Working Paper No. 167

Does personal experience of bribery explain protest participation in Africa?

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Abstract

This paper examines the effect of direct experience with bribery on collective action using survey data on reactions of citizens to a hypothetical situation of corruption as the first dependent variable and participation in protests as the second. The results show that although a relatively small number of respondents prefer protests as a means to address allegations of corruption, the relative probability of preferring this type of action rises with an increase in the frequency of paying bribes. However, participation in protests and demonstrations first rises and then falls as the frequency of bribery increases. These findings bring into sharp focus conditions under which direct personal experience with corruption is likely to encourage apathy and when it is likely to trigger political engagement – a missing detail in the nascent literature on the effect of petty corruption on collective action.

Acknowledgements

Introduction

Protests, boycotts, and online petitions targeting alleged corruption are fast becoming commonplace in many of the world's most corrupt nations. In addition to the mass uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt in 2011 and the Color Revolutions in Ukraine, a series of anti-corruption protests have emerged in Nigeria, Moldova, and India and forced Guatemala's president, Otto Pérez Molina, to resign following allegations of fraud, conspiracy, and bribery (Luhnow, 2015). In 2009, thousands of Indonesians took to the streets to oppose attempts by corrupt elements in government and business to frustrate the work of Indonesia's anti-corruption agency (Beyerle, 2014). In 2015, more than a million Brazilians demonstrated against systemic corruption. While earlier protests centered on a wide range of socioeconomic grievances, media reports indicate that the recent protests in Brazil were specifically inspired by allegations of corruption, especially in the presidency (see, for example, Magalhaes & Jelmayer, 2015). Indeed, it would seem, as Transparency International co-founder Frank Vogl, observed, "… that ordinary citizens, even in some of the most corrupt nations … and some of the most dangerous for anti-corruption activists, can organize and secure justice" (Vogl, 2012, p. 193).

Nevertheless, recent academic analyses of different forms of anti-corruption collective action seem to take for granted the motives of the individuals who participate in these endeavours, focusing more on the strategies and tactics of the civil-society organizations that mobilize against corruption (see Beyerle, 2014; Landell-Mills, 2013). Furthermore, the fact that Landell-Mills, Beyerle, and others restrict their analysis to instances of "successful" anti-corruption civic engagement constrains variation on the dependent variable. For that reason, their research offers a limited account of why anti-corruption collective action does not occur in societies that often share similar attributes with those in which such initiatives seem to thrive.

Attempts at more systematic comparisons also focus almost exclusively on institutional factors underlying the successes or failures of anti-corruption civic engagement, offering no explanation about variations in individual-level participation. While Verdenicci and Hough (2015) underscore the role of state institutions in the "success" of civilian-led anti-corruption initiatives in India, and their apparent failure in China, they do not explain why participation rates differ in the former. In essence, the overemphasis on the institutional context seems to play down the role of individual-level factors in explaining anti-corruption civic engagement, particularly the effect of perceptions and experiences of corruption.

This paper examines the effect of personal experience of bribery on the preference for collective action against corruption and *actual* participation in protest and demonstrations. It uses data from the third round of the Afrobarometer surveys, which were conducted in 18 sub-Saharan African countries in 2005 and 2006. Afrobarometer Round 3 may be the only cross-national survey to field questions about citizens' experiences of corruption, their reactions to a hypothetical act of corruption, and actual participation in past protests and demonstrations. The data offer an excellent opportunity to examine the relationship between experience of bribery and a preference for collective political action relative to other methods of citizens' opposition to corruption, including "whistle-blowing."

This paper makes two main contributions to the current anti-corruption literature. First, it demonstrates that increasing personal experience with bribery has different effects on the reactions of individuals to allegations of corruption. Increased frequency of paying bribes reduces the likelihood of preferring to report corruption allegations but increases the *preference* for the use of protests to resolve issues of corruption. Second, it shows that the probability of *actual* participation in protests and demonstrations first rises and then falls as the frequency of bribery increases. This finding is consistent with the view that entrenched corruption shapes social and political interactions in ways that are largely inimical to collective action (Morris & Klesner, 2010; Persson, Rothstein, & Teorell, 2013; Warren, 2015).

Personal experiences with bribery and the preference for collective action: The role of grievances

Central to the concept of collective action, especially as applied to protests, is the idea that cooperative effort is intentional. Miller (2014) underscores this point when he contrasts collective action with "collective behavior" – a much older concept in the social sciences – and contends that "by using the term collective action rather than collective behavior, [scholars] sought to avoid the implications that social movements were non-purposive behavior based on mass excitement, hysteria and irrational beliefs" (p. 16). Oberschall (1994) concurs, adding that people do not participate in collective action out of "the herd instinct or propensity to imitate" (p. 80). Partly due to this emphasis on "human intentionality," the individual-level analysis of collective action often adopts the theoretical lens of the rational actor model, which generally argues that individuals cooperate when it is in their best private interests to do so (Oberschall, 1994; Opp, 2001, 2009, 2012; Chai, 2005). In this regard, Oberschall (1994) maintains that the willingness to participate in protests varies according to, among other things, the expected particularistic benefit of the collective good that a public protest seeks to accomplish. Indeed, as Lichbach (2003) observes, the fact that human beings are self-seeking is one of the reasons why protest organizers often focus on self-interest rather than altruism and self-sacrifice in their recruitment campaigns.

One of the major variants of the rational-choice paradigm, the grievance model, posits that personal discontent lies at the core of the motivation to organize and participate in protests (Regan & Norton, 2005). Mottiar and Bond's (2012) analysis of South Africa's unusually high rates of protest highlights this point. As they argue, these episodes "suggest a significant amount of social discontent, even if this does not yet mean the rise of a protest 'movement' with similar norms, values, strategies and tactics, nor a transformational political agenda arising from the discontent" (p. 309). In her analysis of local riots in Nigeria, Scacco (2008) finds that poverty increases "the probability of *willingness* to participate in violence, while the interaction between poverty and networks predicts *actual* participation" (p. 201). Other scholars suggest that perceived inequality or the assessment of relative living conditions is a stronger correlate of protest action than absolute levels of poverty (Regan & Norton, 2005; Alexander, 2010).

The issue of socioeconomic grievances is one of the recurring themes in the analysis of the link between corruption and collective political action. A number of studies demonstrate that perceptions of corruption can have a particularly strong effect on both voting and protest action when corruption is regarded as the cause of economic problems (Inman & Andrew, 2009; Slomczynski & Shabad, 2010). As Bratton and van de Walle (1992) noted with reference to the 1990s pro-democracy protests in several African countries, "… the issue of elite corruption served as a vehicle for transforming narrow economic grievances into broad political demands. Protesters began to draw a connection between economic failures and the lack of political accountability in single-party states" (p. 430). Inman and Andrew (2009) found that at least in Senegal, those who felt that corruption was on the rise were likely to protest if they perceived their economic conditions to be worse than they had been in previous years. However, these and many other studies that examine the nexus between corruption and political participation do not specifically assess the effect of direct experience with corruption (see Inman & Andrew, 2015; Kostadinova, 2009; McCann & Dominguez, 1998; Stockemer, LaMontagne, & Scruggs, 2013).

Recent studies have established a link between individual-level economic conditions and bribery, showing that poorer individuals – who often rely exclusively on the state for access to health care, education, and other services – pay bribes more frequently than do their wealthier counterparts (Justesen & Bjornskov, 2014; Peiffer & Rose, 2014). Worse, according to Kaufmann, Montoriol-Garriga, and Recanatini (2008), bribery consumes a relatively large part of poor people's income. For these reasons, one would expect poor people who regularly pay bribes to have high levels of discontent and consequently to be more susceptible to appeals by non-state actors to participate in collective dissent. In this
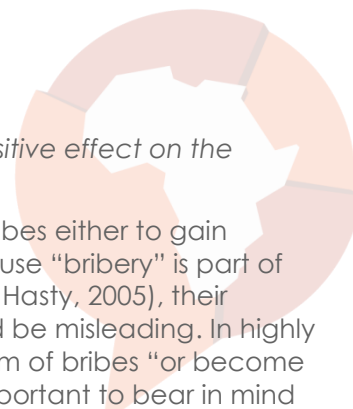
connection, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

> H1: The experience of bribery has an increasingly strong and positive effect on the preference for anti-corruption protest as poverty levels increase.

On the contrary, to the extent that poor people can willingly offer bribes either to gain access to goods and services to which they are not entitled or because "bribery" is part of the normative structure (see Blundo, de Sardan, Arifari, & Alou, 2006; Hasty, 2005), their portrayal as victims of corruption who are inclined to oppose it could be misleading. In highly corrupt societies, everyone, including the poor, can exploit the system of bribes "or become its victims on an everyday basis" (de Sardan, 1999, p. 28). It is also important to bear in mind that societies with high levels of corruption also have highly dysfunctional public institutions (Blundo, de Sardan, Arifari, & Alou, 2006; Karklins, 2005), which necessitate the use of bribes to secure much-needed public goods and services. Smith (2007) has this in mind when he argues that Nigerians "must navigate, indeed participate in corruption, if they are to achieve even their most mundane aspirations and reasonable goals" (p. 14). Seen against the backdrop of a dysfunctional state, it is not surprising that "the amounts of bribes paid to venal officers are often surprisingly small compared to the sorts of relative, short-term gains realised by those who pay the bribes" (Persson, Rothstein, & Teorell, 2013, p. 463).

For these reasons, economic status may not be driving the effect of bribery on the propensity for collective action as Hypothesis 1 suggests. In other words, individuals may not prefer to join protest simply because bribery hurts them economically. It may well be that the experience of corruption is *itself* a grievance, which affects the propensity to engage in collective dissent, independently of personal economic conditions. The study expects the following hypothesis to receive empirical backing:

> H2: The experience of paying bribes has an independent positive effect on the propensity to engage in collective action.

There is a possibility, however, that bribery experiences have a curvilinear effect on the propensity for collective action against corruption. While initial experience with paying bribes in order to gain access to public goods and services (e.g. health care) or to pass through a police checkpoint can generate indignation and the willingness to protest, subsequent incidences can create a sense of resignation as individuals accept petty corruption as a fact. That is, in essence, experience with bribery can have a mobilizing effect on collective action when bribery is relatively uncommon and a dampening effect when bribery is a more regular occurrence. In this connection, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

> H3: The experience of paying bribes initially increases the likelihood of joining collective action and then reduces that likelihood as the frequency of the experience increases.

Data and methods

Dependent variables

This study utilizes data collected by Afrobarometer, an independent research network that conducts a comparative series of nationally representative surveys covering various social, economic, and political dynamics in Africa. Conducted in 2005/2006 in 18 countries (see Table A.1 in the appendix), the third round of surveys provides a range of items that are relevant to this paper's main objective. The Afrobarometer questionnaire included the following battery of items:

> What, if anything, would you do to try to resolve each of the following situations?
> A) You were waiting for a government permit or license, but kept encountering delays
> B) Election officials left your name off the voters roll
> C) You suspected a school or clinic official of stealing
> D) A wrongful arrest of a family member
> E) Someone wrongly seized your family's land

> *Answers were coded as follows: 1=Don't worry, things will be resolved given enough time; 2=Lodge a complaint through proper channels or procedures; 3=Use connections with influential people; 4=Offer a tip or bribe; 5=Join in public protest; 6=Other; 7=Do nothing, because nothing can be done*
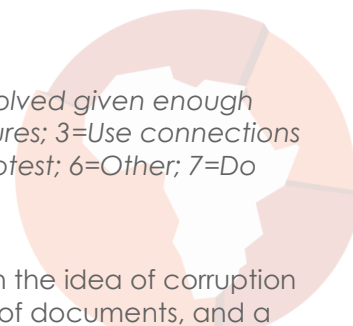
The extent to which respondents associated each of these items with the idea of corruption is subject to debate. While wrongful arrests, delays in the processing of documents, and a name left off the voters' roll might indicate service delivery problems, they do not necessarily entail the abuse of public trust for private gain. For instance, an omitted name can be a genuine mistake and not necessarily a case of corruption. It is difficult to conceive of wrongful seizure of family land as an instance of corruption unless this involves the state or some political authority. The possibility that respondents imagined a whole range of potential land grabbers, including ethnic rivals and neighbours and sometimes excluding the state, renders the land item limited as a proxy for corruption.

Suspecting that *officials* are stealing from schools or health-care facilities seems to have superior face validity compared to the other items. Because it comes closest to the standard definition of corruption, which is "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain" (Transparency International, 2009), the item also has superior content validity. Indeed, few people would contest the notion that the act of stealing from schools and clinics by officials constitutes "corruption." Asking people about their preferred action against such a vague phenomenon as corruption can be fraught with measurement errors when respondents invoke a wide range of practices to answer the question. These errors are significantly reduced when respondents are made to adopt a similar frame of reference – something that this item provides by speaking of theft by officials instead of the value-laden concept of "corruption." Coupled with its answering options, this item is therefore suitable for measuring how ordinary people might react to allegations of corruption.

One weakness of this question is that the answering option "offer a tip or bribe" seems to be a somewhat counter-intuitive solution for theft in schools and health-care facilities. One possibility is that some respondents believe that the best way to get authorities to address problems involving venal officials is to offer tips and bribes. Conversely, this could indicate a response-set bias in that these respondents (1% of the entire sample) gave the same answer (i.e. offer bribes) to all the five hypothetical situations of poor service delivery and corruption. Rather than treat this as missing data, I merged it with the "use connections with influential people" response option. The other options remained unchanged. Thus, the dependent variable "action against corruption" has five response categories with "do nothing" taking the lowest value and "join in public protest" the highest.

When asked how they would react to suspected acts of corruption in schools and clinics, more than two-thirds (69%) of the 25,391 respondents said they would report these to the authorities (hereafter the *whistle-blowers*). About 18% felt that nothing could be done about such issues (the *acquiescents*); 7% said they would use their connections with influential people or offer tips and bribes (the *bribers*); 4% said they would not worry about the problem as it would eventually get resolved given enough time (the *carefrees*). A small minority (2%) said they would resort to collective action in the form of protests (the *protesters*).

One of the main challenges of asking citizens about their possible reactions to corruption is that they can provide answers that conform to social expectations. It is indeed possible that a majority of respondents said they would lodge a complaint because it sounded like an acceptable thing to say. However, excluding those with some college education[1] from the analysis does not change the results. Moreover, the study also examines how corruption

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[1] The literature shows that social desirability is most common among educated respondents (see Tourangeau & Yan, 2007; Bernstein, Chadha, & Montjoy, 2001). Using Afrobarometer Round 3 data, Justesen and Bjornskov (2015) observed that excluding respondents with secondary and/or tertiary education does not alter the parameter estimates of effect of self-reported poverty on bribery.

experiences affect participation in past protests and demonstrations, as a way to provide an extra layer of robustness. The question about participation in past protests and demonstrations reads as follows: *Here is a list of actions that people sometimes take as citizens. For each of these, please tell me whether you, personally, have done any of these things during the past year: Attended a demonstration or protest march?*

Independent and control variables

The study's main independent variable, personal experience with bribery, is measured in two dimensions. First, the study considers the frequency with which respondents have had to pay bribes when interacting with public officials. This is measured based on an additive index of five similarly worded questions about respondents' actual payments of bribes. The questions read as follows: *In the past year, how often (if ever) have you had to pay a bribe, give a gift, or do a favour to government officials in order to: A) Get a document or permit? B) Get a child admitted in school? C) Get medicine or medical attention? D) Get a household service (like piped water, electricity, or phone)? E) Avoid problems with the police (like passing a checkpoint or avoiding a fine or arrest)?* For each of the items, respondents chose one of the following options: "No experience with this in the past year," "Never," "Once or twice," "A few times," or "Often." A maximum likelihood factor analysis extracted one solution with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.77, suggesting that these items can form a reliable additive index of bribery experience (hereafter "bribe paid").

The second dimension of bribery experience is captured by a composite index of two items regarding how often respondents encountered demands for illegal payments in public schools and health-care facilities. As the questions do not ask whether respondents complied with these demands, they are suitable for measuring experience with *demands* for bribes, which is different from actual payments of bribes. Accordingly, they are useful for investigating the differential effects (if any) of having experienced demands for bribes and actually paying them on the probability of joining protests. The exact wording of the "bribe demanded" items is as follows: *Have you encountered any of these problems with your local public schools during the past 12 months: Demands for illegal payments? Have you encountered any of these problems with your local public clinic or hospital during the past 12 months: Demands for illegal payments?* The answering options were identical to the ones offered in questions about the frequency of bribe payments. The two items form an additive scale ("bribe demanded") with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.66. The index of "bribe demanded" correlates positively with "bribe paid" ($r=33$, $p<0.001$).

The regression analysis includes a number of variables that are likely to influence the relationship between experience with bribery and the preference for action against corruption. These are self-reported poverty, corruption perceptions, corruption tolerance, relative living conditions, institutional trust, social trust, and organizational membership. The corruption perceptions variable is an additive index of 10 items concerning how many of the officials in particular public institutions respondents perceive as corrupt. Three questions about the extent to which citizens think various incidences of corruption are wrong constitute a composite index of corruption tolerance. Respondents' evaluation of their living conditions compared to other citizens measures relative living conditions. The index of self-reported poverty comprises five items about how often respondents have gone without enough food, enough clean water, medical treatment, enough fuel to cook food, and a cash income. An index of institutional trust consists of items about how much trust an individual has in a range of public institutions, including the presidency, Parliament, the police, and the courts. Table A.2 in the appendix provides the exact wordings of the items used to measure these control variables, while Table A.3 in the appendix shows the summary statistics of all the variables used in this study.

Estimation and specification strategies

Multinomial logistic regression (MNL) is the most appropriate modeling strategy for a dependent variable that takes on more than two discrete values. MNL imposes the stringent independence of irrelevant alternatives (IIA) assumption, which implies in the context of this study that a particular action is independent of other actions people might prefer against corruption. The results of the "suest-based" Hausman test indicate that the MNL model violates the IIA assumption in two of the five tests. Nevertheless, according to Cheng and Long (2007), tests of IIA are not always accurate or useful, and Freese and Long (2014) discourage their use. This notwithstanding, and because violations of the IIA assumption may lead to inconsistent estimates, I employ the generalized ordered logit (gologit) model as a robustness check of the MNL results. This is a more robust yet computationally less intensive method of modeling categorical data. It is also more parsimonious than MNL (Williams, 2016), and unlike traditional ordered probit/logit estimation, it accommodates heterogeneous effects of the independent variables.

Since this paper's main objective is to examine the effect of direct experience with corruption on collective action as opposed to apathy, it would be meaningful to use either acquiescents or protesters as a base outcome in the multinomial regression model. However, given that two-thirds of Afrobarometer respondents would rather report suspected acts of corruption, using whistle-blowers as a reference group makes comparisons more meaningful. The reporting of results therefore focuses on the probability of preferring to join protests relative to reporting suspected acts of corruption. This notwithstanding, the MNL model was re-estimated a number of times to determine whether using a different reference category changes the results.

I estimate a binary logistic regression model using participation in past protests and demonstrations as a dependent variable and action against corruption as a key factor variable. I include the two variables indicating personal experiences with corruption (i.e. "bribe paid" and "bribe demanded") and control for all the other variables included in the MNL model. Since cross-national studies are susceptible to heteroskedastic error terms due to the nested structure of the data, all the models report country-clustered standard errors.

Bribery and reactions to a hypothetical situation of corruption

The analysis of the pooled Round 3 data shows that people who prefer to join protests had comparatively greater experience of corruption. Two out of three of the protesters had at least one recent experience of paying bribes, giving a gift, or doing a favour to government officials in order to secure various public goods and services or to avoid problems with the police. One in four of the whistle-blowers, 27% of the carefrees, 23% of the acquiescents, and 37% of the bribers had these experiences in the past 12 months. Similarly, protesters experienced more regular demands for illegal payments compared to members of the other groups.

The MNL model indicates that the frequency of bribery payment has a significant effect on reactions to corruption allegations (X^2=31.15, df=4, p<0.001), but the effect of the frequency of demands for illegal payments is weak and non-significant. An increase in the frequency of paying bribes increases the relative probability of choosing to protest rather than engage in other ways of addressing alleged malfeasance. Although this effect is robust to changes in the base outcome, it is non-significant when "bribers" is used as a reference, reflecting the fact that the two groups have similar bribery experiences, as the descriptive analysis suggested.

On average, a standard deviation increase in the frequency of paying bribes increases the probability of a preference for protests by 0.008, holding other variables at their mean. The same increase in the frequency of bribery reduces the chances of preferring to report by 0.022 on average while increasing the probability of preferring to use influential connections by an average of 0.015, holding other variables at their mean. A standard deviation increase
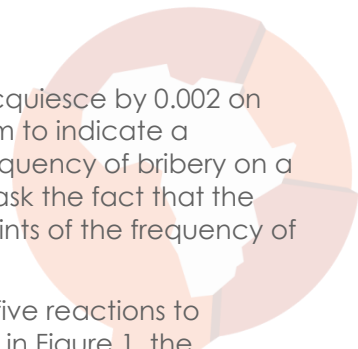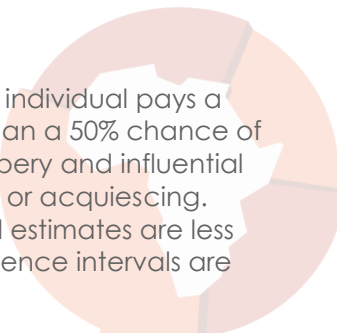
in the frequency of bribery reduces the probability of preferring to acquiesce by 0.002 on average. However, this is not statistically significant. These results seem to indicate a comparatively small (albeit highly significant) overall effect of the frequency of bribery on a preference for protests. However, these average marginal effects mask the fact that the probability of preferring different actions varies widely at different points of the frequency of bribery payments.

To demonstrate this, I plot the predicted probabilities of each of the five reactions to allegations of corruption at hypothetical values[2] of bribery. As shown in Figure 1, the frequency of bribery has a curvilinear effect on different reactions to corruption allegations – something the analysis of average marginal effect is unable to reveal. Holding other variables at their mean, the probability of using bribes and influential connections rises, stabilizes a bit, and falls as the frequency of bribery increases. The probability of a preference for protest increases with smaller margins at the lowest and highest frequency of bribery, which indicates a polynomial relationship between bribery and a preference for protest. Holding other variables at their mean, the probability of preferring to report or acquiesce is highest for an individual who has no experience with bribery but falls with each additional payment of bribes. It would seem from this analysis that a majority of those who prefer to report did not have much direct exposure to bribery, and that having experience with bribery would increase their likelihood of choosing to either protest or issue bribes as a response to corruption.

Figure 1: Probability of different reactions to corruption at hypothetical values of bribe payments
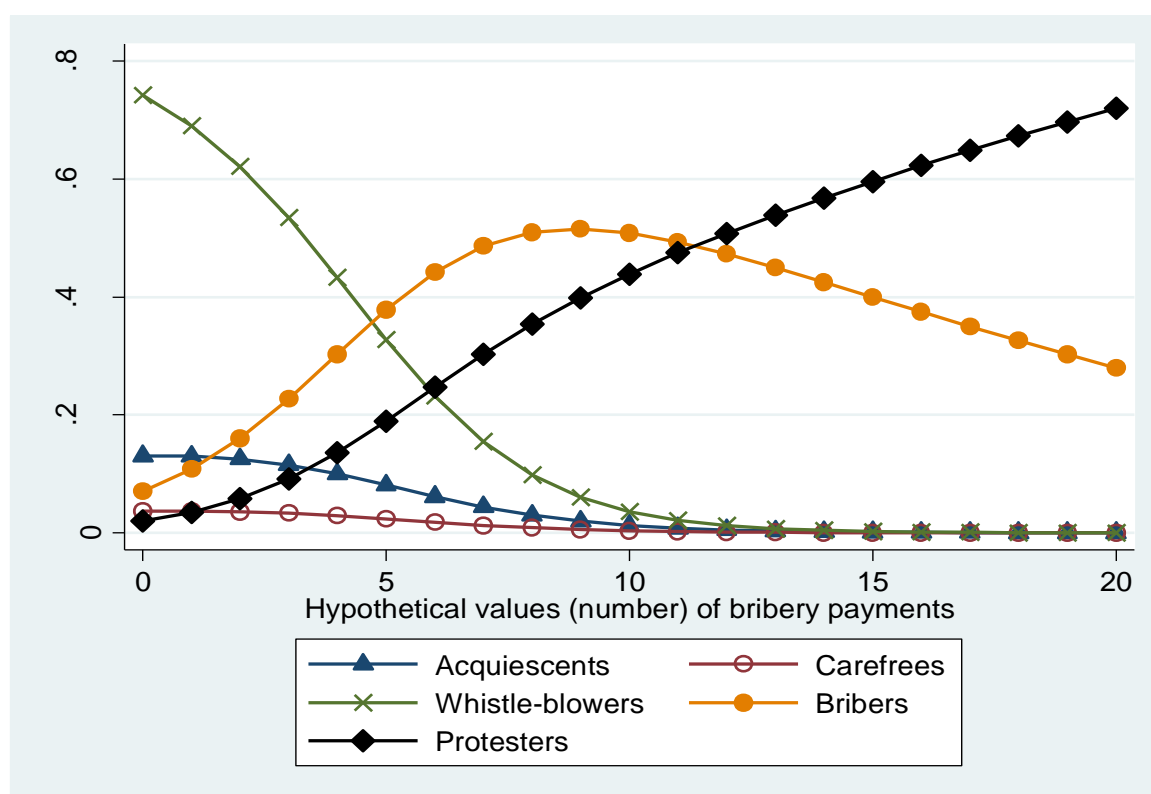
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Assuming these hypothetical values represent the number of times an individual pays a bribe, someone who paid bribes at least 15 times would have more than a 50% chance of preferring to join protests, about a 40% chance of preferring to use bribery and influential connections, and less than a 1% chance of reporting, being carefree, or acquiescing. Instructive though these results are, a caveat is in order: The predicted estimates are less reliable at higher levels of bribery payment as the widths of the confidence intervals are wider and overlap due to the small sample sizes.

Turning to control variables, the effect of relative living conditions on reactions to corruption is statistically significant (X^2=27.82, df=4, p<0.001), while the effect of lived poverty is weak and non-significant. However, neither variable significantly affects the relative probability of preferring to protest, although their negative coefficients indicate, as expected, that as economic status gets worse, people become increasingly likely to prefer protesting rather reporting suspected acts of corruption. The weak effect of lived poverty is somewhat surprising considering the fact that poor people are more than twice as likely to pay bribes when seeking to obtain public services (Justesen & Bjornskov, 2015)[3] and that in many African countries, poor people are likely to turn up for protests and demonstrations (Branch & Mampilly, 2015). Although the interaction term of poverty and "bribe paid" is non-significant, it improves the effect of "bribe paid" on a preference for protest relative to reporting. Similarly, the interaction between poverty and "bribe demanded" significantly improves the effect of the latter on the probability of preferring protest relative to reporting. However, poverty remains non-significant even in the presence of the interaction term. I interpret these mixed results as weak evidence in favour of Hypothesis 1. The results of the full MNL model are shown in Table 1.

As one would expect, subjective perceptions of corruption increase the chances of preferring to protest rather than report allegations of corruption. Although controlling for corruption perceptions reduces the overall effect of both "bribe paid" and "bribe demanded," the effect of "bribe paid" on a preference for protest remains statistically significant. The effect size of corruption perceptions drops and becomes non-significant when institutional trust is introduced, which is hardly surprising given the strong negative correlation between institutional trust and perceptions of corruption (r=-0.426, p<0.001). The negative coefficient of institutional trust indicates that low confidence in the political system increases the probability of preferring to protest rather than report suspected acts of corruption. The correlation between bribery and institutional trust is relatively weak (r=0.147, p<0.001), and bribery remains a strong and statistically significant predictor of a preference for protest after taking into account the effect of institutional trust.

Although corruption tolerance has a strong overall effect on reactions to allegations of corruption (X^2=31.16, df=4, p<0.001), it has a non-significant effect on the preference for protest relative to reporting. Instead, thinking that corruption is acceptable or understandable increases the probability of preferring to use bribes relative to reporting allegations of corrupt activities. Education increases the probability of preferring to report relative to preferring any other action against corruption. Generalized trust increases the chances of preferring to join protests relative to reporting corruption, and results are robust to changes in the base outcome. Additionally, it improves the relative effect of the frequency of bribery on the preference for protest. Surprisingly, membership in voluntary associations, such as religious groups and community development associations, does not increase the relative probability of preferring to protest. Overall, the results show that the effect of bribery remains strong and statistically significant even after controlling for the effects of several potential drivers of the preference for protest.

While protest and the use of influential connections are on average the most preferred actions as corruption increases, the relative probability of preferring to use bribery declines considerably at high levels of bribery experience. The fact that the probability of preferring to

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[3] The authors used the same Afrobarometer Round 3 data as this study.

protest continues to increase while the probabilities of preferring to use bribery, whistle-blowing, acquiescing, and being carefree decline indicate that protest is likely to be the *most preferred reaction* to corruption allegations when the experience of corruption is very high. This seems to suggest, in line with Hypothesis 2, that the frequency of bribery payment has a mobilizing effect, given that the effects of other grievance-related variables such as poverty and relative living conditions are not statistically significant.

Table 1: Action against suspected corruption: Effects of corruption experiences with individual-level controls

Whistle-blowers (base)	Protesters	Bribers	Carefrees	Acquiescents
	Exp. beta	Exp. beta	Exp. beta	Exp. beta
Independent variables				
Bribe paid	1.845** (0.409)	1.700*** (0.222)	1.196 (0.140)	1.231 (0.237)
Bribe demanded	1.207 (0.166)	1.226 (0.172)	0.983 (0.118)	1.040 (0.070)
Control variables				
Corruption tolerance	0.905 (0.080)	0.844*** (0.032)	0.761*** (0.053)	0.867*** (0.033)
Corruption perception	1.199 (0.130)	1.181 (0.104)	1.431*** (0.109)	0.929 (0.056)
Education attainment	0.951 (0.098)	0.885** (0.059)	0.823** (0.053)	0.884** (0.019)
Generalized trust (dummy)	0.902 (0.098)	0.960 (0.084)	1.021 (0.066)	0.999 (0.068)
Lived Poverty Index	2.479*** (0.570)	1.923 (0.427)	2.089*** (0.352)	1.137 (0.134)
Relative living conditions	0.959 (0.054)	1.211*** (0.059)	1.272** (0.149)	1.033 (0.041)
Organization membership	0.864 (0.164)	0.814 (0.106)	0.615** (0.092)	0.783 (0.077)
Institutional trust	0.844 (0.101)	0.882 (0.099)	0.871 (0.141)	0.701*** (0.052)
Interaction				
Poverty & Bribe paid	0.940 (0.155)	0.931 (0.071)	0.958 (0.071)	0.895 (0.075)

Log pseudolikelihood=-12100.60
N=16,468
Dependent variable is "action against suspected act of corruption."

Notes
1. *I used combined weights (within by across weights) to adjust for design effects arising from both disproportionate sampling and cluster sampling. Unweighted results available on request.*
2. *Cluster robust standard errors in parentheses*
3. **significant at 10%, **significant at 5%, ***significant at 1%*
4. *Beta coefficients transformed to relative risk ratios (RRR)*

The results of the generalized ordered logit model (gologit2) are highly consistent with those yielded by the MNL model. The correlations between the predicted probabilities of the MNL and gologit models for each of the five reactions against corruption are strong, positive, and statistically significant (r>.90, p<0.001). Figure 2 shows two distributional plots of the probabilities of protest action as predicted by the MNL and the gologit2 models.

Figure 2: Distributional plot MNL vs. gologit2: Protest action
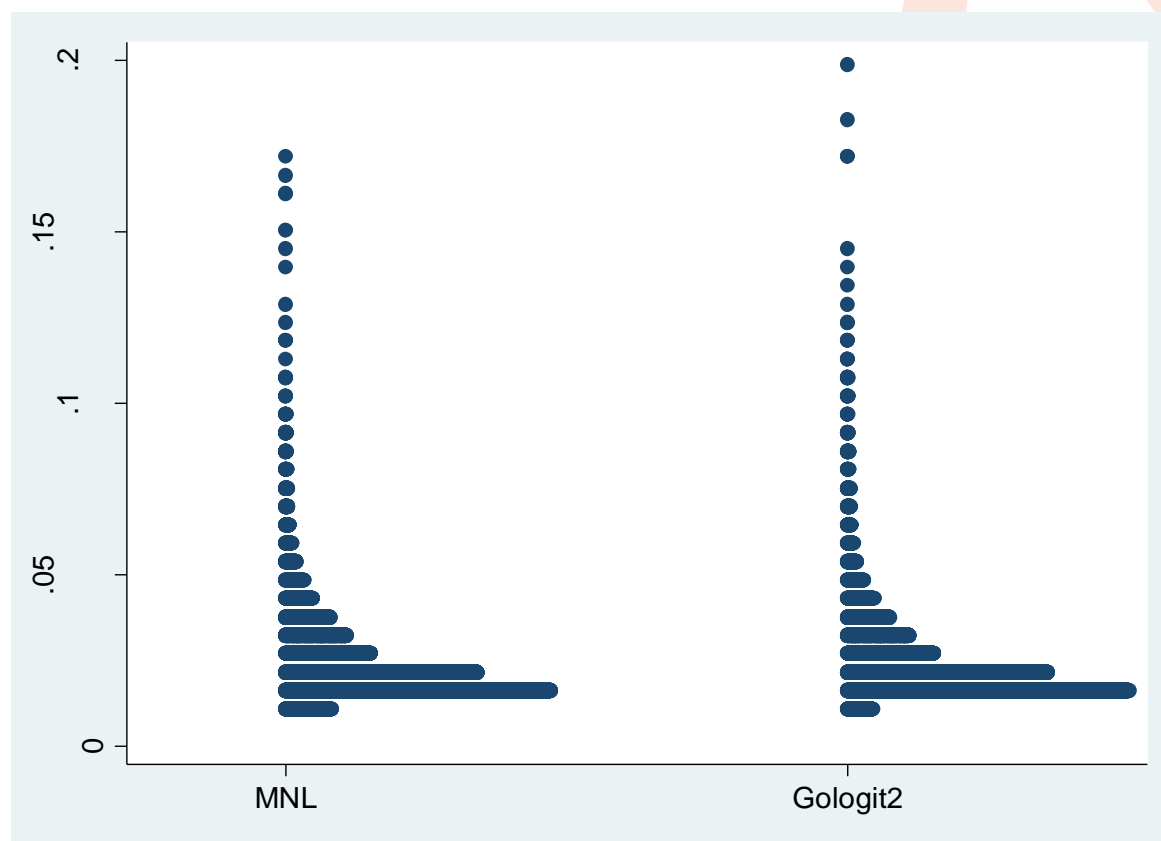
The gologit2 model shows that in general, the odds of preferring higher categories of action against corruption (with protest being the highest category) increase as bribe payments become more regular (see Table A.4 in the appendix). For each additional issuance of a bribe, the odds of preferring anti-corruption protests (highest category) to the other actions against corruption increase by 58%. This strong support for the effect of bribery on collective action departs from the work of Peiffer and Alvarez (2015), in which bribe experiences did not affect the willingness to join anti-corruption protests or work with organizations that fight corruption.

Frequency of bribery and participation in past protests

One in seven Afrobarometer respondents (14%) reported taking part in protests during the year preceding the survey. Those who participated in these events paid bribes more frequently and experienced more regular demands for illegal payments. The results of the binary logistic regression indicate that a standard deviation increase in the frequency of demands for bribes increases the probability of taking part in past protests and demonstrations by 0.015 ($p<0.05$). A standard deviation increase in the frequency of paying bribes increases the probability of joining protests by 0.044 ($p<0.001$). Unsurprisingly, an increase in the frequency of demands for bribes increases the predicted probability of joining protests as the frequency of bribe payments increases.

The quadratic term of the frequency of bribery is negative and highly significant, indicating a concave relationship between the experience of paying bribes and the probability of taking part in protests (see Table A.5 in the appendix). This indicates, in line with Hypothesis 3, that paying bribes increases the propensity for collective action when the experience is relatively rare while gradually decreasing this propensity as bribe payment becomes a more regular

occurrence. The graph in Figure 3 shows the quadratic effect of frequency of bribery on the probability of protest participation.

Figure 3: Predicted probability of past protest participation at hypothetical values of bribe payments

The graph shows predicted probability on the y-axis (ranging from .2 to 1) and Hypothetical values (number) of bribery payments on the x-axis (ranging from 0 to 10).
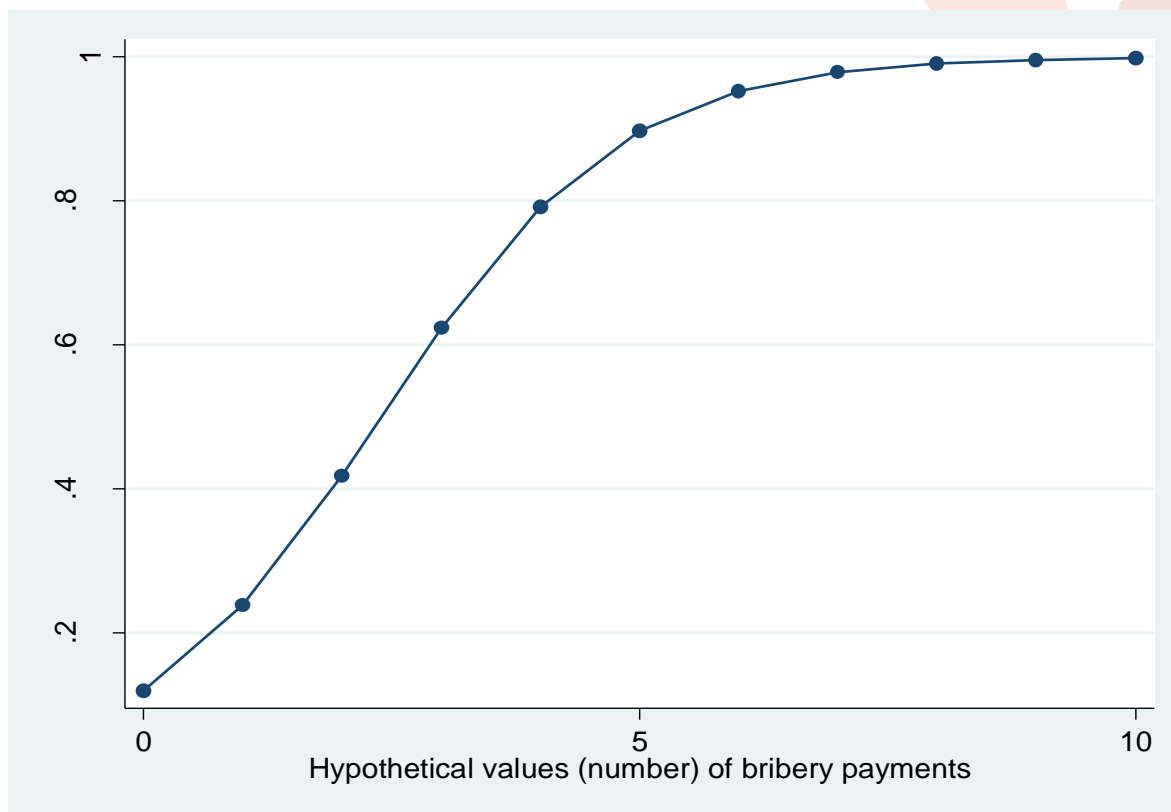
This finding adds an important detail in the anti-corruption discourse, which is that exposure to corruption can both increase and decrease the propensity for collective engagement. To the best of my knowledge, there are no studies showing *when* the frequency of bribe payments can produce this effect on political participation. However, Kostadinova (2009) reported similar results in her analysis of the effect of the *subjective perceptions of corruption* on voting in post-communist countries. As she concludes, "widespread beliefs that government is corrupt make some indignant citizen go to the polls to throw out the 'rascals' " (p. 708). However, over time, corruption erodes political efficacy, or "confidence in the capacity of the democratic process to produce [a] clean government" (p. 696).

The results seem to suggest that when bribe payments are less common, citizens are likely to perceive each encounter as an extortion, which triggers a sense of injustice and the desire to participate in collective dissent (hence the initial rise in the probability of protest). The diminishing probabilities of protest participation as a function of an increasing frequency of bribery corresponds to two interpretations. First, the experience of having to regularly issue bribes can begin to feel "normal" after several encounters, leading bribers to discount it as a grievance for which to join protests and demonstrations. The second interpretation is that when bribery is a regular experience, the exchange takes on a more collusive character in which case participants view it as personally rewarding rather than extortive. Turning to the effect of different reactions to corruption on the probability of protest, the data show that individuals who prefer to join protests or offer tips or bribes instead of reporting are more likely to participate in protests and demonstrations. Individuals who prefer to join protests relative to reporting their suspicions of corruption are more likely to take part in protests as the
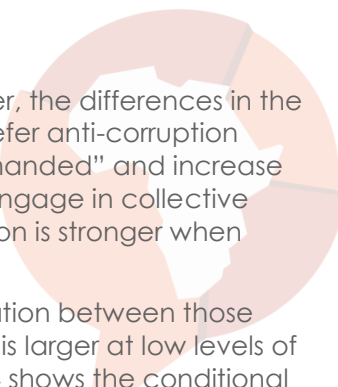
frequency of demands for and payments of bribes escalates. However, the differences in the predicted probabilities of joining past protests between those who prefer anti-corruption protests and other respondents are smaller at low levels of "bribe demanded" and increase as demands for bribes increase. This indicates that the propensity to engage in collective dissent as a function of support for different reactions against corruption is stronger when demands for bribes are frequent.

On the contrary, the difference in the probabilities of protest participation between those who prefer anti-corruption protests and those preferring other actions is larger at low levels of corruption and narrows as the frequency of bribery increases. Figure 4 shows the conditional marginal effects of different reactions to allegations of corruption at hypothetical values of bribe payments. Holding other variables at their mean, a positive change from preferring to report (reference category) to preferring to protest first increases the probability of participating in protests before decreasing it as the frequency of bribery increases.

Figure 4: Conditional effects of reactions to allegations of corruption on protest participation
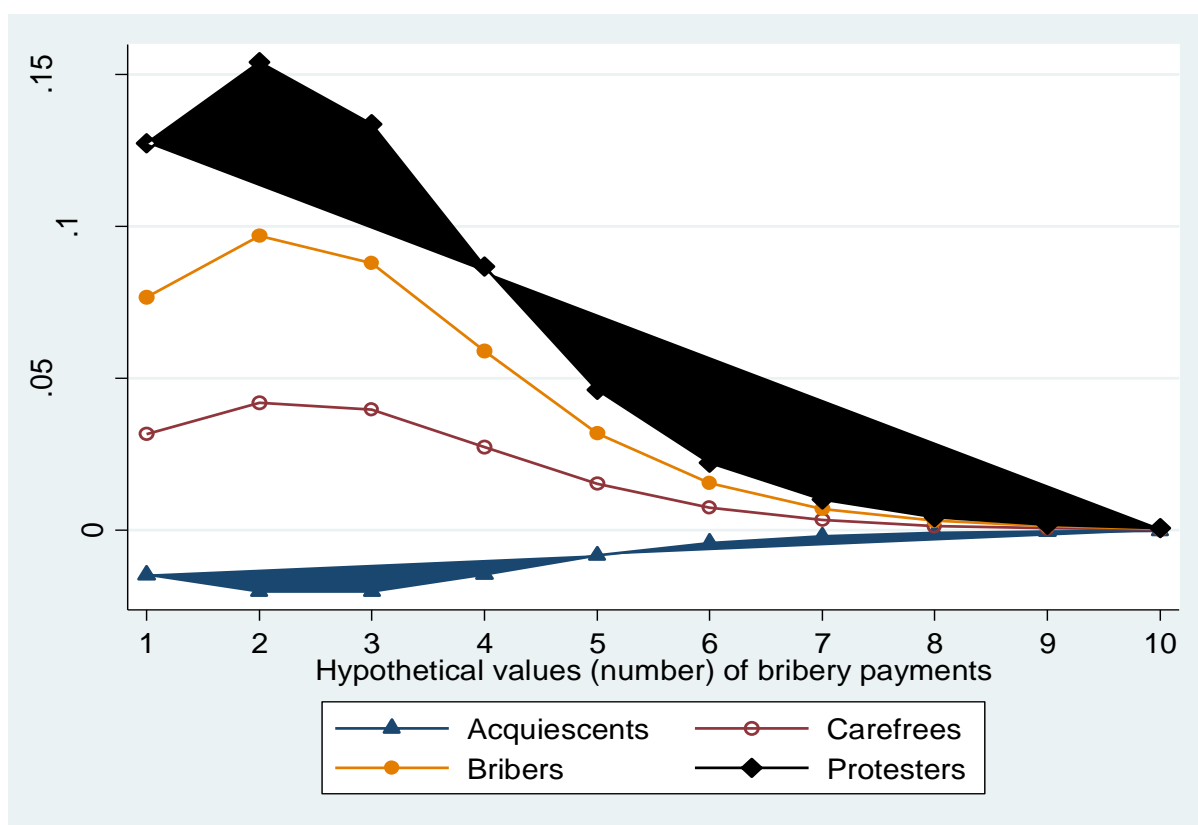
Although the probability of joining past protests is generally higher for those who prefer anti-corruption protests, it falls more precipitously as the frequency of bribery increases. That is, beyond a certain point, additional increases in the frequency of bribery result in relatively large decreases in the predicted probability of protests for those who prefer anti-corruption protests. The results also show that when exposure to corruption is a more regular occurrence, there is no difference in the probability of taking part in actual protests for adherents of different reactions toward corruption allegations. This indicates that even though regular bribers seem to differ in their preference for action against suspected graft, as demonstrated in the previous section, they have an equally low probability of joining actual protests when the frequency of bribery is very high.

Conclusions

This paper examined the effect of direct experience with bribery on collective action using reactions of citizens to a hypothetical situation of corruption as the first dependent variable and participation in protests as the second. The results show that individuals with similar characteristics except for their levels of experience with corruption will prefer different methods of tackling corruption. Those who prefer to protest and actually participated in protests paid bribes more frequently than those who prefer other ways of dealing with suspected acts of corruption. Further, the analysis indicates that protest action is likely to be the most preferred mode of addressing corruption when the frequency of bribery is very high. The fact that the effect of the frequency of bribe payments remains strong after controlling for the effects of personal economic conditions seems to suggest that frequency of bribery could be a mobilizing grievance in its own right.

The results of the binary logistic regression show that increasing frequency of bribe payments has a concave effect on the propensity for collective engagement. Protest participation is more likely when bribery demands as well as payments are relatively uncommon. Conversely, individuals for whom corruption has become routine are less likely to participate in collective dissent. This is consistent with the view that routinized corruption erodes the propensity for collective action (Morris & Klesner, 2010). Most importantly, the logistic regression model shows that both dimensions of the experience of bribery – the frequency of demands and the frequency of payments – increase the probability of joining protests.

One of this study's main limitations is that the hypothetical situation of corruption involves only two areas of public service – education and health. It would be interesting to investigate how the results change when reactions to malfeasance in a broader list of public services are regressed against experience of bribery. Another limitation lies in the fact that institutional factors that underpin corruption and civilian-based anti-corruption strategies in Africa are not included in the models. Controlling for country-level effects rather than specifically modeling for them limited the analysis to the variation between individuals, even though specific institutional factors probably influence both the rate of bribery and the propensity to participate in protest. Indeed, citizens' attitudes regarding their role in anti-corruption efforts are likely to reflect institutional peculiarities or "opportunity structures" of their countries. As Dalton, van Sickle, and Weldon (2010) have argued, individual propensity to protest cannot be divorced from the political environment. By the same token, the propensity for street-level officers to demand bribes and citizens to pay them is likely to depend, to an extent, on country-level characteristics.

Bringing institutions back into the discussion requires the partitioning of sources of variability in the propensity for anti-corruption collective action within and across countries – an analytical technique that random effects modeling can provide. Employing this modeling technique might reveal whether the effect of exposure to corruption on collective dissent is indeed strongest where petty corruption is relatively uncommon, as the current analysis seems to suggest. The challenge, however, is that estimating a discrete choice random effects model is computationally intensive and consumes too many degrees of freedom.

A number of studies have underscored the importance of ethnicity in the discourse on corruption in developing countries (Bayart, Ellis, & Hibou, 1999; Chang & Kerr, 2016; Orjuela, 2014). As Cho and Kirwin (2007) noted, Africans who think that the state treats members of their ethnic, religious, or political group unfairly are more likely to participate in bribery exchanges. Conversely, Isaksson (2015) finds that members of "influential" ethnic groups pay bribes more regularly compared to members of less dominant ethnic groups. Future studies could examine whether a preference for anti-corruption collective action differs systematically with the individual's status as an ethnic insider or outsider (see Chang & Kerr, 2016) while also probing the role of ethnic diversity on collective action against corruption.
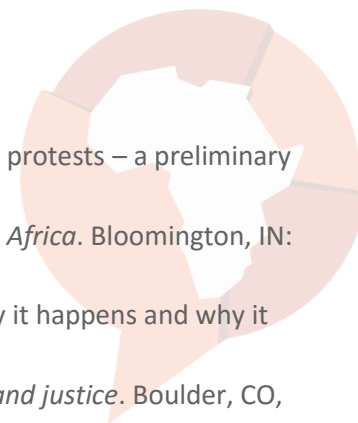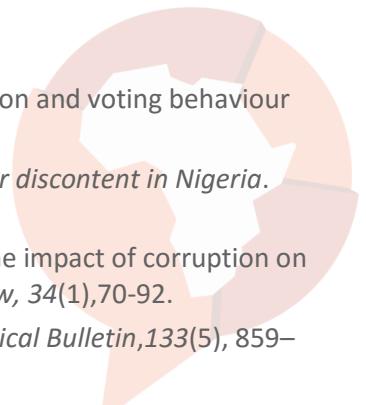
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Appendix

Table A.1: Surveyed countries included in the regression analysis

Country	N
Benin	1,198
Botswana	1,200
Cape Verde	1,256
Ghana	1,197
Kenya	1,278
Lesotho	1,161
Madagascar	1,350
Malawi	1,200
Mali	1,244
Mozambique	1,198
Namibia	1,200
Nigeria	2,363
Senegal	1,200
South Africa	2,400
Tanzania	1,304
Uganda	2,400
Zambia	1,200

Although Zimbabwe was part of the Afrobarometer survey, it is excluded in the regression models because the question about generalized trust was not asked there.
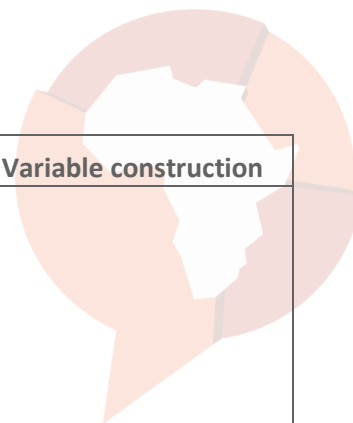
Table A.2: Survey items

Variable	Exact wording	Variable construction
Action against corruption	*What, if anything, would you do to try to resolve each of the following situations: You suspected a school or clinic official of stealing?* 1=Don't worry, things will be resolved given enough time, 2=Lodge a complaint through proper channels or procedures, 3=Use connections with influential people, 4=Offer a tip or bribe, 5=Join in public protest, 6=Other, 7=Nothing, because nothing can be done.	
Protest attendance	*Here is a list of actions that people sometimes take as citizens. For each of these, please tell me whether you, personally, have done any of these things during the past year:* *Attended a demonstration or protest march?* *[If Yes, read out options 2-4]. If not, would you do this if you had the chance? [For No, read out options 0 and 1]* YES: 4=Often; 3=Several times; 2=Once or twice NO: 1=Would if had the chance; 0=Would never do this	
Bribe paid index	*In the past year, how often (if ever) have you had to pay a bribe, give a gift, or do a favour to government officials to: A) Get a* *document or a permit? B) Get a child into school? C) Get a household service (like piped water, electricity or phone)?* *D) Get medicine or medical attention? E)* *Avoid a problem with the police (like passing a checkpoint or avoiding a fine or arrest)?* 0=Never, 1=Once or twice, 2=A few times, 3=Often	Composite index Scale reliability=0.7536
Bribe demanded index	*Have you encountered any of these problems with your local public schools during the past 12 months: Demands for illegal payments?* *Have you encountered any of these problems with your local public clinic or hospital during the past 12 months: Demands for illegal payments?* 7=No experience with public schools/clinics in past 12 months; 0=Never; 1=Once or twice; 2=A few times; 3=Often	Composite index Scale reliability=0.6225

Corruption perception index	How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? A) The president and officials in his office? B) Members of Parliament? C) Elected local government councillors? D) National Government Officials? E) Local government officials? F) Police? G) Tax officials? H) Judges and magistrates? 0=None of them, 1=Some of them, 2=Most of them, 3=All of them	Composite index Scale reliability=0.9202
Corruption tolerance index	For each of the following, please indicate whether you think the act is not wrong at all, wrong but understandable, or wrong and punishable. A) A government official gives a job to someone from his family who does not have adequate qualifications B) A government official demands a favour or an additional payment for some service that is part of his job? C) A public official decides to locate a development project in an area where his friends and supporters lived 1=Not wrong at all, 2=Wrong but understandable, 3=wrong and punishable	Composite index Scale reliability=0.6512
Relative living conditions	In general, how do you rate your living conditions compared with those of other countrymen? 1=Much worse, 2=Worse, 3=Same, 4=Better, 5=Much better	
Lived Poverty Index	Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or your family gone without: A) Enough food to eat? B) Enough clean water for home use? C) Medicines or medical treatment? D) Enough fuel to cook your food? E) A cash income? 0=Never, 1=Just once or twice, 2=Several times, 3=Many times, 4=Always	Composite index Scale reliability=0.7819
Education	What is the highest level of education you have completed?	
Organizational	Now I am going to read out a list of groups	Composite index

membership index	*that people join or attend. For each one, could you tell me whether you are an official leader, an active member, an inactive member, or not a member?*	Scale reliability=0.5602
	A) A religious group (e.g., church, mosque)? B) A trade union or farmers association? C) A professional or business association? D) A community development or self-help association?	
	0=Not a member, 1=Inactive	
	member, 2=Active member, 3=Official leader	
Generalized trust	*Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you must be very careful in dealing with people?*	
	1=Most people can be trusted, 0=You must be very careful	
Institutional trust index	*How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?*	Composite index Scale reliability=0.8921
	A) The president? B) Parliament? C) The Electoral Commission [of your country]? D) Your elected local government council? E) The ruling party? F) Opposition political parties? G) The army? H) The police? I) Courts of law? J) Government broadcasting service? K) Independent broadcasting services?	
	0=Not at all, 1=Just a little, 2=Somewhat, 3=A lot	
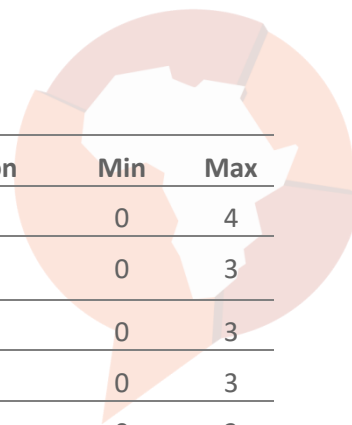
Table A.3: Summary statistics

	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Min	Max
Action against corruption	25,391	1.720	0.9156	0	4
Corruption perception index	25,377	2.645	0.4667	0	3
Bribe paid index	25,382	0.886	2.0125	0	3
Bribe demanded index	24,084	0.399	0.7413	0	3
Corruption tolerance index	24,326	7.935	1.4000	0	3
Education	25,305	3.118	1.9954	0	9
Lived Poverty Index	24,980	1.282	0.9584	0	4
Generalized trust	23,810	0.167	0.3733	0	1
Relative living conditions	24,426	2.784	1.0180	1	5
Org. membership index	24,787	0.571	0.5198	0	3
Institutional trust index	19,859	1.706	0.7974	0	3

Table A.4: Gologit2 predicting determinants of action against allegations of corruption

	Robust odds ratio	Std. err.	z	P>z	95% conf. interval	
Acquiescents						
Corruption perception index	1.066	0.061	1.120	0.263	0.953	1.192
Bribe paid index	1.029	0.141	0.210	0.837	0.786	1.346
Bribe demanded index	1.092	0.091	1.050	0.293	0.927	1.286
Corruption tolerance index	1.112	0.038	3.100	0.002	1.040	1.190
Education	1.110	0.020	5.890	0.000	1.072	1.150
Lived Poverty Index	0.974	0.032	-0.810	0.420	0.913	1.039
Generalized trust	1.028	0.142	0.200	0.841	0.784	1.348
Relative living conditions	0.983	0.036	-0.470	0.639	0.915	1.056
Org. membership index	1.108	0.054	2.100	0.036	1.007	1.219
Institutional trust index	1.374	0.102	4.270	0.000	1.188	1.590
_cons	1.077	0.344	0.230	0.817	0.576	2.013
Carefrees						
Corruption perception index	0.999	0.044	-0.030	0.977	0.916	1.090
Bribe paid index	1.019	0.119	0.160	0.874	0.811	1.280
Bribe demanded index	1.092	0.091	1.050	0.293	0.927	1.286
Corruption tolerance index	1.163	0.046	3.850	0.000	1.077	1.256
Education	1.134	0.019	7.580	0.000	1.097	1.171
Lived Poverty Index	0.974	0.032	-0.810	0.420	0.91	31.039
Generalized trust	0.848	0.081	-1.730	0.084	0.703	1.022
Relative living conditions	0.941	0.045	-1.250	0.210	0.857	1.035

Org. membership index	1.108	0.054	2.100	0.036	1.007	1.219
Institutional trust index	1.346	0.083	4.820	0.000	1.193	1.519
_cons	0.669	0.229	-1.170	0.240	0.342	1.308
Whistle-blowers						
Corruption perception index	1.188	0.105	1.940	0.052	0.999	1.412
Bribe paid index	1.563	0.202	3.450	0.001	1.213	2.014
Bribe demanded index	1.092	0.091	1.050	0.293	0.927	1.286
Corruption tolerance index	0.896	0.035	-2.810	0.005	0.830	0.967
Education	0.927	0.063	-1.110	0.267	0.812	1.059
Lived Poverty Index	0.974	0.032	-0.810	0.420	0.913	1.039
Generalized trust	1.911	0.410	3.020	0.003	1.255	2.909
Relative living conditions	1.124	0.045	2.880	0.004	1.038	1.216
Org. membership index	1.108	0.054	2.100	0.036	1.007	1.219
Institutional trust index	0.923	0.089	-0.830	0.405	0.764	1.114
_cons	0.175	0.082	-3.700	0.000	0.070	0.440
Bribers						
Corruption perception index	1.179	0.129	1.510	0.131	0.952	1.460
Bribe paid index	1.589	0.313	2.350	0.019	1.080	2.336
Bribe demanded index	1.092	0.091	1.050	0.293	0.927	1.286
Corruption tolerance index	0.963	0.082	-0.440	0.657	0.815	1.137
Education	0.988	0.093	-0.130	0.896	0.821	1.189
Lived Poverty Index	0.974	0.032	-0.810	0.420	0.913	1.039
Generalized trust	2.139	0.394	4.130	0.000	1.491	3.069
Relative living conditions	0.939	0.053	-1.120	0.262	0.841	1.048
Org. membership index	1.108	0.054	2.100	0.036	1.007	1.219
Institutional trust index	0.912	0.102	-0.830	0.409	0.733	1.135
_cons	0.029	0.026	-3.920	0.000	0.005	0.169

Dependent variable is "preferred action against corruption."

Notes:
1. *I used combined weights (within by across weights) to adjust parameter estimates for the effects of both disproportionate sampling and cluster sampling. Unweighted results available on request.*
2. *Standard errors clustered by country*
3. *Constraints for parallel lines imposed for:*
   - *Bribe demanded index*
   - *Lived Poverty Index*
   - *Organizational membership index*

Table A.5: Logistic regression model predicting determinants of protest participation

	Odds ratio	Robust std. err.	z	P>z	95% conf. interval	
Bribe paid index	2.189	0.435	3.950	0.000	1.484	3.230
Bribe paid squared	0.778	0.073	-2.680	0.007	0.648	0.935
Bribe demanded index	1.165	0.074	2.410	0.016	1.029	1.320
Corruption tolerance index	1.070	0.160	0.450	0.654	0.797	1.435
Corruption perception index	0.984	0.078	-0.210	0.837	0.842	1.150
Action against corruption (Whistle-blowers reference)						
Acquiescent	0.924	0.106	-0.690	0.489	0.738	1.156
Carefree	1.173	0.343	0.550	0.585	0.662	2.081
Briber	1.481	0.199	2.920	0.003	1.138	1.927
Protester	1.853	0.583	1.960	0.050	1.000	3.432
Education	1.122	0.035	3.700	0.000	1.055	1.192
Generalized trust	1.062	0.136	0.460	0.642	0.825	1.366
Lived Poverty Index	1.033	0.038	0.880	0.381	0.961	1.109
Relative living conditions	1.103	0.044	2.490	0.013	1.021	1.192
Org. membership index	1.710	0.170	5.410	0.000	1.408	2.077
Institutional trust index	1.086	0.075	1.200	0.232	0.949	1.242
Constant	0.035	0.014	-8.170	0.000	0.016	0.078

N=16,464

Wald chi2 (15)= 2488.28, Prob>chi2=0.0000

Pseudo R2=0.0433

Dependent variable is "protest attendance," coded 0=Did not join in public protest, 1=Joined in public protest.

Notes:

1. *I used combined weights (within by across weights) to adjust parameter estimates for the effects of both disproportionate sampling and cluster sampling. Unweighted results available on request.*

2. *Standard errors clustered by country*

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