How do Press Freedom & Democracy Impact Controllig Corruption? A Focus on Corruption in Africa

By

KONNEH, Samuka Ahmed

THESIS

Submitted to

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Committee in charge:

Professor KIM, Taejong, Supervisor _____

Professor Liu, Cheol _____
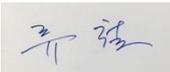
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ABSTRACT

How do Press Freedom & Democracy Impact Controlling Corruption? A Focus on Corruption in Africa

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Samuka Ahmed Konneh

This research studies the combined effects of democracy and press freedom on corruption. In the study, we seek to understand if democracy and freedom of the press act separately or together to curb corruption. Exploiting various empirical strategies, we investigated to explain it takes the joint impacts of democracy and freedom of the media to reduce the incidence of graft. The work goes deeper to seek to understand the causes and consequences of corruption in Africa and offers policy recommendations in line with the investigation. Using a 17-year panel data and exploiting numerous empirical methodologies, the research shows it takes a combination of a nation having democratic institutions that allow journalists to operate freely without political and monetary pressures to have effects on controlling corruption. While corruption on the continent is an African problem, due to its international dimensions and the complex involvement of foreign actors, the study highlights it would require effective governance and cooperative cross-national efforts to curtail the rampant graft in Africa.

Keywords: Corruption, Press Freedom, Democracy, International Dimension

Contents

Chapter 1

1. Introduction

Researchers have sought to understand the complex correlation between freedom of the press, democracy, and corruption for decades (Brunetti et al. 1998; Bardhan, 1997; Mauro, 1996; Tanzi, 1994). A considerable number of scholars and policy-makers believe an independent press acts significantly in curbing corruption. However, the extent to which free media performs in fighting graft remains controversial among significant researchers and requires further studies (Fardigh, Andersson & Oscarsson, 2011). Various scholars have elaborated on how democratic societies with a robust press, uncontrolled by the political elites (laws and regulations restricting freedom of speech or threats against journalists and media moguls) and monetary concerns tend to have lower corruption levels (Fisman and Gatti, 1999; Goel and Nelson 1998).

Using extended data and new time frame, we will seek to understand how developing countries fare under this assumption. Whereas previous studies (Treisman, 2000; Paldam 2000; Brunetti & Weder 2003; Freille et al. 2007; and Bhattacharyya & Hodler, 2015) have examined this topic, exploiting the combinations of empirical strategies, i.e. (regressions with lagged variables, panel fixed effects, sub-groups and regional analyses) this research will attempt to demonstrate the relationships between press freedom, democracy and corruption need further work.

It is often observed; political operatives and politicians tend to appropriate illicit funds through their connections to power. According to Treisman (2000), democratization serves as a powerful tool to curtail political corruption (Bhattacharyya & Hodler, 2015). Free & fair elections can give citizens the opportunity to hold corrupt elected-officials to account. In an empirical work about electoral accountability and corruption in Brazil, Ferraz & Finan (2011) show the release of the country's anti-corruption reports indicates a significant effect on how incumbent mayors perform

in municipal elections. The authors show that in regions with a robust institutional mechanism and a freer press, first-term mayors with reelection incentives exhibited less corruption than two-term ones who face term limits (Ferraz & Finan, 2011). Their findings suggest when there are functioning systems and citizens can freely express their wills at the polls without fear or intimidations and with a robust press reporting on bad behaviors, democratic elections can lower corruption. Brunetti and Weder (2003) state, as unlawful acts occur covertly, a free, independent media can serve as a powerful instrument to uncover fraud.

Transparency International [TI] (2018) states, influential persons and politicians abusing their power for private gains constitute corruption. Depending on the amounts of stolen public funds and the affected sector, one could classify corruption as grand, petty and political. TI elaborates high-level crimes and policy distortions that affect the proper functioning of the state can be classified as a large-cased graft. Daily abuses and extortionary behaviors by junior and mid-level officials in their dealings with citizens seeking public services in government bureaus, schools and hospitals constitute minor corruption; while manipulative procedures and policies that bend the rules of the game in resource allocation are examples of political corruption (TI, 2018).

In this study, we seek to understand if democracy and freedom of the press act separately or together to curb corruption. Exploiting various empirical strategies, we investigated to explain it takes the combined effects of democracy and press freedom in a nation to reduce the incidence of corruption. The findings highlight nations with strong democratic norms that allow journalists to operate freely without political and monetary pressures tend do well in controlling corruption.

1.1. Aims and Significance

Scholars have shown that Sub-Saharan African countries appear to be some of the world's most corrupt nations. As high-level of corruption seems to have a detrimental impact on government effectiveness, donor partners, African governments and international organizations seem to focus on finding solutions to corrupt practices that have had severe consequences on citizens' lives on the continent. This research seeks to examine how the joint effects of democracy and press freedom can lower corruption. Exploiting various regression analyses, the study will show these variables can have impacts on reducing graft.

While corruption on the continent remains an African problem, considering the vast numbers of foreign firms involved in illicit cross-border transfers and the international dimension of the phenomenon, in this paper, we will illustrate that it would require effective governance, collaboration among member states and their international partners to combat corruption. Using findings based on data from Escresa and Picci (2017) and research by the United Nations Economic Council for Africa on alternative ways of measuring corruption in Africa, we will examine this international dimension of graft in Sub-Saharan nations.

1.2. Research Questions

In this study, I will attempt to answer the following questions:

- Do increases in the levels of democracy and press freedom affect controlling corruption?
- Do these determinants (democratization and freedom of the press) act separately or jointly in lowering corruption?
- How do developing nations in sub-Saharan Africa fare under these assumptions?

- What are issues in measuring corruption that are attributed to Africa's high perception of corruption?

- How does the international dimension of corruption affect lowering graft on the continent?

1.3. The Theoretical Relationships between Democracy, Press Freedom & Corruption

One of the earliest theories of corruption is Susan Rose-Ackerman's Principal-agent model. It states there is a divergence in interests between the principal, the elected official, and low-level bureaucrat, or the agent and that there is an informational asymmetry to the agent 's advantage, but that the principal can prescribe the pay-off rules in their relationship (Groenendijk, 1997). In this framework, the incidences of corruption, i.e., firms bribing bureaucrats to gain leverages in a government's contracting or bidding procedures were the initial focuses of the model. In her later analysis, she extends the model to high-level political and low-level bureaucratic corruption. Under these assumptions, she argues that elected officials in democracies based on strong legal foundations must feel insecure and worried about their reelection potentials. The longer and the more politicians feel secured about their tenures, the higher the likelihood they will engage in corrupt arrangements. Groenendijk (1997) explains that Liu, Klitgaard, and Alam extended the principal-agent models. The author states that Alam argues the variations in cross-societal and agency corruption depend on the victim's ability to engage in countervailing actions. When citizens are well-educated and informed, and they can take measures to hold their elected leaders accountable, thus, increasing the likelihoods of checks on the incidence of corruption, this can eventually lead to a reduction in unethical behaviors. When citizens in Korea insisted on the weekend candlelight protests, this led the National Assembly to impeach President Park Geun-Hye for a political scandal in December 2016. Scholars (Lawson 2009; Rose-Ackerman 1978; Teorell 2007) who argue for this mechanism, state fighting corruption should seek to increase the

agent's cost of corrupt acts. As such, they have elaborated on the need for more openness, good regulatory institutions for checks and balances, a free press, independent corruption commissions, better pay for public servants and so on.

Another famous theory that explains corruption is the rent-seeking model. This model evaluates how policymakers and lobbyists seek various preferential treatments in the decision-making process. Competitive lobbying and corruption are considered under this approach (Lambsdorff, 2002). In resource allocation, according to this model, lobbyists may seek to redirect public policy to their clients' advantage. Rent-seeking may differ from corruption as it may not involve illegal payments to politicians, but it may affect systems in a manner that may not be in the public interest (Zucoloto, Nogueira, & Pereira, 2018).

In these scenarios, under functioning democracies based on the rule of law, an independent media can serve as a watchdog to monitor power and provide citizens with the information to hold governments accountable for their actions (Adserà, Boix, & Payne, 2011; Chowdhury, 2004; Strömberg, 2002). The role of the free press is not just to inform voters of politicians and agenda setters' actions, but it can also be useful in the inputs and outcomes of the policy process by monitoring public officials to constrain their abilities to misuse their power, which can ultimately improve government's effectiveness and reduce corruption.

Chapter 2

2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

A considerable number of scholars have found that corruption has detrimental effects on economic growth; as a result, academics and most policymakers seem to believe this crime is one of the critical themes in growth policy (Brunetti et al. 1998; Bardhan, 1997; Mauro, 1996; Tanzi,1994). In this paper, we will seek to understand this assumption and prove that democratization and press freedom can have effects on the control of corruption. Since the 1960s, academics have been working to understand how corruption impacts development dividends in countries (Rose-Ackerman, 1975). Using cross-countries analyses, scholars have exploited various econometrics techniques to uncover corruption true causal determinants (Gupta, Davoodi and Alonso-Terme 1998). While policy-makers and academics have sought to find remedies for controlling graft, it remains challenging as corruption appears to be endemic in some developing countries.

2.2. Press Freedom and Corruption

In this section, I will provide an account on how effective a free press can serve as controls on bureaucratic corruption. According to Bolsius (2012), most definitions of corruption has three key components. The emphasis is on the public role an official fulfills when he conducts his abusive behavior; secondly, the personal gain an official seeks; and lastly, an official's behavior can only be corrupt when the behavior "deviates from normal duties" (p. 12). This requirement separates corruption from other, but related kinds of misbehaviors that are conducted by private organizations, such as business corruption and fraud, (Gardiner, 2002, p. 28). Public interest or misusing the masses' funds for self-gains by officials is critical in labeling corrupt acts. However,

this categorization is disputed by some in the literature. A public official might act in ways in his private life that can infringe on the public interest.

Corruption, according to Klitgaard (1988) and De Soto (1989), is a significant obstacle to economic development in low-income countries. Various economists through a series of empirical work tend to prove this assumption. In a cross-countries study, Mauro (1995) found that corruption can have opposite effects on investment. Research by Brunetti et al. (2005) and M Knack and Keefer (1995) illustrate weak institutions could lower economic development through an illegal accumulation of wealth and inefficient resource allocations. An analysis of TI recent data shows, states with the worst CPI scores tend to have lower development outcomes, which supports previous findings. Fardigh, Andersson, Oscarsson (2011) iilustrate three types of determinants can explain the incidence of corruption. Firstly, if internal structures and bureaucratic incentives exit to control graft; and whether external devices/ structures as an independent judiciary or a watchdog are in place to check it. And that cultural norms and the appropriated rents' amount can also explain corruption. Media freedom thus serves as an external check on   illicit activities

Freille et al. (2007) argue that greater press freedom correlates with low-level corruption. Ahrend (2002) shows that this association cannot be attributed to spurious variables and that the direction of this relationship runs from press freedom to corruption (as cited in Freille et al. 2007, p.3). Others (for example Freille et al., 2007) believe that this relationship picks up wealth effects and the institutional environment more generally. Corruption can be eliminated in two ways: corrupt officials decide to change their criminal behaviors, or they are caught and sentenced if proven guilty. The press can help with both mechanisms. Aggressive media reporting in exposing bribery and other crimes can make it costly for public employees to engage in dubious acts. The rationale for a corrupt action is the expected profit against the costs. If this cost increases so that such

officials can easily be subjected to public disgrace, being tried or loss of jobs, this might help in changing their behaviors. While the findings suggest a higher level of press freedom is correlated with controlling corruption, one should be mindful of this connection and that it works better with advanced open democracies than closed societies.

2.3.   Democracy and Corruption

The literature shows various scholars have studied different determinants of corruption (Treisman, 2000; Paldam 2000; Brunetti & Weder 2003; Freille et al. 2007; and Bhattacharyya & Hodler, 2015). In this paper, we intend to add to the discussion focusing on how the increase in democratization and the freedom of the press can affect corruption control and how the variables can explain remedies to Africa's corruption problem. Exploiting cross-country analyses, scholars have found democracy and media press can lower crime. Using a 17-year panel data of 130 countries, Adserà et al. (2003) state the effectiveness of governments to meet the needs of their citizens depends on how good people are in holding politicians accountable for their actions. They elaborate that two factors (free and regular elections & the degree of citizen information) determine the political control of public officials. The threat of losing reelection allows citizens to discipline politicians and compels public officials to cater to citizens' demands. And that frequent reporting and circulation of newspapers reduce opportunities for politicians to engage in dubious acts (Adserà, Boix, & Payne, 2011). The extent to how effective these concepts can aid to hold politicians accountable depend a lot on voters' sophistication. In low developed countries, political candidates tend to engage in vote buying. As the masses may not receive the right information or understand political issues well, they tend to vote for the wrong candidates. However, even in such settings, with regular free and fair elections under a sound democratic system, citizens could oust corrupt incumbent politicians.

Chowdhury elaborates a free press shares lights on political corruption, thereby empowering voters to punish corrupt politicians by ousting them through elections in a democracy. In functional democracies, elected officials react to voters by reducing corruption (Chowdhury, 2004). Corruption, according to (Heymann, 1996), is not just a problem of public officials. Private agents offering rents to effect decisions of general interest for their gains contribute a lot to the problem.

Researchers and policymakers tend to agree that good governance can lead to significant development outcomes. Various scholars agree there is a long-term causal effect of institutional quality on development. Daniel Kaufman and the World Bank (2005) suggest a standard-deviation rise in effective governance raises income in the long run by some two-to threefold which could generate large development dividends in countries. The authors report that nations with better institutional quality tend to grow faster even over a short-term (10 years) period. (KALFMANN & Bank, 2005).Considering the causal impact of proper public administration on economic development, aid effectiveness, and other development dividends, poor governance in Africa has been the concerns of many in the donor world in the past decades ("Private Sector Development in West Africa," 2014). While some have argued that such poor management on the continent is due to the acute poverty, the authors stress there is little empirical evidence to support such a claim. Considering development outcomes in other regions, it is good governance, i.e., improving the rule of law, quality of institutions (more openness and democracy) controlling corruption that can lead to higher development dividends.

A lot of the previous corruption research tend to focus mostly on the perception-based views and sometimes underplay the contextual complexities of African nations. Cross-country perception-based analyses may be misleading as countries differ a lot on their historical, cultural and political realities and may affect how respondents perceived states. While perception-based indexes remain

useful as they offer viable data for empirical research, they tend to suffer from sample selection problems and may provide limited insights for policy recommendations, especially in the case of African countries. Whereas previous studies (Treisman, 2000; Paldam 2000; Brunetti & Weder 2003; Freille et al. 2007; and Bhattacharyya & Hodler, 2015) have examined this topic, exploiting the combinations of empirical strategies, i.e. (regressions with lagged variables, panel fixed effects, sub-groups and regional analyses) this research will attempt to demonstrate the relationships between press freedom, democracy and corruption need further work.

2.4.   Corruption Trends in Africa

While there are some encouraging gains on the war on corruption in some African countries, various estimates show the world's most corrupt nations lay in this region. Academics and policy-makers believe graft leads to lower economic growth and poverty on the continent. A report by the African Union in 2002 indicates the estimated cost of corruption in Africa is roughly $150 billion a year, far more than 22.5 billion the OECD calculates the continent receives in development aid in 2008. According to the Global Justice Now (as cited in the Guardian, 2017, p.2), "More wealth leaves Africa every year than enters it – by more than $40bn (£31bn)". Their findings indicate in 2015 Sub-Saharan nations received $162bn through loans, aid and personal remittances; while either through multinational firms, corrupt cash flights or climate change adaptation and mitigation costs, $203 billion was wired out of the continent. The publication quoted Honest Accounts (2017) that such huge illegal transfers lead to the yearly financial loss of $41.3bn from 47 African countries. The paper further elaborates that "The campaigners said illicit financial flows, defined as the illegal movement of cash between countries, account for $68bn a year, three times as much as the $19bn Africa receives in aid" (Guardian, 2017, p.1).

As the population in most African nations is predominately young, with over two thirds below 35, a 2017 UNDP report states the youth in Africa will bear the brunt of such illicit cash outflow. The continent, as per the finding, loses some $30bn to $60bn annually due to cross-border transfers (UNDP, 2017). This report and other findings show how shunted development on the continent can lead to acute impoverishment, rampant curable diseases and loss of hope for all age groups. The opportunity cost of graft on the on young Africans appears exceptionally high. As such, they tend to take on risky journeys for greener pastures, which leads to a brain drain and lower economic growth on the continent. Corrupt practices can act as a tax on innovation which can retard young people innovation potentials. The distortionary effects of corruption on the talent pool can work on the incentive structure of a country.

Transparency International recent findings indicate a hopeful cleaner picture for the continent. With well-managed sustained measures, CPI points to gains in Rwanda and Cape Verde. Cote D'Ivoire and Senegal are showing promising signs. However, South Sudan and Somalia still lay at the bottom of the index and the continent is always the worst performing region (Transparency International [TI], 2018).

According to TI (2018), the CPIs of Botswana and Seychelles (61 & 60) respectively, are better than Spain at 57. This development reinforces expert opinions on fighting corruption, as stated by the anti-graft body; with good leadership, well-sustained efforts and political will, nations can win the war on corruption.The report elaborates Rwanda's President, Paul Kagame, make specific strict compliance with the leadership code in the country; Cabo Verde 's Jorge Fonseca promotes institutional transparency, and President Ian Khama maintains a creative approach to mainstream anti-corruption strategies in Botswana's ministries (TI, 2018). These well-performing African

nations have learned measures that work well in their settings and have pursued these tactics with

commitments.

Chapter 3

3. The Empirical Model

The main estimations are based on a cross-section of 140 countries considering period averages from 2000 to 2017

The link between democracy and press freedom on corruption can be summarized using the following regression equation:

$$\text{corruption}_i = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{demo}_i + \beta_2 \text{press}_i + \beta_3(\text{demo}_i * \text{press}_i) + \delta X_i + \varepsilon_i \tag{1}$$

corruption_i indicates the perception of corruption in country i measured by CPI, demo_i measures the level of democracy in country i, press_i checks the freedom of press in country i, X_i is a set of covariates, the log of GDP per capita (lnGDP), political stability (PolStab) and a dummy if a nation is former British colony,(BritCol)). δ is a vector of coefficient estimates of the control variables and ε_i is an idiosyncratic error term. Our primary coefficients of interest are β_3…… which captures the impact of democracy and press freedom on corruption.

$$\frac{\partial CPIi}{\partial DEMOi} = X_1 + X_3 * Press_i \tag{2}$$

The model depends on the marginal impact of the key variables, which implies the effect of democracy on corruption would depend on the level of press freedom in a country. I.e. the higher the level of press freedom in a democratic country, the greater the likelihood of reduction in the incidence of corruption.

Table 1: Summary Statistics

	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Maximum	Minimum
Democracy (0 = absence of democracy; 10 = highest level of democracy)	2,550	6.373	3.118	10	0
WB Control of Corruption Estimate (-2.5 = highest corruption; 2.5 = absence of corruption)	2,261	-0.0895	1.031	2.469	-1.813
Former British Colonies (A dummy variable = 0 or 1)	2,484	0.297	0.457	1	0
Political Stability and Absence of Violence (Partial index of world government indicators)	2,270	-0.039	1.002	2.436	-2.231
Log of GDP in 2011 (GDP Per Capita)	2,455	9.052	1.294	11.77	6.302
Corruption Perception Index (0 = highest corruption; 10 = absence of corruption)	2,111	4.224	2.162	10	0.4
Freedom of the Press Index (0 = worst; 10 = highest press freedom)	2,255	5.042	2.388	9.2	0.1

Note: This table shows the summary statistics, and it indicates variables used this research. Some of the data have been normalized to make easier reading of the regression results. The information below overs details on the variables.

The literature review reveals academics tend to use Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) as a measure of corruption. We also use the World Bank's World Governance Indicator's (WGI index) Control of Corruption Estimates as an alternative dependent variable. The current CPI index ranges from 0 (too much corruption) to 100 (total lack of). However, some time frames in the data begin from 0 (worst corruption) to 10 (total absence of). To make reading our regression estimates easier we use the index as in the range 0 and 10 for our panel. Our panel data ranges from 2000 to 2017. CPI is based on the views and opinions of business people and citizens about the perception of corruption in the country. The control of corruption estimates ranges between -2.5 (very corrupt) to 2.5 (least corrupt) and fall falls part of the World Governance Indicator. According to the World Bank (2018), it estimates the limit public power is abused for private gain. It checks the extent of elite capture, grand and low-level forms of corruption. The CPI scores of the recent least corrupt countries include: New Zealand, 89; Denmark, 88; Finland, 85; and Norway 85; while the worst ones are: Yemen, 16; Afghanistan, 15; Syria, 16; South Sudan, 12; and Somalia 9 (Transparency International, 2018).

Figure 1: Transparency International 2017 Pictorial CPI of the World
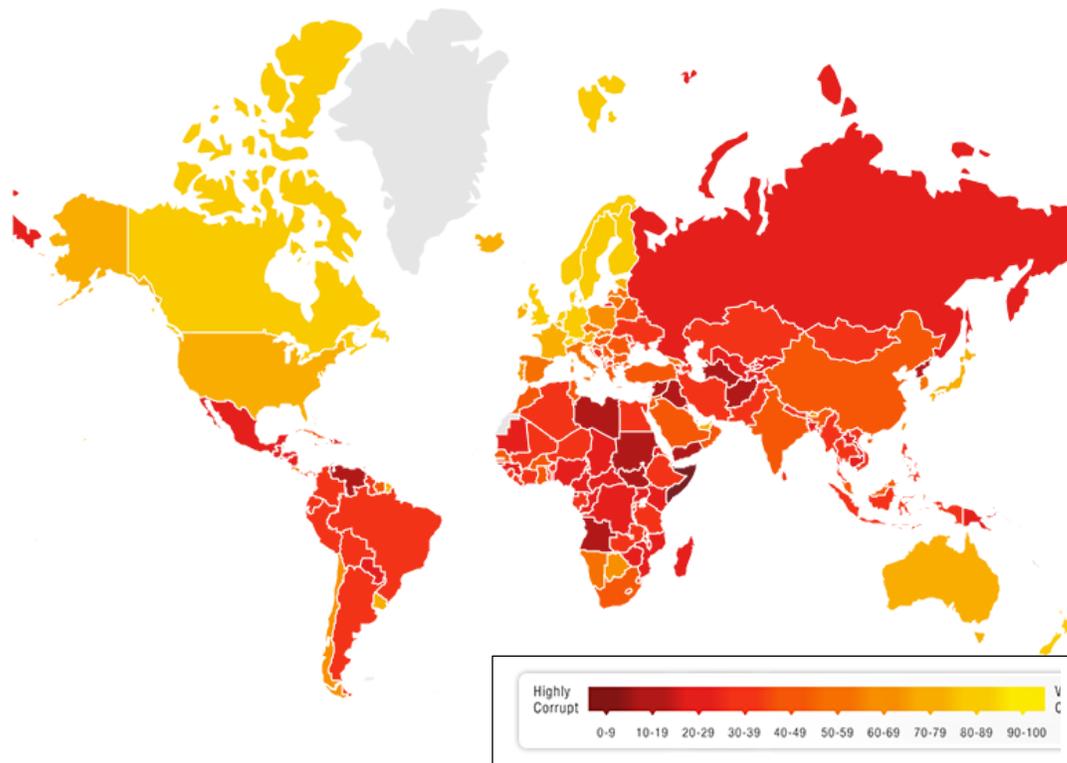
Source: Transparency International

Note: Pictorial representation of Transparency International 2017 World's CPI. Deep to lighter red colors signify highest to very corrupt nations, while deep to brighter yellow indicates moderate to less corrupt states on the scale of (0=highly corrupt & 100= less corrupt)

Freedom House's Press Freedom Index (Press) is our key independent variable. According to Freedom House (2018), a total country score ranges between 0 (best) to 100 (worst) based on 23 methodology questions and 109 indicators divided into three (legal, political, and economic environment) weighted subcategories by Freedom House's researchers. Countries are grouped into three categories: scores ranging from (0-30) is considered free, (31-60) partly free, (61-100) not free. We normalize and standardized this index by subtracting 100 from a country press freedom score and dividing it by 10 to make easier interpreting the coefficients. The latest (2017) index scored 199 countries and territories. 61, 72 & 66 states were rated Free (31%), Partly Free (36%) and Not Free (33%) respectively. The report indicates Azerbaijan, Crimea, Cuba, Equatorial

Guinea, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Syria, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan were the world's ten worst-rated countries and territories. And that freedom of the press around the world declined to its lowest point in 13 years in 2016 due to threats against media persons in major democracies and new steps by autocratic states to control the press, including beyond their borders (Freedom House, 2018).

Democracy: Our main index of democracy is the (Freedom House-Polity2) level of democracy. It ranges between zero (least democratic) to ten (most democratic) countries. It is the average of Freedom House political rights and civil liberties which are transformed into a score 0-10 and Polity2IV transformed to a scale 0-10. The two scales are averaged into fh_polity2. For endogeneity concern, some researchers have opted to use the Vanhanen's democratization index. According to them, this index does not factor in press freedom as an aspect of democracy as in other measures of democracy. We had tried to use this measure, but the version of the data we downloaded have a lot of missing values in the years and our observations of interest. While our measure of democracy might contain some elements that are included in measuring freedom of the press, according to the University of Gothenburg's Quality of Government database (2018) this (Level of Democracy (Freedom House/Imputed Polity)) has imputed values for nations where data on polity is missing. According to the authors, by running polity on the mean of Freedom House estimates, this version tends to be valid and reliable than its constituents' parts or the polity2IV that is commonly used as a measure of democracy (Teorell, Dahlberg, Holmberg, Rothstein, & Natalia Svensson, 2018).

Our key control variables include Political Stability: A World Bank's governance indicator that measures the perception of the political stability and violence's likelihood. Log of GDP per capita: measures the level of economic growth in a country. BritCol, a dummy variable which indicates

if a state is a former British colony. Various scholars have used these as covariates in corruption research (Bhattacharyya & Hodler, 2015; Chowdhury, 2004; Kalenborn & Lessmann, 2013; Kaufmann & Bank, 2005; Treisman, 2014).

Figure 2: Corruption and press freedom

Figure2: Corruption and press freedom world(2000-2017)
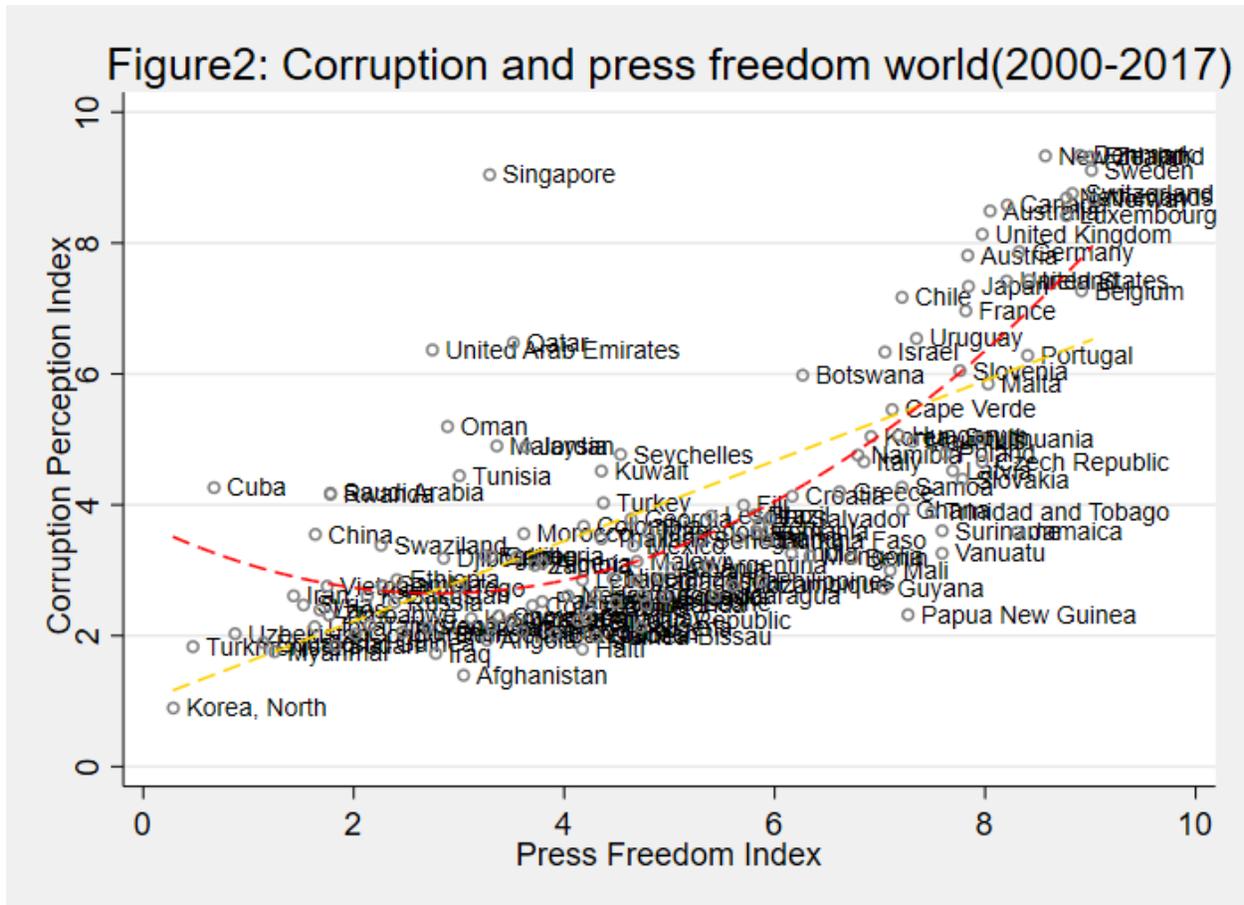
Note: Figure 2 represents the scatter plot of TI's Corruption Perception Index on the vertical axis and Press Freedom Index on the horizontal axis. The interpretation of the figure follows below.

In Figure 2, we graph the mean of two of our main variables, Corruption and Press Freedom. As indicated earlier, Western European countries, Norway, Sweden, and New Zealand, Canada, Australia, etc. have good scores indicating a lower level of corruption and higher press freedom as represented in the upper right-hand corner. They also tend to be more democratic. Singapore and the United Arab Emirates are outliers with low and above medium corruption scores respectively

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but not so great on press freedom. Botswana and Cape Verpe appear to do well among African countries. Countries in bottom lower-left angle, North Korea, Myanmar, Somalia, and Afghanistan, etc. fare poorly on the indicators. They also seem to have poor democracy indicators.

Chapter 4

4. Findings

Starting with table 2 we report regressions with lagged endogenous variables. To control for endogeneity, following Kalenborn & Lessmann (2013), we estimate a series of regressions on the lagged values of our main explanatory variables. We constructed the lagged values of democracy and freedom of the press and formed their various interaction terms to regress on the two separate measures of the corruption, unlike the authors who used Transparency International's CPI as the only dependent variables. In columns (1) we run the model on the lagged value of press variable, democracy, an interaction term between democracy and the lagged press controlling for the log of GDP per capita (lnGDP), political stability (PolStab), and an indicator if a country is a former British colonial (BritCol). In column (2) we alternate with the lagged value of democracy, an interaction term between lagged democracy and the press variable with controls. In column (3) we include the lagged values of two explanatory variables and other controls.

We repeat the estimations with the World Bank Control of Corruption Estimate as the dependent variables. In all models, the interaction terms show positive and significant estimates which are in line with the theory of the joint effect of democracy and press freedom on corruption as other scholars have found (Treisman, 2000; Chowdhury, 2004; Kalenborn & Lessmann, 2013).

Table 2: Regression results with lagged dependent variables

VARIABLES	(1) (lag Press)	(2) (lag Demo)	(3) (lag both)	(4) (lag Press)	(5) (lag Demo)	(6) (lag both)
L.Press	0.0150		-0.0751	0.0299		-0.00686
	(0.0659)		(0.0676)	(0.0352)		(0.0374)
Demo	0.0197			0.0245		
	(0.0417)			(0.0217)		
Demo*L.Press	0.0161*			0.00678		
	(0.00903)			(0.00481)		
L.Demo		0.109**	0.0909*		0.0546**	0.0495**
		(0.0485)	(0.0482)		(0.0248)	(0.0245)
Press		-0.0631			0.0114	
		(0.0582)			(0.0325)	
L.demo*Press		0.0144			0.00568	
		(0.00896)			(0.00492)	
L.Press*L.Demo			0.0170*			0.00751
lnGDP	0.255***	0.281***	0.274***	0.0666***	0.0784***	0.0729***
	(0.0362)	(0.0364)	(0.0369)	(0.0195)	(0.0202)	(0.0201)
PolStab	0.420***	0.375***	0.398***	0.262***	0.254***	0.257***
	(0.0429)	(0.0417)	(0.0421)	(0.0208)	(0.0215)	(0.0206)
BritCol	0.0199	0.00321	-0.00715	0.0712**	0.0547*	0.0632**
	(0.0566)	(0.0560)	(0.0559)	(0.0301)	(0.0309)	(0.0300)
			(0.00940)			(0.00506)
Constant	0.690	0.368	0.527	-1.453***	-1.595***	-1.496***
	(0.441)	(0.433)	(0.458)	(0.238)	(0.246)	(0.254)
Observations	594	574	594	684	641	684
R-squared	0.512	0.528	0.528	0.525	0.531	0.532

Note: CPI index and Control of Corruption are the dependent variables; robust standard error are reported in parenthesis; the lagged independent variables are calculated by taking the lags of the variables; ***,**,and * show the significance at 1%, 5% & 10%". L.Press is the lag of the Press freedom, Demo*L.Press, an interaction term between democracy and L.Press Variable. L.Demo, indicates the lag of Democracy variable. L.Press*L.Demo, refers to an interaction term between the two lagged variables. PolStab, BritCol and lnGDP are control variables are described.

We run a series of regressions for the robustness checks using our two measures of perception of corruption. The findings are reported on Table 3. We first run robustness check using Transparency International's CPI as the dependent variable. In column (1), we run a pooled OLS including all our key variables and the controls. And in column (2), we regress the same variables but with panel fixed effects. We repeat these methods with our alternate dependent variable, World Bank's Control of corruption estimate, in and columns (3) and (14). As in the previous regressions, the coefficients on the interaction terms between democracy and press freedom remain positive and significant. We find that the results are comparable and robust to different specifications. This evidence supports complementarity between democratization and press freedom in the fight against corruption.

$$\text{corruption}_{it} = \alpha i + \theta_t + \beta_1 \text{demo}_{it} + \beta_2 \text{press}_{it} + \beta_3 (\text{demo}_{it} * \text{press}_{it}) + \delta X_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (3)$$

Where corruption_{it} represents the corruption level in country i in time t, $\beta_3 (\text{demo}_{it} * \text{press}_{it})$, captures the combined effects of democracy and the press freedom in country i, X'_{it} is a vector of the control variables such as (the log of GDP per capita (lnGDP), political stability (PolStab) and a dummy if a country is former British colony, (BritCol)). α_i represents country fixed effects, and θ_t year fixed effects. The standard error is clustered at the country level to take account of serial correlation.

Table 3: Robustness checks

VARIABLES	Transparency International CPI		WB Control of Corruption Estimate	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	(Pooled-OLS)	(Fixed-Effect)	(Pooled-OLS)	(Fixed-Effect)
Press	-0.000109	0.0484	0.0525	0.0547**
	(0.157)	(0.0527)	(0.0763)	(0.0225)
Demo	-0.263***	-0.284***	-0.0909**	-0.103***
	(0.0887)	(0.0267)	(0.0426)	(0.0120)
Demo*Press	0.0553***	0.0498***	0.0202**	0.0194***
	(0.0204)	(0.00571)	(0.00940)	(0.00247)
lnGDP	0.537***	0.178**	0.248***	0.0485
	(0.0870)	(0.0696)	(0.0427)	(0.0299)
PolStab	0.540***	0.563***	0.277***	0.299***
	(0.133)	(0.0397)	(0.0621)	(0.0177)
BritCol	0.481**	0.552***	0.191**	0.233***
	(0.191)	(0.0592)	(0.0884)	(0.0265)
Constant	-1.429	-0.613	-2.826***	-1.916***
	(0.976)	(0.428)	(0.485)	(0.181)
Observations	1,849	1,713	1,984	1,818
R-squared	0.746	0.751	0.757	0.771
Control	Yes	YES	Yes	YES
Years FE	Yes	YES	Yes	YES
Country FE	No	YES	No	YES

NOTE: CPI index and Control of Corruption Estimate are the dependent variables; robust standard error are reported in parenthesis; ***,**,and * show the significance at 1%, 5% & 10%". Press, Demo & Demo*Press are measures for press freedom, democracy and their interaction term respectively. lnGDP, is the log of GDP in 2011, PolStab and BritCol are indicators on political stability and a dummy for former British colonies.

Our empirical strategy relies on the marginal effect of democracy on press freedom to account for controlling corruption. For countries with higher levels of press freedom, the marginal impact of democracy on corruption is positive and significant. To account for this joint effect of the explanatory variables, we run sub-group analyses of democratic and non-democratic countries. To do this, we set a cut off based on a certain level of a country' democracy scores. The results indicate, democratic countries with higher level of press freedom show positive and significant estimates. We estimate with different dependent variables, and our results are robust to the inclusion of the control variables, interaction terms, year and country fixed effects. We report this result on Table 3. The result would imply it takes the combination of a certain level of democratization in a country, for a free press to have effects on lowering corruption. And that the two variables are conditional on each other.

Table 4: Subgroup Analysis (Democratic and non-Democratic Countries)

	Transparency International CPI					WB Control of Corruption Estimate				
Dependent Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Panel A. Non-Democratic Countries										
Press	0.219	0.213	0.160	0.00178	-0.0383	0.128	0.131	0.104	0.0958**	0.0813**
	(0.239)	(0.242)	(0.148)	(0.0584)	(0.0675)	(0.117)	(0.120)	(0.0945)	(0.0409)	(0.0385)
lnGDP			0.366**		0.564**			0.146		0.266***
			(0.156)		(0.253)			(0.0984)		(0.0904)
PolStab			0.823***		0.306**			0.389***		0.178***
			(0.239)		(0.132)			(0.126)		(0.0649)
Britcol			0.863**					0.418*		
			(0.398)					(0.212)		
Constant	2.700***	3.140***	0.0970	3.275***	-1.422	-0.922***	-0.861***	-1.937*	-0.801***	-3.023***
	(0.487)	(0.670)	(1.572)	(0.213)	(2.279)	(0.268)	(0.291)	(0.969)	(0.101)	(0.786)
Observations	411	411	369	411	369	460	460	414	460	414
R-squared	0.020	0.032	0.617	0.960	0.953	0.029	0.035	0.534	0.965	0.968
Panel B. Democratic Countries										
Press	1.031***	1.050***	0.506***	0.176**	0.112	0.500***	0.503***	0.249***	0.130***	0.129***
	(0.0821)	(0.0835)	(0.0815)	(0.0737)	(0.0762)	(0.0372)	(0.0379)	(0.0376)	(0.0339)	(0.0319)
lnGDP			0.657***		1.529***			0.278***		0.236***
			(0.123)		(0.282)			(0.0539)		(0.0754)
PolStab			0.574***		0.0694			0.311***		0.0266
			(0.143)		(0.107)			(0.0673)		(0.0438)
BritCol			0.256					0.0809		
			(0.265)					(0.117)		
Constant	-1.440***	-2.084***	-4.765***	3.735***	-10.20***	-2.743***	-2.904***	-3.949***	-0.427**	-2.676***
	(0.511)	(0.551)	(1.111)	(0.537)	(2.843)	(0.241)	(0.246)	(0.477)	(0.208)	(0.776)
Observations	868	868	807	868	807	836	836	820	836	820
R-squared	0.684	0.697	0.800	0.971	0.976	0.727	0.729	0.829	0.983	0.983
Control	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Years FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Country FE	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

Note: CPI index and Control of Corruption are the dependent variables; robust standard errors are reported in parenthesis; ***, **, and * show the significance at 1%, 5% & 10%". Panel A shows the impacts of the variables on the sub-sets of non-democratic countries while Panel B reports on democratic countries. lnGDP, is the log of GDP in 2011, PolStab and BritCol are indicators on political stability and a dummy for former British colonies.

4.1. Regressions with African Countries

In most previous research on this subject, scholars tend to include a few dummies for a sample of African countries. As a lot of the massive corrupt nations remain on the continent, we seek to see how the region will fare under the estimations. Besides, including a few African countries in our main models as reported on the previous tables, we repeat our lagged regressions and the robustness checks with only African countries. We report the results on table 4. As one can observe, a lot of the results are not robustly significant. However, the interaction terms remain positive and moderately significant in the lagged regressions in some instances while we observe significant estimates on the interaction terms with the results of panel fixed effects in columns (8) and (10).

Scholars and policy makers have sought to understand the reasons for Africa's high perception of corruptions, and they tend to offer conflicting views. An analysis of our three key variables (corruption, press freedom & democracy) highlights why one would not be surprised by these results. In the median relative ranking of Africa and the world's other regions with uninterrupted CPI scores from 2007-2014, the continent does better than South Asia; Africa's best performers (Botswana & Seychelles) have medium 2017 corruption perception scores of (61 & 60) respectively, Cabo Verde, Rwanda, and Namibia also did well (TI, 2018). However, a significant number of countries with the low or bottom scores are Sub-Saharan African nations. Equatorial Guinea and Eritrea also fall on Freedom House's World worst-rated countries in 2017. Several other countries in the region are said to have extended restricted media laws or have taken measures to curtail free speech. In line with our theory, it is not surprising to observe insignificant estimates as most of the states on the continent are early in their democratization.

Table 5: Robustness Checks (African countries)

VARIABLES	Transparency International CPI		WB Control of Corruption Estimate	
	(1) (Pooled-OLS)	(2) (Fixed-Effect)	(3) (Pooled-OLS)	(4) (Fixed-Effect)
Press	-0.0641	-0.0294	0.0115	0.0166
	(0.148)	(0.0494)	(0.106)	(0.0279)
Demo	-0.0317	-0.0917**	0.0184	-0.0257
	(0.0953)	(0.0375)	(0.0681)	(0.0215)
Demo*Press	0.0266	0.0289***	0.00881	0.0121***
	(0.0201)	(0.00717)	(0.0150)	(0.00406)
lnGDP	0.212*	-0.337***	0.0635	-0.275***
	(0.111)	(0.0700)	(0.0745)	(0.0387)
PolStab	0.451***	0.407***	0.266***	0.242***
	(0.105)	(0.0415)	(0.0641)	(0.0236)
Britcol	0.0793	0.0632	0.0654	0.0470
	(0.159)	(0.0586)	(0.111)	(0.0334)
Constant	1.351	3.396***	-1.326*	0.0652
	(1.044)	(0.514)	(0.780)	(0.269)
Observations	574	534	641	592
R-squared	0.571	0.627	0.522	0.597
Control	Yes	YES	Yes	YES
Years FE	Yes	YES	Yes	YES
Country FE	No	YES	No	YES

NOTE: CPI index and Control of Corruption Estimate are the dependent variables; robust standard error are reported in parenthesis; ***,**,and * show the significance at 1%, 5% & 10%". Press, Demo & Demo*Press are measures for press freedom, democracy and their interaction term respectively. lnGDP, is the log of GDP in 2011, PolStab and BritCol are indicators on political stability and a dummy for former British colonies.

4.2. Reasons for Africa's High Corruption Perception

Studies offer various explanations for the high levels of corruption perception in Africa despite increased measures to curtail it. According to Persson, Rothstein, and Teorell (2010), based on case studies in Kenya and Uganda, the high perception is the result of the mischaracterization of corruption in the African context. The principal-agent framework, according to the authors, underscores the recent anti-corruption reforms. They claim corruption in Africa, is more a collective action problem. As such, the costs of combating corruption in the short-run outweigh its gains. If fighting this crime rests on the principal-agent framework, in nations where corrupt practices seem to be the rule, even if many disapprove of it, but as leaders and bureaucrats tend to lack the political will to fight corruption aggressively, the authors contend the anti-corruption measures would mostly fail.

Research by the United Nations Economic Council for Africa (UNCEA, 2016), contends the perception-based measures, the focus of most of the international anti-corruption organizations underreport the complexities on Corruption in Africa. Focusing on one's attitude and not the nature or the magnitude of the corrupt acts may not be useful for policymaking in Africa. A victim of corruption may feel their country is very corrupt, while people who may not have experienced it might think differently. Sequeira (2012) argues that interviewees might be impacted by the recent views of corruption in a country, even if they have not experienced it themselves, in a manner foreign experts and businesspersons would expect developing nations to be corrupt. With graft's clandestine nature and the extent unscrupulous agents seek to hide their crimes, developing alternatives means to measure corruption in Africa seem to be challenging. The debate among scholars is either to measure corruption in Africa objectively (factual events), i.e., the sequence of corrupt events, anti-corruption laws adopted, court records on related charges and convictions and cases that get media attention. However, such objective reporting would depend on the capacities of a government and the media to report and combat

corruption. In instances officials tasked with fighting corruption tend to be part of the problem, objective reporting may be undermined. Johnston and Kpundeh (2002) state academics who argue for the use of accurate reporting tend to favor proxy indicators that check observable differences in government policies and the in the economy that makes easy for citizens to engage in corrupt acts or highlight the effects of corruption.

Experts agree corruption in Africa is systemic and requires community engagement and democratization. "Measuring Corruption in African: The International Dimension Matters" (2016) highlights that adequately measuring corruption and understanding its international dimensions are essential to winning the fight against graft. The report contends that the famously used definition of corruption as an "abuse of power for private gains" understates the various dimension of the problem by putting too much emphasis on the public office while omitting important roles private agents play and the international nature of corruption in the African context. Corrupt practices in most countries extend to jurisdictions beyond borders, are not only the faults of corrupt African bureaucrats alone or private agents, both African businessmen, and multinational firms play roles in it. Illicit cash transfers across countries are the phenomenon that affects nations and unless such aspects of African corruption are highlighted, fighting this plaque will remain elusive.

According to Shah and Schacter (2004), weak institutions can be essential determinants of corruption. As most nations on the continent tend to suffer from poor-regulatory and enforcement regimes which can trigger and enable corruption to grow; thus, African governments should seek to improve the institutional structures and engage citizens in decision making to improve governance.

Chêne (2011) elaborates that increased transparency and citizen-participation, strengthening and enforcing anti-corruption principles and effective administration are required to control

corruption. Such enhanced clarity would require efforts to changing minds and attitudes towards public administration on the continent. While most nations now have anti-corruption institutions and various regulations, few or any are genuinely useful. Effective enforcement of laws remains a challenge and sometimes overshadowed by political considerations. Weak institutional structures and lack of strong political will to prosecute corrupt agents allow multinational firms to bribe their ways through systems. They sometimes bribe public officials to gain an unfair advantage to pay meager or no taxes, exploit the system and to secure the political edge in government policies. Such abuse of the system is rampant in most African countries which could end up costing nations more lost revenues than petty corruption by bureaucrats.

Table 7 below, based on the data by Escresa and Picci, who developed a seminal World Bank paper in 2015 to construct a new cross-national corruption index, shows the geographic distribution of public officials that are involved in trans-border corruption. Model on similar metrics as cited in a UNECA 2016 publication on measuring corruption in Africa. Table 7 indicates cross-border corruption cases involving foreign firms in Africa. 95.5% or 1075 firms out of 1080 cross-border corruption cases on the continent between 1995-2014 involved non-African firms. It shows the external dimension of the high involvement of foreign actors in corrupt practices in Africa ("Measuring corruption in Africa: The international dimension matters," 2016). Unfortunately, perception-based research rarely cites this aspect of corruption. To curtail graft in Africa, states and the international communities must cooperate to address this phenomenon.

Table 5: Number of cross border cases of corruption by foreign firms

Years	Total number of cases in Africa	
	From rest of the World	Africa
1995-1999	135	0
2000-2004	383	3
2005-2009	350	0
2010-2014	207	2
Total 1995-2014	1075	5

Source: (Escresa & Picci, 2017)

Note: This table shows the international dimension of corruption in Africa. It indicates the numbers of cases of transnational corruption by foreign firms and African companies from 1995-2014.

4.3.   Limitations of the Study

While we are confident that our findings are robust to various specifications, considering the correlations between democracy, press freedom and corruption, we acknowledge including instrumental variable regressions could improve the impact of our results. Due to time constraint, the rush to meet graduation deadline and our inability to find suitable instruments, we could not continue with this approach.

We also sought to prove the international dimension of corruption in Africa extensively, but with very few prior studies, data limitation and the need for field studies constrained our ability to do much analysis in this area. A lot of the research data on corruption rely on the perception-based approach which hardly cover this aspect. Considering how measuring corruption can affect ways to combating it, we highlight the need for further studies to developing objective metrics on corruption to help Africa in her fight against graft.

Chapter 5

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

In this paper, we study the interaction effect of democracy and freedom of the press on corruption. Prior studies and the analysis of the data show it takes the combined effects of these variables to lower corruption in countries. The collective impacts work in the following channels: Citizens can oust corrupt officials through democratic elections, and a robust free press can share lights on illicit acts making it costly for crooked agents to engage in corruption thereby lowering the incidence of graft. Since the 1960s, Academics have been working to understand how corruption impacts development in countries (Rose-Ackerman, 1975). Rose-Ackerman (1978) argues that more press freedom can limit the inequality of information in government. With useful information about governance and wrongdoings of public officials, citizen participation increases which could empower them to hold corrupt officials accountable at the polls in democratic countries. Using a 17-year panel data, we study this assumption and show that democratization and press freedom could have effects on controlling corruption. In the data, countries with low levels of corruption perception, i.e., New Zealand, Sweden, and Canada, etc. have good democracy and press freedom scores. Somalia, DRC Congo and North Korea with more corruption tend to have the worst democracy and freedom of the press indexes. Our sub-group analysis highlights, the two institutional variables (press freedom and democracy) are jointly significant in helping to lower corruption.

While corruption in sub-Saharan countries is an African problem as it is having detrimental effects on growth and all aspects of citizens' lives, further analyses of the phenomenon indicate it would require international solutions to help curb it. Africa's vast mineral resources and weak governance make it a magnet for crooked state agents, predatory foreign firms, and off-shore

banks across the globe facilitating the rampant corruption on the continent. Our study shows the international dimension of corruption is significant, and efforts must be undertaken by member states and their global partners to help combat it to facilitate wins in the fight against graft.

5.2. Policy Recommendations

Despite the challenges in fighting corruption, studies reveal that effective governance matters most. Democratization should go on with greater openness to allow citizens to have access to free and fair information. In nations where journalists can report freely without fear or intimidation, the masses can have access to uncensored information to make value judgments about politicians which in the long run can make it costly to engage in corrupt behaviors. If there is no press freedom and with government controls on access to public information, the so-called democratization may not lead to lowering corruption. But good reforms in abolishing restrictive media laws leading to more unbiased information about states' politics and adherence to the rule of law can empower citizens to hold corrupt officeholders accountable at the polls. While these two determinants are equally important, studies have found democratic reforms in the former Soviet states and some countries in Africa that maintain restrictive media laws and abuses against journalists, have not made the needed gains against corruption.

Nowadays, most African nations have various laws on graft and anti-corruption bodies, but as the rules are not adequately applied or the agencies lack prosecutorial powers, the abuse of power and illicit behaviors remain rampant which can have dire consequences on the rule of law. This research suggests transparent and effective democratic systems that help citizens to have unbiased and reliable information can help to increase voters' interest in public administration and empower them to make smart decisions at the polls. A politician's fear of being punished by the voters can help limit suspicious behaviors if the likelihood of a corrupt official losing their seats is high, thus, lowering corruption.

Mere voting, but not knowing much about the candidates' backgrounds may not result in lowering corruption. Voters in Liberia zealously elected a new President, George Weah, in 2017 and scores of senators and representatives. With limited voters' knowledge of the elected officials, huge corruption scandals have engulfed the country in less than six months into the new administration. These cases highlight that voting alone does not ensure lowering corruption. According to FrontPage (2018), the new banknotes the Central Bank of Liberia printed overseas that entered the country during the transitional period or few months into the new administration have been embezzled by public officials. These claims have resulted in a major political crisis and have made economic conditions worsen in the country. Unlike the past when citizens did not have much access to good information, with aggressive reporting by the Liberian media houses and increased social media activities by citizens, there is now more public scrutiny on the government to properly investigate the crimes. This increased social media use and robust reporting by Liberians journalists have increased pressure by the country's donor partners and citizens to hold the culprits to account.

 Illicit cross-border transfers reveal the international dimension of corruption in Africa. African governments and their international partners must collaborate to ensure there are no safe-heavens for stolen states' funds. Member states must work harder to make anti-corruption commissions effective and cement cooperation among regional and international jurisdictions to limit fraudulent cross border transfers. It is often the case on the continent that corrupt agents with associations to the higher-ups tend to have claims against them dropped, not adequately prosecuted, or walk away free with impunity. While anti-corruption bodies are numerous on the continent, their politicization and weak enforcement of the findings seem to render them useless. If African nations are to make a significant impact on reducing corruption, all citizens must fairly be subjected to the rule of law.

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