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The effects of the perception of corruption on public trust in government in Africa: a comparative analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effects of corruption on public trust in government in Africa at various levels and explores variations across stable and fragile states. This study uses Afrobarometer data collected from households in 2019 to understand whether this link exists. Using ordered logit analysis and marginal effects, the study reveals that corruption significantly diminishes trust in government. High levels of corruption in the presidency, parliament, and local government are all associated with declining levels of trust. This corruption extends to judges, magistrate courts, religious, and traditional leaders suspected of corruption, who are expected to uphold ethical standards. Corruption in the office of the president reduces trust in the president, parliament, and local governments, while corruption in parliament decreases trust in parliament and local governments. Local government corruption impacts trust at the local level. Despite a high level of corruption in stable states, corruption in the local government is not responsive to public trust. The sensitivity of corruption to trust in the government is more pronounced in fragile states than in stable states. This study illustrates the pressing need to combat corruption and rebuild trust in governments. The findings highlight the need for context-specific anti-corruption strategies and policy interventions.

1. Introduction

Trust is a glue that holds citizens and the government together, where collective actions are not achievable in its absence (Pagliara et al. 2021). It also remains a foundation for state legitimacy (Charron and Rothstein 2016; Nunkoo et al. 2018; Mansoor 2021; Voogd, Vries, and Beunen 2021; Gebrihet and Mwale 2024). However, in recent decades, the trust of citizens in government has declined (Weng et al. 2015). The average global trust in government computed out of the 28 countries is below 50%, indicating that citizens' trust in their government is deteriorating (Edelman Trust Barometer 2020). Corruption, which hinders investment and economic growth and heightens the difference between rich and poor, is a potential factor that erodes public trust (Justesen and Bjørnskov 2014; Weng et al. 2015).

Narrowing down to Africa, corruption is a significant concern, and its impact on public trust cannot be underestimated (Zinyama 2021; Gebrihet et al., 2024). The African Union

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has reported an annual loss of \$140 billion due to corruption, an amount that equates the gross domestic product (GDP) of all African countries except for five (Adekoya 2020). This signifies a substantial obstacle to achieving the vision outlined in Agenda 2063, an agenda that aims to create a future for Africa that is devoid of corruption and impunity. The problem of corruption is expanding in both scale and impact, to the point where even anti-corruption agencies themselves become corrupt (Khan and Roy 2022).

5wThe impact of corruption on the socio-economic and political development constitute well-documented areas of research (Dimant, Krieger, and Meierrieks 2013; Charron and Rothstein 2016; Habibov, Afandi, and Cheung 2017; Habibov, Cheung, and Auchynnikava 2018; Nunkoo et al. 2018; Habibov, Fan, and Auchynnikava 2019; Mansoor 2021; Pagliara et al. 2021; Voogd, Vries, and Beunen 2021; Gebresilassie et al., 2024). Habibov, Fan, and Auchynnikava (2019) establishes a causal link between higher corruption levels and lower satisfaction with local and national governments. Dimant, Krieger, and Meierrieks (2013) highlights the impact of corruption on Nigeria's socio-economic development. Habibov's (2016) examination of corruption in post-Soviet nations reveals its detrimental effect on healthcare satisfaction. Corruption erodes trust across various societal institutions, including political parties, government, financial institutions, international investors, non-profit organisations, and trade unions (Habibov, Afandi, and Cheung 2017). In addition, rising ethnic polarisation diminishes trust in the central government in Ethiopia (Gebrihet and Mwale 2024). Conversely, increased institutional trust correlates with a greater willingness to pay higher taxes for public healthcare and education (Habibov, Cheung, and Auchynnikava 2018). However, understanding how and under what conditions the perception of increased corruption affects public trust requires further exploration. In addition, the effects of corruption on public trust in government in Africa, at various levels of government, and variations across stable and fragile states are less explored areas of research.

This study uncovers the association between corruption and public trust and whether corruption affects public trust in three arms of government: the office of the presidency, the parliament, and local governments. In doing so, data were used from four countries, Guinea, Sudan, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. While Guinea, Sudan, and Zimbabwe were selected because of their high levels of fragility according to the Fragile States Index of the Fund for Peace (Messner et al. 2019), South Africa was chosen to provide a comparison due to its second higher GDP in Africa and better political stability (Ali, Fjeldstad, and Sjørusen 2014). The Fragile States Index is a tool for understanding the dynamics of nations facing fragility. The primary attributes of state fragility are corruption and political instability, poor governance structures, and weak human and institutional capacities (ADF 2007).

The scientific contribution of this study is twofold. First, it examines the association between corruption and public trust, investigating whether corruption undermines public trust. Focusing on the specific contexts of Guinea, Sudan, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, the study enhances understanding of how citizens in these diverse African nations perceive corruption and its impact on their trust in their respective government. Second, it bridges the gap in the literature regarding the intricate relationship between corruption and public trust, comparing politically fragile and stable states, where evidence is limited. Thus, the study contributes to the broader governance literature by offering detailed insights into the governance dynamics of African countries grappling with elevated levels of corruption and political fragility.

2. Literature review

2.1. *The perception of corruption, public trust, and the principal agent theory*

Before diving into the discourse of the association between corruption and public trust, it is essential to define these terms and identify the key actors. Firstly, corruption is a concept enriched with a diverse lexicon of terminologies. The aim of this study is not to debate the different concepts of corruption. Thus, for the purposes of this study, the Transparency International (TI) definition of corruption has been used, which posits that ‘corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain’ (TI 2017). In this regard, corruption is a symptom that signifies a dysfunction in government’s role (Justesen and Bjørnskov 2014).

In the context of this study, it is crucial to differentiate between actual corruption and the perception of corruption. Actual corruption refers to instances where individuals within an organisation or government engage in corrupt activities—tangible, concrete actions considered corrupt under legal or ethical standards. Citizens exert pressure on politicians to curb corrupt practices when they possess accurate information about corruption (Olken 2009). However, directly observing corrupt activities is challenging due to the illegal nature of corruption. Consequently, public perception plays a significant role in assessing the impact of corruption on various socioeconomic and political activities.

The central focus of this study is on the perception of corruption, which refers to how individuals, communities, or the general public perceive corruption. It doesn’t necessarily rely on concrete evidence but reflects beliefs, attitudes, and opinions regarding the level of corruption within a system. Various factors, including media reports, cultural norms, and personal experiences, can influence the perception of corruption. The precision of corruption perceptions is crucial, as this study relies on them to assess their impact on public trust in government. High levels of perceived corruption can have more adverse consequences than the corruption itself, fostering a ‘culture of distrust’ towards institutions (Melgar, Rossi, and Smithy 2010). Even when corruption perception diverges from the actual level of corruption, the latter still influences the former, resulting in detrimental effects on public trust.

Much like corruption, in spite of considerable attention in academic and political discourse, trust remains a term that is conceptually and practically contested in the social science literature (Ruscio 1996; Nunkoo, Ramkissoon, and Gursoy 2012). Conceptually, the definition of trust has evolved over time, shifting from the traditional assumption of a one-to-many relationship to a dynamic, co-creating process involving interactions between officials and citizens. This process entails a continuous exchange of opinions and mutual understanding (Pagliara et al. 2021). Thus, trust serves as the binding mediator that facilitates collective actions between citizens and the government (Nunkoo, Smith, and Ramkissoon 2013; Pagliara et al. 2021).

For this study, the perspective that views trust as a subjective concept influenced by perceptions and better explained by societal values has been adopted. Two key reasons strengthen this choice. Firstly, this perspective is well-suited for examining the relationship between the perception of corruption and public trust in government. Secondly, the data obtained from the Afrobarometer survey is based on household perceptions. Thus, this survey data is subjective in nature and explained by societal values.

The inducing arguments connecting corruption with public distrust are grounded in the principal-agent theory. The concept of delegation appears as the main variable of this theory. Delegation arises when citizens (the principals) enlist public officials (the agents) to carry out tasks in their place (Lupia 2001). The significant risk associated with delegation is that the individuals entrusted with this authority may misuse the power they have been granted. This theory is well-suited to understanding the dynamics between the principals and the agents when public trust is eroded due to perceptions of corruption. A lack of public trust often stems from the feeling that agents are prioritising their own interests over those of the public.

This theory also highlights the issue of information asymmetry, where the principal lacks complete information about the agent's actions (Chen 2018). A lack of transparency and accountability can contribute to a lack of public trust. The public may perceive that corruption is occurring, but due to limited access to information, they cannot effectively monitor or control the actions of agents. This study challenges that if citizens perceive that public officials are involved in corrupt practices, it intensifies the pre-existing challenges related to collective action and adds to the growing level of distrust among the public.

2.2. Empirical review

Several scholars have significantly contributed to the various aspects of corruption and trust in government and nongovernment organisations. Habibov, Fan, and Auchynnikava (2019) studied the impact of corruption on satisfaction with local and national governments. They discovered that as satisfaction with public services, political situations, and economic conditions improve, the negative effects of corruption diminish, showcasing nuanced dynamics in governance. Dimant, Krieger, and Meierrieks (2013) underscores the significant impact of corruption on Nigeria's socio-economic development, emphasising its critical national importance. The study stresses the urgency for heightened awareness of the potential damage caused by corruption and suggests that a thorough understanding will guide effective government strategies to combat corruption and foster a robust and healthier economy. Habibov (2016) investigated the effect of corruption on healthcare satisfaction in post-soviet nations and concluded that corruption in post-Soviet nations underscores its adverse impact on healthcare satisfaction.

The empirical literature also presents a substantial body of research on the relationship between tax compliance and citizens' trust in government. Nurkholis et al. (2020) emphasise that increased compliance with tax regulations can be an outgrowth of the trust that citizens place in their government. Building on this foundation, Nkundabanyanga et al. (2017) delve into the multifaceted factors influencing tax compliance or non-compliance. Their exploration highlights the significance of government effectiveness, the transparency of the tax system, and the presence of mechanisms for citizen voice and accountability. D'Attoma (2020) extends the inquiry into tax compliance by examining the impact of perceptions of public institutions. This study suggests that a decline in tax compliance may be linked to this erosion of trust. In a cross-national analysis, Kogler et al. (2023) expand the scope by investigating the relationship between trust, power, and the size of the shadow economy, along with the extent of corruption. Their findings reveal a negative association between trust and power and the prevalence of both the shadow economy and corruption.

The literature presents a variety of evidence on the impact of corruption on the growth of the economy. Mo (2001) explored corruption's impact on governance, human capital, investments, and growth, finding that a one-unit increase in corruption level reduces growth by 0.72%. The study identifies political instability as the primary channel through which corruption harms economies, accounting for over 53% of the total effect. Gründler and Potrafke (2019) investigated the effect of corruption on economic growth across 175 countries from 2012 to 2018, revealing a negative effect on economies. They observed a 17 percentage points reduction in economic growth with each one-unit increase in reversed corruption, indicating the long-term impact of corruption. In addition, Afonso and de Sá Fortes Leitão Rodrigues (2022) analysed the mediating role of government size in the corruption-economic growth relationship using 48 countries from 2012 to 2019. Based on system Generalised Method of Moments (sGMM) approach, their findings confirmed the negative impact of corruption on economic growth.

While many empirical research agrees that corruption has a detrimental impact on economic growth, some scholars argue that corruption can enhance economic performance under certain circumstances (Ighodaro and Igbinedion 2020; Spyromitros and Panagiotidis 2022; Trabelsi 2023). According to Spyromitros and Panagiotidis (2022), a study encompassing 83 developing countries from 2012 to 2018 found varying effects of corruption on economic growth, depending on the level of corruption intensity. Specifically, in Latin American countries, corruption has a positive impact on economic growth, while in other regions, it has a negative influence. Moreover, Trabelsi (2023) found that a moderate level of corruption benefits the economy under an optimal threshold level. Ighodaro and Igbinedion (2020) investigated the impact of corruption on economic growth. Employing linear estimation, they observed a positive effect of corruption on economic growth. However, with non-linear estimation, the impact of corruption on income growth varied depending on its intensity.

Gebrihet and Mwale (2024) investigated the impact of polarisation on trust in government in Ethiopia. Findings indicate that heightened polarisation diminishes trust in the central government, while trust in local government remains unaffected. Even when accounting for government performance, the study reveals a positive connection between government performance and trust, but this does not change the relationship between polarisation and trust in government. Conversely, an increase in institutional trust correlates with an increased willingness to pay higher taxes for public healthcare and education (Habibov, Cheung, and Auchynnikava 2018). The erosion of trust extends across various societal institutions, encompassing political parties, government, financial institutions, international investors, non-profit organisations, and trade unions (Habibov, Afandi, and Cheung 2017).

These empirical studies provide a nuanced perspective on the complex interplay between corruption and socio-economic development. Despite a growing body of literature on this subject, the findings are diverse and sometimes inconclusive. The unresolved issues in this area persist as significant research questions across various disciplines, and this study aims to address these gaps. Particularly, understanding how and under what conditions the perception of increased corruption affects public trust requires further exploration. In addition, the effects of corruption on public trust in government in Africa, at various levels of government, and variations across stable and fragile states are less explored areas of research, and this study aims to address these gaps.

3. Materials and methods

3.1. Source and nature of data

The source of data for this study is Afrobarometer survey data. Afrobarometer is a nonpartisan, pan-African study institution conducting public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economy, and society in more than 30 African countries (Afrobarometer 2022). These surveys have been carried out at periodic intervals since 1999. The primary method involves personal interviews to gather information from individual respondents. A standardised questionnaire, containing identical or functionally equivalent items, is administered to every respondent across countries and time periods, enabling comparisons across countries and over time periods.

3.2. Sample size and design

Afrobarometer employs national probability samples, ensuring equal chances for every adult citizen to be interviewed. Samples typically comprise 1,200 or 2,400 cases, allowing inferences to national adult populations with a margin of sampling error of ± 2.8 or ± 2.0 percent at a 95% confidence level. The sample design involves clustering, stratification, and a multi-stage, area probability approach. Stratification considers sub-national units and urban or rural locations, reducing the risk of excluding distinct ethnic or language groups. Interviewers randomly select households and individuals within them.

During the face-to-face interview, the respondent's language was used as a preferred instrumental tool to obtain information. Accordingly, the interviewer poses a series of questions and records the provided responses. This approach increases high survey response rates, minimal refusal rates, opportunities for respondents to clarify their answers, and the ability to draw inferences about public opinion by aggregating responses.

Understanding the association between corruption and trust is possible using the Afrobarometer survey data of round 7, 2019. In 2019, Afrobarometer conducted surveys in 34 African countries. The selected countries for this study had the following number of observations: Guinea (1,194 observations), South Africa (1,840 observations), Sudan (1,200 observations), and Zimbabwe (1,200 observations). After cleaning the missing variables, 4253 observations for presidential trust, 4252 for parliament, and 4234 for local government were used for the analysis.

3.3. Empirical strategy

The empirical application of the study question to establish the effects of corruption on trust in government, demands modelling trust as a function of corruption and several other covariates that may confound this relationship. An order logit model is used when the dependent variable has more than two outcomes and an order scale. In this study, the outcome variables, levels of trust, are discrete with increasing order of responses measured on a scale of 0–3, where 0 represents 'Not at all,' 1 is 'Just a little,' 2 stands for 'Somewhat,' and 3 corresponds to 'A lot'. The model is estimated using the maximum likelihood technique as it cannot be consistently estimated using ordinary

least square methods due to the order nature of the covariates. Thus, the ordered logit method allows us to estimate the relationship between corruption and trust in government while controlling for several confounding variables. Suppose the underlying relationship to be considered is:

$$y^* = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{Corr} + X' \alpha_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

Where: y^* is the exact but unobserved explained outcome variable, Corr is the perceived level of corruption, X' is the vector of covariates, and α_1 & α_i is the coefficient of corruption and vector of regression coefficients of the other control covariates. While we cannot observe y^* , we instead can only observe the following response categories:

$$\begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } y^* \leq 0, \\ 1 & \text{if } y^* < y^* \leq \gamma_1, \\ 2 & \text{if } \gamma_1 < y^* \leq \gamma_2, \\ \vdots & \\ N & \text{if } \gamma_{N-1} < y^* \end{cases} \quad (2)$$

Then, the ordered logit technique employs the observations on y , which is a form of censored data on y^* is an outcome variable dependent variable which takes the values of 1, 2, 3, and 4, which are described as follows:

- $y^* = 0$, If a respondent does not have trust in the government ('Not at all')
- $y^* = 1$ If a respondent has just a little trust in the government ('Just a little')
- $y^* = 2$ If a respondent does have some trust in the government ('Somewhat')
- $y^* = 3$ If a respondent does have a lot of trust in the government ('A lot')

Equation (2) models the relationship between trust in government (president, parliament, and local government) and corruption in each of these branches. Trust in government is represented as an ordinal variable, and the model includes variables for corruption in the respective government branches. Corruption was assessed using a scale from 0 to 3, indicating 'None of them', 'Some of them', 'Most of them' and 'All of them'.

The natural log odds as a linear function of the covariates, using Equation (1), the ordered logit regression technique, is expressed as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} y^* = \text{logit} &= \frac{\exp(\alpha_1 \text{Corr} + \alpha_2 \text{PC} + \alpha_3 \text{JMC} + \alpha_4 \text{BEC} + \alpha_5 \text{FSP} + \alpha_6 \text{RLE} + \alpha_7 \text{FSI} + \alpha_8 \text{HRA} + \alpha_9 \text{CD})}{1 + \exp(\alpha_1 \text{Corr} + \alpha_2 \text{PC} + \alpha_3 \text{JMC} + \alpha_4 \text{BEC} + \alpha_5 \text{FSP} + \alpha_6 \text{RLE} + \alpha_7 \text{FSI} + \alpha_8 \text{HRA} + \alpha_9 \text{CD})} \\ &= \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{Corr} + X' \alpha_i + \varepsilon_i \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

Therefore, the logarithmically transformed linear ordered logit model can be rewritten using Equation (3) as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{logit} = \ln(y^* = \text{public trust in government}) &= \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{Corr} + \alpha_2 \text{PC} + \alpha_3 \text{JMC} + \alpha_4 \text{BEC} \\ &+ \alpha_5 \text{FSP} + \alpha_6 \text{RLE} + \alpha_7 \text{FSI} + \alpha_8 \text{HRA} + \alpha_9 \text{CD} + \varepsilon_i \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

Where: The covariates used in this study are abbreviated as follows: Police corruption (PC), Judges and Magistrates' Corruption (JMC), Business Executives' Corruption (BEC), Freedom of Speech (FSP), Respondents Levels of Education (RLE), Household Food Insecurity (FSI), Household Residential Area (HRA: rural vs. urban), and Country

Dummies (CD) (Guinea = 0 (reference category), South Africa, Sudan, and Zimbabwe). The study weighted the models by within-country weights to ensure the sample's representativeness of the main population and improve internal validity. These controls were included to mitigate omitted variable bias in the estimations. In this study, Stata version 17 was used to estimate the results. For more details on the variables and descriptive statistics, refer to [Table 2](#) of the appendices.

4. Descriptive statistics

4.1. Trust in state and non-state actors

[Figure 1](#) shows the level of trust in state and non-state actors. The level of trust in almost all state actors, including opposition parties, is low across the sample countries, except for Zimbabwe. Sudanese exhibit the lowest level of trust in these state actors and opposition parties, followed by South Africans and Guineans. Zimbabwe stands out, with more than 50% of citizens expressing trust in all state and non-state actors except opposition parties. In comparison to the levels of trust in government actors across the sample countries, local governments are entrusted with less trust than the national government. Religious, and traditional leaders, the court of law, and the army are the only entities that enjoy the trust of most citizens compared to state actors.

4.2. Level of corruption

[Figure 2](#) illustrates that 70% of Sudanese respondents perceive a significant increase in the level of corruption, followed by Guineans and South Africans at 51% and 50%, respectively. Only a small percentage of respondents from Sudan, South Africa, Guinea, and Zimbabwe reports a minor increase in corruption, with 6%, 4%, 2%, and 2%, respectively.

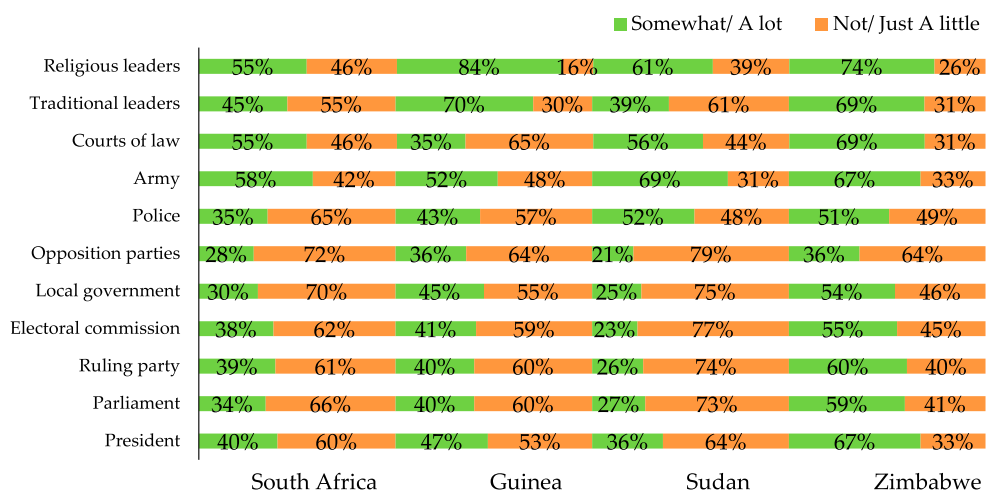


Figure 1. Trust in state and non-state actors. Source: Author's construction from 2019 Afrobarometer data.

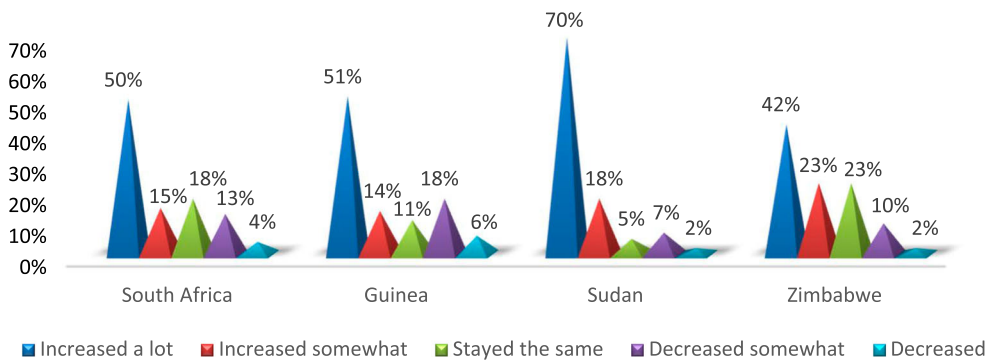


Figure 2. Level of corruption. Source: Author’s construction from 2019 Afrobarometer data.

4.3. Corruption in state and non-state institutions

Figure 3 indicates that corruption is pervasive across the state and non-state actors in the sample countries. Only few of the respondents suggest the absence of corruption in state or non-state actors, while more than three-quarters of respondents perceive that the state and non-state actors are suspected of corruption. Only 48% and 32% of Guineans state that their religious and transitional leaders are not or just a little corrupt, followed by 25% and 24% of Zimbabweans, respectively. Furthermore, judges and magistrates, who are meant to uphold the constitution and anti-corruption regulations, are also involved in corrupt activities.

5. Main results

Table 1 presents results from estimating the marginal effects between corruption and public trust in government limited to the variables of interest. Tables 3–7 of the appendices presents all the remaining control variables. Because all the models were estimated by ordered logit technique, the coefficients in Table 8 of the appendices are composite,

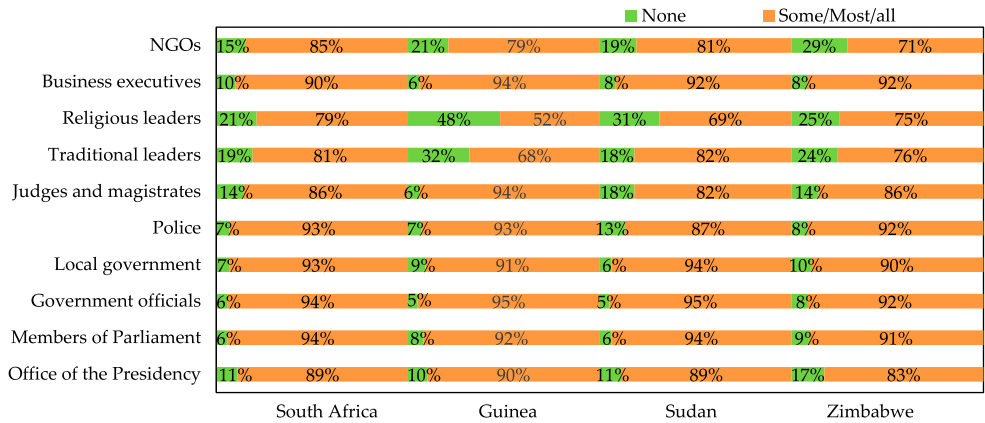


Figure 3. Corruption in state and non-state institutions. Source: Author’s construction from 2019 Afrobarometer data.

Table 1. Government trust and corruption: marginal effects.

Covariates	President trust	Parliament trust	Local government trust
President corruption (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	0.139*** (0.009)	0.062*** (0.009)	0.064*** (0.010)
Just a little trust	0.015*** (0.002)	0.000 (0.001)	−0.001 (0.001)
Somewhat trust	−0.027*** (0.002)	−0.021*** (0.003)	−0.019*** (0.003)
A lot of trust	−0.127*** (0.008)	−0.041*** (0.006)	−0.043*** (0.007)
Parliament corruption (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	0.006 (0.011)	0.079*** (0.011)	0.021* (0.012)
Just a little trust	0.001 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)	−0.000 (0.000)
Somewhat trust	−0.001 (0.002)	−0.027*** (0.004)	−0.006* (0.004)
A lot of trust	−0.005 (0.010)	−0.052*** (0.008)	−0.014* (0.008)
Local corruption (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	−0.011 (0.009)	−0.000 (0.010)	0.091*** (0.010)
Just a little trust	−0.001 (0.001)	−0.000 (0.000)	−0.002 (0.001)
Somewhat trust	0.002 (0.002)	0.000 (0.003)	−0.028*** (0.003)
A lot of trust	0.010 (0.009)	0.000 (0.007)	−0.062*** (0.007)
Number of observations	4253	4252	4234
Likelihood Ratio	−4981.01	−5018.84	−5044.61
Wald test	1078.69	921.80	768.22

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$; The scales 'No trust at all, Just a little trust, Somewhat trust, and A lot of trust' stands for president trust, parliament trust, and local government trust.

Source: Table created by the author using Afro-barometer data, 2019.

never to be directly interpreted as probabilities. It can only show the levels of significance and direction of the relationship. Therefore, to interpret the estimates as probabilities, marginal effects have been derived for all the coefficients.

Table 1, column 1, presents the effects of corruption on trust in the president. The marginal effects show heterogeneity in this result. In other words, as the trend towards the feeling that the office of the president is corrupt increases, the lowest value of trust increases, while the highest value of trust decreases. A one-unit increase towards the feeling that the office of the president is corrupt increases people's 'no trust at all' the president by 13.9 percentage points, the parliament by 6.2 percentage points, and the local governments by 6.4 percentage points. On the opposite angle of trust, a one-unit increase towards the feeling that the office of the president is corrupt reduces people's 'trust a lot' in the president by 12.7 percentage points, the parliament by 4.1 percentage points, and the local governments by 4.3 percentage points. More importantly, corruption in the office of the presidency matters for governmental trust at all levels.

Moving to Table 1, column 2, presents the effects of corruption on trust in the parliament. Like the presidential office, the marginal effects reveal variations in this outcome. As the inclination towards perceiving members of parliament as corrupt intensifies, the lowest level of trust rises while the highest level declines. A one-unit increase in the perception of parliament corruption leads to a 7.9 percentage points rise in 'no trust at all' towards parliament members and a 2.1 percentage points increase in distrust towards local governments. Conversely, on the trust spectrum, a one-unit increase in the belief of parliamentary corruption results in a 5.2 percentage points decrease in 'trust a lot' towards parliament members and a 1.4 percentage points reduction in trust towards local governments. This finding underscores that corruption within the parliament is linked to diminished trust in both the parliament and local governments, but not in the presidency.

In Table 1, column 3, the effects of corruption on trust in local government are distinct. In contrast to the outcomes observed for the president, the results pertaining to local

governments indicate that corruption within local government bodies primarily influences trust in local governments. A one-unit increase in the perception of corruption among local government council members results in a 9.1 percentage points increase in 'no trust at all' towards local governments. On the opposite end of the trust spectrum, a one-unit increase in the belief of local government council corruption leads to a 6.2 percentage points decrease in 'trust a lot' towards both local government council members and local governments by 1.4 percentage points. These findings highlight that while high corruption in local governments diminishes trust in those entities, it does not impact trust in the presidency or members of the parliament.

Table 3 of the appendices presents the effect of other controlling variables on trust. Corruption among police officials increases 'no trust at all' and decreases 'trust a lot' across government levels. Corruption in the judiciary organ/judges reduces trust in only the president, while corruption in the traditional leaders decreases trust in both the office of the president and local governments. In addition, Table 4 of the appendices demonstrates that freedom of speech increases trust for governmental trust at all levels. The correlation between the sense of freedom and increased trust is evident, with freedom of speech playing a crucial role in fostering an environment where citizens can freely express their opinions, actively participate in decision-making, and hold authorities accountable. Conversely, an increase in food insecurity has a detrimental impact on trust in government entities (refer to Table 4 in the appendices).

Referencing Table 7 in the appendices, corruption's impact on trust across countries varies. A high level of corruption in the office of the president diminishes trust in government institutions in South Africa. However, the marginal effects, as presented in the same table, reveal variations in this outcome. In comparison to Guinea, a one-unit increase in the perception that members of the South African president, parliament, and local government are corrupt results in an 11.4 percentage points increase in 'no trust at all' towards the president and a 10 percentage points increase towards the parliament. Conversely, on the trust spectrum, a one-unit increase in the belief that members of the South African president, parliament, and local government are corrupt leads to a 10.4 percentage points decrease in 'trust a lot' towards the president and a 6.6 percentage points decrease towards the parliament.

In comparison to Guinea, a one-unit increase in the perception that members of the Sudanese president, parliament, and local government are corrupt results in notable shifts in trust levels. The impact is evident: there is a 14.5 percentage points increase in 'no trust at all' towards the Sudanese president, a 13.5 percentage points increase towards the parliament, and a 15.5 percentage points increase towards the local government council. Conversely, on the trust spectrum, a one-unit increase in the belief that members of the Sudanese president, parliament, and local government are corrupt leads to a 13.3 percentage points decrease in 'trust a lot' towards the president, a 6.6 percentage points decrease towards the parliament, and a 10.5 percentage points decrease towards the local government.

In comparison to Guinea, a one-unit increase in the perception that members of the Zimbabwean president, parliament, and local government are corrupt results in substantial changes in trust levels. There is a significant impact: a 19.8 percentage points increase in 'no trust at all' towards the Zimbabwean president, a substantial 25.4 percentage points increase towards the parliament, and a 20.4 percentage points increase towards the local

government council. Conversely, on the trust spectrum, a one-unit increase in the belief that members of the Zimbabwean president, parliament, and local government are corrupt leads to an 18.2 percentage points decrease in 'trust a lot' towards the president, a substantial 16.8 percentage points decrease towards the parliament, and a 13.8 percentage points decrease towards the local government.

6. Discussion

This section discusses three main findings: the effect of corruption on public trust in the three levels of government, why the effect in one level of government affects or does not affect the other, and finally, why the highest level of perception of corruption in local government in stable states does not correlate with public trust in local government, while it does in fragile states.

The findings reveal that corruption erodes trust in the government in all the sample states. The results of this study are similar to a study conducted by Gracia and Casaló Ariño (2015), which found that public trust has shown a worldwide reduction in public administration due to corruption and the economic situation. This reduction has been evident over the past few decades according to Hardin (2013) and Gracia and Casaló Ariño (2015), indicating that trust and social capital are in decline even in several advanced democracies. However, this decline may not always be a symptom of a significant problem.

According to Hardin (2013), citizens can develop generalised distrust in response to either incompetent or poorly motivated government. If either incompetence or wrong motivation is evident in some area of government regulatory effort, citizens can distrust the government in that area. However, the finding of this study in Figure 1 shows that trust in nearly all state actors and agencies is low. This reduction poses a significant worry for legitimacy because governments require public trust to ensure the success of a wide range of public policies that depend on behavioural responses from the public.

The study reveals distinct patterns in the impact of the perception of corruption on public trust across different levels of government. The perception of corruption at the highest executive level, particularly in the office of the president, extends its negative influence beyond the presidency, affecting trust in both the parliament and local governments. On the legislative front, the perception of corruption in members of parliament diminishes trust specifically in the parliament and local governments, without spilling over to affect trust in the presidency. At the local government level, the effect of the perception of corruption is localised, diminishing trust in local governments, with no evident effect on trust in the presidency and parliament. One possible scenario is that corruption at the central government level can have cascading effects, influencing all levels of government due to its central role in governance, whereas corruption at the local government level tends to impact the local level more directly and may not extend its influence to broader national governance.

In similar cases, Habibov, Fan, and Auchynnikava (2019) found that as the economic conditions enhance, the adverse impacts of corruption decrease for local government, but not for national governments. In this study, the effect of the perception of local government corruption does not spill over to impact trust in the office of the presidency or members of the parliament. Implementing development projects through local

governments, as the effect of the perception of corruption has no evident impact on trust in the presidency and parliament in a stable state according to the findings of this study, has the potential to bring the government closer to the people. Conversely, prioritising the addressing of the perception of corruption in the office of the president, which extends its adverse influence beyond the presidency and impacts trust in both the parliament and local governments, enhances state legitimacy and social cohesion.

The study raises two questions about the varied impact of corruption on trust across sample countries: Why does high corruption in South Africa not correlate with trust in local government? Conversely, why is corruption's impact on trust higher in fragile states compared to South Africa, despite lower corruption levels? Weak governance structures in fragile states may make them more susceptible to corruption's detrimental effects on public trust than stable countries.

7. Conclusion and policy implications

This study examines the effects of corruption on public trust in government. The findings highlight an extensive lack of trust in state actors and institutions, including opposition parties, across the studied countries. Likewise, the study reveals a concerning rise in corruption across the sample countries. This corruption extends to judges, magistrate courts, religious, and traditional leaders suspected of corruption, who are expected to uphold ethical standards.

The findings unequivocally underline the substantial impact of corruption on trust. The importance of these findings is further underscored when considered the nuances across different countries. In stable states, such as South Africa, suspicions of corruption, particularly at the local level, do not significantly impact trust in government. This could be attributed to a more resilient governance architecture and an institutional framework designed to offset the corrosive effect of corruption. However, in fragile states such as Zimbabwe and Sudan, the picture is much worse. For citizens in these nations, trust in both local and central governments is precarious.

The implications of corruption on public trust are far-extensive, affecting the potential for political stability, socio-economic development, and, ultimately, the overall well-being of citizens. As trust continues to decline, the pursuit of effective governance and the consolidation of democracy becomes increasingly challenging. To address this crisis, curbing corruption through preventive and curative mechanisms, including promoting open access to information, enforcing strict codes of conduct, fostering a culture of integrity within institutions, ensuring effective law enforcement, an impartial judiciary, and strong anti-corruption agencies, remains a better model to rebuild public trust.

The journey towards a more accountable, transparent, and trusted public sector begins with acknowledging that the path to reform is not uniform. The context of each nation shapes its unique struggles and solutions. Fighting corruption and rebuilding trust is not merely a moral imperative; it is the cornerstone of sustainable and effective governance. The findings of this study carry significant theoretical implications. Firstly, it supports existing theories on trust and governance, revealing how corruption erodes trust in government institutions at all levels. This resonates with social contract theories, emphasizing the pivotal role of trust between citizens and the state. Secondly, the study illuminates the dynamics of institutional trust, illustrating how corruption in one area can

influence trust in other government entities. Thirdly, it underscores the significance of trust as a foundation for legitimacy in governance, suggesting that maintaining public trust is essential for effective governance. Lastly, the findings shed light on power dynamics within corruption, indicating that corruption at higher levels of government exerts greater influence on trust throughout the governance structure.

8. Limitations of the study

The study benefits from the Afrobarometer dataset's strengths, such as rigorous testing, validation processes, and a representative sample for diverse analyses of citizens' opinions on corruption and public trust. However, limitations exist. The reliance on cross-sectional analysis hinders generalisability, and the Afrobarometer's focus on public opinion might not fully capture corruption and public trust dynamics. While the study explores the impact of perceived corruption on trust, it lacks actual corruption metrics, intentionally using perception data to examine its effect on government trust. The study suggests future research using panel data for a more comprehensive understanding of corruption and public trust over time.

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Appendices

Table 2. Summary statistics for variables used in the study.

Number of observations = 4253	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Does Not trust president at all	0.31	0.46	0.00	1.00
Trust president Just a little	0.26	0.44	0.00	1.00
Somewhat trust president	0.17	0.38	0.00	1.00
Trust president a lot	0.25	0.44	0.00	1.00
Does Not trust parliament at all	0.35	0.48	0.00	1.00
Trust the parliament Just a little	0.29	0.45	0.00	1.00
Somewhat trust the parliament	0.19	0.40	0.00	1.00
Trust the parliament a lot	0.17	0.37	0.00	1.00
Does not trust local government at all	0.37	0.48	0.00	1.00
Trusts local government Just a little	0.28	0.45	0.00	1.00
Somewhat trusts local government	0.18	0.38	0.00	1.00
Trusts local government a lot	0.17	0.38	0.00	1.00
None of the office of the presidency are corrupt	0.11	0.31	0.00	1.00
Some of the offices of the presidency are corrupt	0.42	0.49	0.00	1.00
Most of the office of the presidency are corrupt	0.24	0.43	0.00	1.00
All of the office of the presidency are corrupt	0.23	0.42	0.00	1.00
None of the members of the parliament are corrupt	0.07	0.26	0.00	1.00
Some of the members of the parliament are corrupt	0.45	0.50	0.00	1.00
Most of the members of the parliament are corrupt	0.30	0.46	0.00	1.00
All of the members of the parliament are corrupt	0.18	0.39	0.00	1.00
None of the local government councillors are corrupt	0.07	0.26	0.00	1.00
Some of the local government councillors are corrupt	0.47	0.50	0.00	1.00
Most of the local government councillors are corrupt	0.28	0.45	0.00	1.00
All of the local government councillors are corrupt	0.18	0.39	0.00	1.00
None of the government officials are corrupt	0.06	0.24	0.00	1.00
Some of the government officials are corrupt	0.45	0.50	0.00	1.00
Most of the government officials are corrupt	0.32	0.46	0.00	1.00
All of the polices are corrupt	0.17	0.38	0.00	1.00
None of the polices are corrupt	0.07	0.26	0.00	1.00
Some of the polices are corrupt	0.40	0.49	0.00	1.00
Most of the polices are corrupt	0.28	0.45	0.00	1.00
All of the polices are corrupt	0.24	0.43	0.00	1.00
None of the judges and magistrates are corrupt	0.12	0.32	0.00	1.00
Some of the judges and magistrates are corrupt	0.48	0.50	0.00	1.00
Most of the judges and magistrates are corrupt	0.22	0.42	0.00	1.00
All of the judges and magistrates are corrupt	0.18	0.38	0.00	1.00
None of the business executives are corrupt	0.08	0.27	0.00	1.00
Some of the business executives are corrupt	0.47	0.50	0.00	1.00
Most of the judges and magistrates are corrupt	0.29	0.45	0.00	1.00
All of the business executives are corrupt	0.16	0.37	0.00	1.00
Not very free say what you think	0.20	0.40	0.00	1.00
Somewhat free say what you think	0.33	0.47	0.00	1.00
Completely free say what you think	0.28	0.45	0.00	1.00
Food insecure just once or twice	0.14	0.35	0.00	1.00
Food insecure several times	0.19	0.39	0.00	1.00
Food insecure many times	0.12	0.32	0.00	1.00
Never been food insecure	0.51	0.50	0.00	1.00
Electricity	0.67	0.47	0.00	1.00
Piped water system	0.55	0.50	0.00	1.00
Sewage system	0.38	0.49	0.00	1.00
Mobile service	0.84	0.36	0.00	1.00
Police	0.41	0.49	0.00	1.00
Clinic	0.60	0.49	0.00	1.00
Market stalls	0.69	0.46	0.00	1.00
Bank	0.24	0.43	0.00	1.00
Female	0.48	0.50	0.00	1.00
No formal education	0.18	0.38	0.00	1.00
Primary education	0.14	0.35	0.00	1.00
Age	37.56	14.84	18	106

(Continued)

Table 2. Continued.

Number of observations = 4253	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Employed	0.19	0.39	0.00	1.00
Secondary education	0.42	0.49	0.00	1.00
Higher education	0.25	0.43	0.00	1.00
Urban residents	0.48	0.50	0.00	1.00

Source: Table created by the author using Afro-barometer data, 2019

Table 3. Government trust and corruption: marginal effects of controls–1.

Covariates	President trust	Parliament trust	Local government trust
Government official corruption (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	–0.004 (0.010)	0.017 (0.011)	–0.018 (0.012)
Just a little trust	–0.000 (0.001)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Somewhat trust	0.001 (0.002)	–0.006 (0.004)	0.005 (0.004)
A lot of trust	0.004 (0.010)	–0.011 (0.007)	0.012 (0.008)
Police corruption (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	0.038*** (0.009)	0.032*** (0.009)	0.023** (0.010)
Just a little trust	0.004*** (0.001)	0.000 (0.000)	–0.000 (0.000)
Somewhat trust	–0.007*** (0.002)	–0.011*** (0.003)	–0.007** (0.003)
A lot of trust	–0.035*** (0.008)	–0.021*** (0.006)	–0.016** (0.007)
Judge corruption (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	0.025*** (0.009)	0.005 (0.010)	–0.001 (0.011)
Just a little trust	0.003*** (0.001)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Somewhat trust	–0.005*** (0.002)	–0.002 (0.003)	0.000 (0.003)
A lot of trust	–0.023*** (0.008)	–0.003 (0.006)	0.001 (0.008)
Traditional leaders corruption (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	0.056*** (0.018)	0.028 (0.019)	0.049** (0.020)
Just a little trust	0.006*** (0.002)	0.000 (0.000)	–0.001 (0.001)
Somewhat trust	–0.011*** (0.004)	–0.010 (0.007)	–0.015** (0.006)
A lot of trust	–0.051*** (0.016)	–0.019 (0.013)	–0.033** (0.013)
Religious corruption (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	0.004 (0.016)	–0.002 (0.017)	–0.002 (0.018)
Just a little trust	0.000 (0.002)	–0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Somewhat trust	–0.001 (0.003)	0.001 (0.006)	0.001 (0.006)
A lot of trust	–0.003 (0.014)	0.001 (0.012)	0.001 (0.012)
NGOs corruption (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	–0.020 (0.016)	0.018 (0.017)	–0.017 (0.018)
Just a little trust	–0.002 (0.002)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Somewhat trust	0.004 (0.003)	–0.006 (0.006)	0.005 (0.005)
A lot of trust	0.018 (0.014)	–0.012 (0.011)	0.012 (0.012)
Business executive corruption (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	–0.007 (0.008)	–0.003 (0.009)	–0.007 (0.010)
Just a little trust	–0.001 (0.001)	–0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Somewhat trust	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.003)	0.002 (0.003)
A lot of trust	0.006 (0.008)	0.002 (0.006)	0.005 (0.007)

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$; The scales ‘No trust at all, Just a little trust, Somewhat trust, and A lot of trust’ stands for president trust, parliament trust, and local government trust.

Source: Table created by the author using Afro-barometer data, 2019.

Table 4. Government trust and corruption: marginal effects of controls–2.

Covariates	President trust	Parliament trust	Local government trust
Not very free (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	–0.020 (0.018)	–0.051*** (0.019)	–0.011 (0.020)
Just a little trust	–0.002 (0.002)	–0.000 (0.001)	0.000 (0.000)
Somewhat trust	0.004 (0.003)	0.018*** (0.007)	0.003 (0.006)
A lot of trust	0.019 (0.017)	0.034*** (0.013)	0.007 (0.014)
Free (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	–0.076*** (0.017)	–0.072*** (0.018)	–0.042** (0.019)
Just a little trust	–0.008*** (0.002)	–0.000 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)
Somewhat trust	0.015*** (0.003)	0.025*** (0.006)	0.013** (0.006)

(Continued)

Table 4. Continued.

Covariates	President trust	Parliament trust	Local government trust
A lot of trust	0.070*** (0.016)	0.048*** (0.012)	0.028** (0.013)
Very free (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	−0.153*** (0.018)	−0.130*** (0.019)	−0.108*** (0.020)
Just a little trust	−0.017*** (0.003)	−0.000 (0.002)	0.002 (0.001)
Somewhat trust	0.029*** (0.004)	0.045*** (0.007)	0.033*** (0.006)
A lot of trust	0.140*** (0.017)	0.086*** (0.013)	0.073*** (0.014)
Always insecure (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	0.029 (0.036)	−0.001 (0.036)	0.012 (0.038)
Just a little trust	0.003 (0.004)	−0.000 (0.000)	−0.000 (0.001)
Somewhat trust	−0.006 (0.007)	0.001 (0.012)	−0.004 (0.012)
A lot of trust	−0.026 (0.033)	0.001 (0.024)	−0.008 (0.026)
Seldom insecure (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	0.007 (0.016)	0.018 (0.017)	0.022 (0.018)
Just a little trust	0.001 (0.002)	0.000 (0.000)	−0.000 (0.000)
Somewhat trust	−0.001 (0.003)	−0.006 (0.006)	−0.007 (0.006)
A lot of trust	−0.007 (0.015)	−0.012 (0.011)	−0.015 (0.012)
Insecure (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	0.054*** (0.015)	0.065*** (0.017)	0.049*** (0.017)
Just a little trust	0.006*** (0.002)	0.000 (0.001)	−0.001 (0.001)
Somewhat trust	−0.010*** (0.003)	−0.022*** (0.006)	−0.015*** (0.005)
A lot of trust	−0.049*** (0.014)	−0.043*** (0.011)	−0.033*** (0.012)
Often insecure (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	0.096*** (0.019)	0.108*** (0.021)	0.108*** (0.022)
Just a little trust	0.010*** (0.002)	0.000 (0.001)	−0.002 (0.001)
Somewhat trust	−0.018*** (0.004)	−0.037*** (0.007)	−0.033*** (0.007)
A lot of trust	−0.088*** (0.017)	−0.071*** (0.014)	−0.073*** (0.015)
Number of observations	4253	4252	4234

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$; The scales 'No trust at all, Just a little trust, Somewhat trust, and A lot of trust' stands for president trust, parliament trust, and local government trust.

Source: Table created by the author using Afro-barometer data, 2019

Table 5. Government trust and corruption: marginal effects of controls–3.

Covariates	President trust	Parliament trust	Local government trust
Access to electricity (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	0.016 (0.018)	−0.003 (0.018)	0.000 (0.020)
Just a little trust	0.002 (0.002)	−0.000 (0.000)	−0.000 (0.000)
Somewhat trust	−0.003 (0.004)	0.001 (0.006)	−0.000 (0.006)
A lot of trust	−0.014 (0.017)	0.002 (0.012)	−0.000 (0.014)
Access to piped water (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	0.006 (0.018)	0.027 (0.019)	0.044** (0.020)
Just a little trust	0.001 (0.002)	0.000 (0.000)	−0.001 (0.001)
Somewhat trust	−0.001 (0.003)	−0.009 (0.006)	−0.013** (0.006)
A lot of trust	−0.006 (0.017)	−0.018 (0.012)	−0.030** (0.014)
Access to sewage system (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	0.042** (0.017)	0.004 (0.018)	−0.027 (0.020)
Just a little trust	0.005** (0.002)	0.000 (0.000)	0.001 (0.001)
Somewhat trust	−0.008** (0.003)	−0.001 (0.006)	0.008 (0.006)
A lot of trust	−0.039** (0.015)	−0.003 (0.012)	0.018 (0.013)
Access to mobile service (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	−0.053*** (0.017)	−0.041** (0.018)	−0.042** (0.020)
Just a little trust	−0.006*** (0.002)	−0.000 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)
Somewhat trust	0.010*** (0.003)	0.014** (0.006)	0.013** (0.006)
A lot of trust	0.049*** (0.016)	0.027** (0.012)	0.029** (0.013)
Access to police service (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	−0.001 (0.014)	0.002 (0.016)	−0.017 (0.016)
Just a little trust	−0.000 (0.002)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Somewhat trust	0.000 (0.003)	−0.001 (0.005)	0.005 (0.005)
A lot of trust	0.000 (0.013)	−0.001 (0.010)	0.012 (0.011)
Access to clinic service (Ref. = No)			

(Continued)

Table 5. Continued.

Covariates	President trust	Parliament trust	Local government trust
No trust at all	0.007 (0.013)	0.010 (0.014)	0.023 (0.015)
Just a little trust	0.001 (0.001)	0.000 (0.000)	−0.000 (0.000)
Somewhat trust	−0.001 (0.003)	−0.004 (0.005)	−0.007 (0.005)
A lot of trust	−0.006 (0.012)	−0.007 (0.009)	−0.016 (0.010)
Number of observations	4253	4252	4234

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$; The scales 'No trust at all, Just a little trust, Somewhat trust, and A lot of trust' stands for president trust, parliament trust, and local government trust.

Source: Table created by the author using Afro-barometer data, 2019

Table 6. Government trust and corruption: marginal effects of controls–4.

Covariates	President trust	Parliament trust	Local government trust
Access to market stalls (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	0.004 (0.015)	−0.003 (0.016)	0.020 (0.017)
Just a little trust	0.000 (0.002)	−0.000 (0.000)	−0.000 (0.000)
Somewhat trust	−0.001 (0.003)	0.001 (0.005)	−0.006 (0.005)
A lot of trust	−0.004 (0.014)	0.002 (0.010)	−0.014 (0.012)
Access to bank service (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	−0.023 (0.017)	0.015 (0.018)	0.018 (0.019)
Just a little trust	−0.003 (0.002)	0.000 (0.000)	−0.000 (0.000)
Somewhat trust	0.004 (0.003)	−0.005 (0.006)	−0.005 (0.006)
A lot of trust	0.021 (0.015)	−0.010 (0.012)	−0.012 (0.013)
Female (Ref. = Male)			
No trust at all	0.027** (0.011)	0.025** (0.012)	0.007 (0.012)
Just a little trust	0.003** (0.001)	0.000 (0.000)	−0.000 (0.000)
Somewhat trust	−0.005** (0.002)	−0.009** (0.004)	−0.002 (0.004)
A lot of trust	−0.025** (0.010)	−0.016** (0.008)	−0.005 (0.008)
Uneducated respondents (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	−0.077 (0.176)	−0.042 (0.192)	−0.267** (0.135)
Just a little trust	−0.008 (0.019)	−0.000 (0.001)	0.005 (0.004)
Somewhat trust	0.015 (0.034)	0.014 (0.066)	0.081** (0.041)
A lot of trust	0.071 (0.161)	0.028 (0.127)	0.181** (0.091)
Primary school finished respondents (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	−0.034 (0.176)	0.038 (0.192)	−0.254* (0.134)
Just a little trust	−0.004 (0.019)	0.000 (0.001)	0.005 (0.004)
Somewhat trust	0.007 (0.034)	−0.013 (0.066)	0.077* (0.041)
A lot of trust	0.032 (0.161)	−0.025 (0.127)	0.172* (0.091)
Secondary school finished respondents (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	−0.029 (0.175)	0.044 (0.191)	−0.193 (0.133)
Just a little trust	−0.003 (0.019)	0.000 (0.001)	0.004 (0.003)
Somewhat trust	0.006 (0.034)	−0.015 (0.066)	0.059 (0.041)
A lot of trust	0.027 (0.161)	−0.029 (0.126)	0.131 (0.091)
Number of observations	4253	4252	4234

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$; The scales 'No trust at all, Just a little trust, Somewhat trust, and A lot of trust' stands for president trust, parliament trust, and local government trust.

Source: Table created by the author using Afro-barometer data, 2019

Table 7. Government trust and corruption: marginal effects of controls–5.

Covariates	President trust	Parliament trust	Local government trust
Higher education finished respondents (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	0.004 (0.176)	0.068 (0.192)	−0.193 (0.134)
Just a little trust	0.000 (0.019)	0.000 (0.001)	0.004 (0.003)
Somewhat trust	−0.001 (0.034)	−0.023 (0.066)	0.059 (0.041)

(Continued)

Table 7. Continued.

Covariates	President trust	Parliament trust	Local government trust
A lot of trust	−0.003 (0.161)	−0.045 (0.126)	0.131 (0.091)
Urban Resident (Ref. = Rural)			
No trust at all	−0.002 (0.017)	0.025 (0.017)	0.041** (0.019)
Just a little trust	−0.000 (0.002)	0.000 (0.000)	−0.001 (0.001)
Somewhat trust	0.000 (0.003)	−0.009 (0.006)	−0.012** (0.006)
A lot of trust	0.002 (0.016)	−0.016 (0.011)	−0.028** (0.013)
Employed (Ref. = No)			
No trust at all	−0.018(0.016)	0.001(0.016)	0.010(0.018)
Just a little trust	−0.002(0.002)	0.000(0.000)	−0.000(0.000)
Somewhat trust	0.003(0.003)	−0.001(0.006)	−0.003(0.005)
A lot of trust	0.016(0.014)	−0.001(0.011)	−0.007(0.012)
Age			
No trust at all	−0.001** (0.000)	−0.000(0.000)	−0.001(0.000)
Just a little trust	−0.000** (0.000)	−0.000(0.000)	0.000(0.000)
Somewhat trust	0.000** (0.000)	0.000(0.000)	0.000(0.000)
A lot of trust	−0.001** (0.000)	0.000(0.000)	0.000(0.000)
South Africa (Ref. = Guinea)			
No trust at all	0.114*** (0.021)	0.100*** (0.022)	0.033 (0.023)
Just a little trust	0.012*** (0.002)	0.000 (0.001)	−0.001 (0.001)
Somewhat trust	−0.022*** (0.004)	−0.034*** (0.008)	−0.010 (0.007)
A lot of trust	−0.104*** (0.019)	−0.066*** (0.015)	−0.022 (0.016)
Sudan (Ref. = Guinea)			
No trust at all	0.145*** (0.018)	0.135*** (0.018)	0.155*** (0.020)
Just a little trust	0.016*** (0.002)	0.000 (0.002)	−0.003 (0.002)
Somewhat trust	−0.028*** (0.004)	−0.046*** (0.007)	−0.047*** (0.006)
A lot of trust	−0.132*** (0.016)	−0.089*** (0.012)	−0.105*** (0.013)
Zimbabwe (Ref. = Guinea)			
No trust at all	0.198*** (0.018)	0.254*** (0.020)	0.204*** (0.020)
Just a little trust	0.022*** (0.003)	0.000 (0.003)	−0.004 (0.003)
Somewhat trust	−0.038*** (0.004)	−0.087*** (0.007)	−0.062*** (0.006)
A lot of trust	−0.182*** (0.017)	−0.168*** (0.013)	−0.138*** (0.014)
Number of observations	4253	4252	4234

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$; The scales 'No trust at all, Just a little trust, Somewhat trust, and A lot of trust' stands for president trust, parliament trust, and local government trust.

Source: Table created by the author using Afro-barometer data, 2019.

Table 8. Factors that affect government trust: ordered logit estimates.

Covariates	President trust	Parliament trust	Local government trust
Corruption in office of the presidency	−0.492*** (0.033)	−0.200*** (0.031)	−0.199*** (0.032)
Corruption in members of parliament	−0.021 (0.040)	−0.255*** (0.037)	−0.064* (0.038)
Corruption in the local government	0.038 (0.033)	0.000 (0.032)	−0.284*** (0.033)
Corruption in government officials	0.015 (0.037)	−0.053 (0.036)	0.055 (0.036)
Corruption in police	−0.135*** (0.030)	−0.103*** (0.029)	−0.073** (0.031)
Corruption in judge and magistrates	−0.090*** (0.032)	−0.017 (0.031)	0.004 (0.035)
Corruption in traditional leaders	−0.197*** (0.064)	−0.090 (0.062)	−0.154** (0.062)
Corruption in religious leaders	−0.013 (0.056)	0.007 (0.056)	0.005 (0.057)
Corruption in NGOs	0.071 (0.056)	−0.057 (0.055)	0.053 (0.055)
Corruption in business executives	0.023 (0.030)	0.010 (0.029)	0.023 (0.030)
Freedom of speech (not very free)	0.072 (0.064)	0.165*** (0.062)	0.033 (0.062)
Freedom of speech (free)	0.271*** (0.060)	0.232*** (0.057)	0.129** (0.058)
Freedom of speech (very free)	0.542*** (0.065)	0.418*** (0.061)	0.336*** (0.063)
Household always food insecure	−0.102 (0.128)	0.005 (0.115)	−0.038 (0.119)
Household seldom food insecure	−0.025 (0.058)	−0.058 (0.055)	−0.069 (0.057)
Household food insecure	−0.190*** (0.055)	−0.210*** (0.054)	−0.153*** (0.053)
Household often food insecure	−0.341*** (0.068)	−0.349*** (0.067)	−0.336*** (0.069)
Access to electricity	−0.056 (0.065)	0.009 (0.059)	−0.001 (0.063)
Access to piped water	−0.023 (0.065)	−0.087 (0.060)	−0.138** (0.063)
Access to sewage system	−0.150** (0.060)	−0.014 (0.058)	0.085 (0.062)
Access to mobile service	0.189*** (0.062)	0.132** (0.059)	0.131** (0.062)

(Continued)

Table 8. Continued.

Covariates	President trust	Parliament trust	Local government trust
Access to police station	0.002 (0.051)	−0.005 (0.050)	0.053 (0.051)
Access to clinic	−0.023 (0.047)	−0.033 (0.046)	−0.072 (0.047)
Access to market stalls	−0.014 (0.053)	0.009 (0.051)	−0.064 (0.053)
Access to bank	0.082 (0.059)	−0.047 (0.057)	−0.056 (0.059)
Respondent is female	−0.096** (0.039)	−0.080** (0.038)	−0.022 (0.039)
Respondent is uneducated	0.273 (0.624)	0.136 (0.618)	0.833** (0.419)
Respondent is primary educated	0.122 (0.623)	−0.122 (0.617)	0.792* (0.418)
Respondent is secondary educated	0.104 (0.622)	−0.142 (0.615)	0.601 (0.416)
Respondent is higher educated	−0.013 (0.622)	−0.219 (0.616)	0.602 (0.417)
Respondent is urban resident	0.007 (0.060)	−0.080 (0.054)	−0.127** (0.059)
Respondent is employed	0.060 (0.056)	−0.005 (0.052)	−0.033 (0.056)
Respondent age	0.003** (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)
South Africa	−0.403*** (0.074)	−0.321*** (0.071)	−0.102 (0.072)
Sudan	−0.512*** (0.063)	−0.433*** (0.060)	−0.482*** (0.063)
Zimbabwe	−0.703*** (0.066)	−0.818*** (0.065)	−0.636*** (0.063)
cut1	−1.925*** (0.630)	−1.977*** (0.625)	−1.027** (0.430)
cut2	−1.090* (0.630)	−1.088* (0.625)	−0.169 (0.429)
cut3	−0.501 (0.630)	−0.350 (0.624)	0.483 (0.428)
Individual controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Individual controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Individual controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	4253	4252	4234

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

Source: Table created by the author using Afro-barometer data, 2019.