003)	0.226 ^a (0.000)	0.155 ^a (0.001)	0.181 ^a (0.000)	0.102 ^b (0.027)	0.222 ^a (0.000)
Age of pol. leader	-0.179 (0.295)		0.023 (0.853)				
No. of children of pol. leader	0.019 ^a (0.001)		0.019 ^a (0.000)				0.019 ^a (0.000)
Marital status of pol. leader	-0.045 (0.429)		-0.022 (0.686)				-0.044 (0.409)
Pol. leader's education	0.012 (0.742)			-0.014 (0.663)			
Economics-related degree	-0.016 (0.863)			-0.055 (0.437)			
Years in pol. office	-0.002 (0.603)				-0.001 (0.881)		
Years in national politics	0.005 ^c (0.074)				0.005 ^a (0.003)		0.003 (0.189)
Fiscal exp. of pol. leader	-0.132 (0.346)				-0.309 ^a (0.005)		-0.105 (0.408)
Pol. leader's intern. exp.	-0.196 ^b (0.028)				-0.022 (0.716)		-0.214 ^a (0.010)
Pol. spectrum of pol. leader	0.077 ^a (0.002)					0.044 ^b (0.018)	0.074 ^a (0.000)
Means of gaining power	0.085 (0.191)					0.166 ^a (0.004)	0.087 (0.148)
Constant	6.745 (0.00)	6.682 (0.00)	6.727 (0.00)	6.750 (0.00)	6.435 (0.00)	6.460 (0.00)	6.178 (0.00)
R ²	0.679	0.638	0.641	0.632	0.669	0.654	0.685
F-Statistics	31.390 (0.000)	131.370 (0.000)	62.500 (0.000)	83.050 (0.000)	72.640 (0.000)	92.740 (0.000)	46.520 (0.000)
Observation	236	296	293	291	295	296	242
Countries	39	39	39	39	39	39	39

Note: The values in parenthesis are the probability values of the estimates. ^a, ^b, and ^c signify the level of significance at 1.0, 5.0, and 10 percent. The variable gender of the political leader was dropped because all political leaders in the sampled countries were male.

Table 4. GLS Estimations (Fixed Country Effects) When Considering the Time Period for Which Political Leader Has Been in Office

Explained variable: WGI corruption	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Real GDP per capita	-0.269 ^a (0.000)	-0.217 ^a (0.000)	-0.310 ^a (0.000)	-0.213 ^a (0.000)	-0.190 ^a (0.000)	-0.228 ^a (0.000)	-0.278 ^a (0.000)
Democracy	-0.143 ^a (0.000)	-0.147 ^a (0.000)	-0.162 ^a (0.000)	-0.117 ^a (0.000)	-0.132 ^a (0.000)	-0.165 ^a (0.000)	-0.166 ^a (0.000)
Size of government	-0.026 ^a (0.000)	-0.028 ^a (0.000)	-0.028 ^a (0.000)	-0.029 ^a (0.000)	-0.027 ^a (0.000)	-0.027 ^a (0.000)	-0.026 ^a (0.000)
Legal origin	0.159 ^b (0.038)	0.022 (0.724)	0.172 ^b (0.013)	0.087 (0.184)	0.089 (0.144)	-0.025 (0.703)	0.122 ^c (0.088)
Age of pol. leader	-0.114 (0.590)		-0.009 (0.956)				
No. of children of pol. leader	0.037 ^a (0.000)		0.029 ^a (0.000)				0.038 ^a (0.000)
Marital status of pol. leader	-0.137 ^b (0.038)		-0.108 ^c (0.099)				-0.129 ^c (0.051)
Pol. leader's education	-0.052 (0.361)			-0.014 (0.758)			
Economics-related degree	-0.252 ^c (0.079)			-0.300 ^a (0.000)			-0.347 ^a (0.005)
Years in political office	-0.017 ^a (0.004)				-0.009 ^b (0.023)		-0.017 ^a (0.001)
Years in national politics	0.007 ^b (0.045)				0.008 ^a (0.002)		0.006 ^b (0.048)
Fiscal exp. of pol. leader	-0.019 (0.919)				-0.402 ^a (0.004)		-0.006 (0.973)
Pol. leader's intern. exp.	-0.123 (0.333)				-0.086 (0.301)		
Pol. spectrum of pol. leader	0.117 ^a (0.001)					0.032 (0.249)	0.109 ^a (0.001)
Means of gaining power	0.088 (0.303)					0.201 ^a (0.008)	0.129 ^c (0.092)
Constant	6.115 (0.000)	5.536 (0.000)	6.232 (0.000)	5.468 (0.000)	5.199 (0.000)	5.450 (0.000)	5.673 (0.000)
R ²	0.722	0.604	0.655	0.608	0.645	0.6063	0.715
F-Statistics	20.930 (0.000)	67.360 (0.000)	35.080 (0.000)	44.770 (0.000)	37.780 (0.000)	43.660 (0.000)	26.060 (0.000)
Observation	137	180	138	177	176	177	137
Countries	39	39	39	39	39	39	39

Note: The values in parenthesis are the probability values of the estimates. ^a, ^b, and ^c signify the level of significance at 1.0, 5.0, and 10 percent. The variable gender of the political leader was dropped because all political leaders in the sampled countries were male.

Conclusions and Policy Implications

Previous studies on the incidence of corruption in developing countries have provided varying findings on the factors that impede (or promote) this social “plague.” In an attempt to consider the issue from an entirely different perspective, I investigated the effect of the attributes of political leaders on corruption, taking into consideration some other covariates that have been noted to have a significant impact on corruption. The estimated results indicate that several of the attributes of politicians – including socio-demographic features, such as number of children, marital status, experience (in national politics, fiscal policy, and international relations), and political ideology (political leanings and means of gaining power) associated with those – matter in determining the extent of corruption in given countries. These results are robust to the inclusion of alternative estimations. Furthermore, I investigated and downplayed the possibility of simultaneity of the variables in the model based on relevant checks.

Although this result is new to the existing literature, it is important to state that my measure of corruption here is mainly based on people’s perceptions about the extent of corruption in the respective countries. Also, I did not match the countries in accordance with their institutional development or re-estimate the results. Despite these drawbacks, the result remains valid because the measure of corruption I used in this study has been the most reoccurring indicator of the level of corruption in empirical literatures and has been proven capable of showing the level of corruption in countries (Glaeser et al. 2004; Kotera, Okada and Samreth 2012). I could not disaggregate the countries into their levels of institutional development because most of the sampled countries fall into the category of poor institutional development. Therefore, I expected no difference from a re-estimated result.

The main policy implication from the results is that attention should begin to focus on the quality of the political leaders directing the affairs of African countries. For instance, fiscal experience, international relations experience, and economics-related background matter in a political leader’s dealing with corruption. Furthermore, there is the need to reconsider the quality of democratic governance that is practiced in Africa as it exerts a positive influence on corruption. The need to consider the economic cost of getting into leadership positions matters. For instance, since most of these leaders require massive funds to secure leadership positions, it is little wonder that they are not able to reduce corruption. Hence, electoral processes can begin to drive toward fairness and not economic power. Although this may sound farfetched, I hope to encourage further debate on approaches to achieving this feat. Finally, there is the need to advocate for political officials, whose agenda is likely to be pro-poor and toward inclusive growth. These kinds of political leaders will be more concerned about the welfare of the people and will put policies in place to protect the interest of the poor by discouraging corrupt practices. My results robustly support this stance.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Data Definitions and Sources

Variable	Description	Source
Corruption (WGI)	This index is developed by World Bank, World Governance Indicator. It captures the perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as "capture" of the state by elites and private interests.	World Governance Indicator (2012)
Corruption (TI)	This index defines corruption as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain, including corrupt practices in both the public and private sectors.	Transparency International (2012)
Politicians attributes	This data includes the socio-demographic features, education, experience, and political ideology of the leaders.	Different web sources including biographical websites
Government size	This is measured using the general government final consumption expenditure as a share of GDP.	World Development Indicator (2012)
Democracy	This measures the extent of democratic practice in the country. The Freedom House provides data for political right and civil liberty. Democracy is the average of the two measures, and it is rescaled so that a higher value signifies better democracy.	Freedom House (2012)
GDP per capita	This is the real per capita GDP at purchasing power parity in 2005 U.S. Dollars.	World Development Indicator (2012)
Legal origin	Dummy variable for the legal systems of countries, whose origin is the Anglo-Saxon common law.	Central Intelligence Agencies classification

Appendix 2. Descriptive Statistics of Politicians' Attributes

Variables	Description	Indicators	Stat.
Social-demographic features	Mean age	Age (years)	61.52
	Mean no. of children	Number of children	4.3
	Marital status	Monogamous	68.07
		Polygamous	27.92
		Separated	4.01
	Gender	Male	100
Female		0	
Educational attainment	Education	No formal education	0.35
		Primary school education	3.68
		Secondary school education	42.11
		University education	37.19
	Educational category	Post-graduate	16.67
		Did not study a course related to economics	81.58
	Studied a course related to economics	18.42	
Experience	Mean years in office	Office experience (years)	9
	Mean years in politics	Politics experience (years)	23
	Fiscal experience	No	93.59
		Yes	6.41
	International relation experience	No	73.31
		Yes	26.69
Political ideology	Political spectrum	Left-wing	37.78
		Center	22.56
		Right-wing	30.26
	Means of gaining power	Appointment	7.69
		Coup d'état	14.04
		Presidential election	77.23

Appendix 3. Descriptive Statistics of Other Variables

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	Obs.
Corruption	-0.54	0.59	-2.06	1.26	431
Government size	15.01	7.41	2.05	69.54	524
Democracy	3.68	1.57	1.00	7.00	585
GDP per capita	2075.76	13673.15	0.00	250,555.60	570
Legal origin	0.38	0.49	0.00	1.00	585

Appendix 4. Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Corruption	1.00															
President's age	0.12	1.00														
No. of children	-0.09	0.11	1.00													
Marital status	-0.25	0.02	0.40	1.00												
Education	0.06	0.11	-0.12	-0.02	1.00											
Educational category	0.12	0.26	-0.02	-0.04	0.56	1.00										
Years in office	-0.11	0.34	0.45	0.37	-0.20	-0.20	1.00									
Years in politics	-0.03	0.65	0.28	0.02	-0.06	0.01	0.39	1.00								
Fiscal experience	0.37	0.07	-0.07	-0.08	0.31	0.52	-0.13	-0.09	1.00							
International exp.	0.09	0.16	-0.03	-0.14	0.29	0.49	-0.18	0.10	0.43	1.00						
Political spectrum	-0.08	0.03	-0.09	0.25	0.28	0.17	0.06	-0.07	0.09	-0.01	1.00					
Means of power	0.09	0.16	0.08	0.07	-0.01	0.17	-0.06	0.16	0.03	0.22	0.00	1.00				
Real GDP per capita	0.13	0.04	0.14	0.02	0.04	0.05	0.07	0.04	0.12	0.04	0.00	0.04	1.00			
Democracy	0.58	0.14	-0.01	-0.29	0.25	0.29	-0.32	-0.01	0.29	0.29	0.04	0.37	0.08	1.00		
Expenditure	0.44	-0.08	-0.13	-0.16	0.06	0.01	-0.10	-0.10	0.12	-0.07	-0.01	-0.18	0.04	0.09	1.00	
Legal origin	0.13	0.14	-0.02	0.25	0.31	0.37	-0.08	-0.03	0.20	0.24	0.24	0.25	0.03	0.22	0.03	1.00

Note: The numbering in the first row represents columns for each of the variables in the order in which they are presented in the first column.

Appendix 5. GLS (Fixed Country Effects) Estimations, Including Lagged Values of Covariates

<i>Explained variable: WGI corruption</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Real GDP per capita	Yes	Yes			
Democracy	Yes		Yes		
Size of government	Yes			Yes	
Legal origin	Yes				Yes
Age of political leader	-0.680 ^a (0.001)	-0.148 (0.375)	-0.540 ^a (0.003)	-0.594 ^a (0.003)	-0.552 ^a (0.002)
No. of children of political leader	0.003 (0.596)	0.021 ^a (0.000)	0.002 (0.796)	0.004 (0.490)	0.002 (0.682)
Marital status of political leader	-0.131 ^b (0.027)	-0.177 ^a (0.000)	-0.174 ^a (0.001)	-0.173 ^a (0.002)	-0.166 ^a (0.002)
Political leader's education attainment	0.049 (0.563)	-0.004 (0.911)	0.053 (0.217)	0.019 (0.676)	0.037 (0.355)
Economics related degree	-0.019 (0.935)	-0.215 ^b (0.013)	-0.005 (0.959)	-0.044 (0.703)	-0.029 (0.762)
Years in political office	0.002 (0.752)	-0.004 (0.255)	-0.001 (0.800)	0.001 (0.826)	0.000 (0.915)
Years in national politics	0.008 ^b (0.029)	0.001 (0.554)	0.008 ^a (0.006)	0.009 ^a (0.010)	0.007 ^a (0.008)
Fiscal experience of political leader	-0.295 ^a (0.000)	-0.319 ^b (0.026)	-0.245 ^a (0.000)	-0.183 ^a (0.000)	-0.233 ^a (0.000)
Political leader's international experience	-0.044 (0.827)	-0.172 ^b (0.027)	-0.003 (0.973)	0.022 (0.829)	-0.036 (0.692)
Political spectrum of leader	0.096 ^a (0.000)	0.122 ^a (0.000)	0.097 ^a (0.000)	0.106 ^a (0.000)	0.097 ^a (0.000)
Means of gaining power	0.119 (0.177)	0.006 (0.921)	0.085 (0.236)	0.101 (0.178)	0.106 (0.132)
Constant	5.549 (0.000)	4.093 (0.000)	4.553 (0.000)	4.950 (0.000)	4.703 (0.000)
R ²	0.370	0.527	0.378	0.362	0.379
F-Statistics	10.770 (0.000)	29.550 (0.000)	16.250 (0.000)	13.030 (0.000)	16.340 (0.000)
Observation	292	327	340	292	340
Countries	39	39	39	39	39

Note: The values in parenthesis are the probability values of the estimates. ^a, ^b, and ^c signify the level of significance at 1.0, 5.0, and 10 percent. The variable gender of the political leader was dropped because all political leaders in the sampled countries were male.

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