African Politics and Policy

Corruption and Trust (R. Pelizzo)

Trust in the political system is the single most important condition for the stability of a political regime. Political regimes that are unable, for whatever reason to be regarded as legitimate by their citizens, become unstable and often break down.

Scholars have often argued that corruption, in addition to misallocating resources, slowing down economic growth, and hindering development, erodes the legitimacy of political institutions.

The purpose of this article is to show whether and to what extent the legitimacy of African legislatures is affected by their perceived level of corruption.

The Afrobarometer regularly conducts surveys to monitor public opinion in Africa. The questionnaire developed and administered by Afrobarometer allow one to assess the legitimacy of various institutions, to compute the level of perceived corruption of such institutions and to test the relationship between corruption and trust.

Before exploring the relationship between corruption and trust, it is important to note that the data collected by Afrobarometer do not seem to have any problem in terms of validity. In fact, by correlating the percentage of respondents who report to have a great deal or some trust in parliament with the percentage of respondents who report to approve the performance of their Members of Parliament, we find a strong, positive and statistically significant relationship between these two variables. The correlation in fact yields a correlation coefficient of .677 (sig. = .000). The strength of this relationship, which can be observed by looking at figure 1, shows the extent to which these two variables validate one another.

The data on perceived corruption do not display any problem in terms of validity. In fact, when we correlate the percentage of respondents who believe that some or all Members of Parliament are involved in corruption with the percentage of respondents who believe that parliaments are either corrupt or extremely corrupt, we find that these two variables are strongly, linearly, positively, and significantly related to one another. The strength of this relationship, which can be observed in figure 2, supports the claim that these two sets of data do not have any problem in terms of validity.

Having established that the data collected by Afrobarometer are valid, we can proceed to test whether and to what extent trust in legislatures is affected by their perceived level of corruption. By performing a correlation analysis (see figure 3), it becomes immediately apparent that the perceived level of corruption of African parliaments (or legislatures), however measured, erodes their legitimacy, however measured.

This finding has an obvious policy implication. Legislatures need to take strict anti-corruption measures and reduce their perceived level of corruption. Failure to do so will erode their legitimacy, will lead to higher electoral volatility, and could ultimately undermine the stability of the political systems of which they are an integral part.

To make African democracies work, parliaments need to fight corruption and regain citizen trust
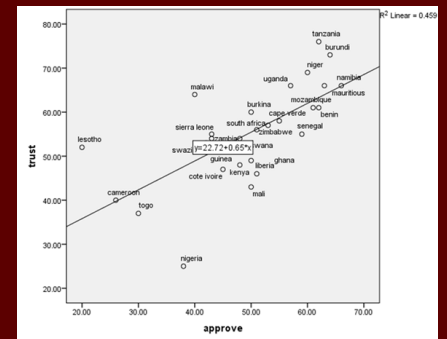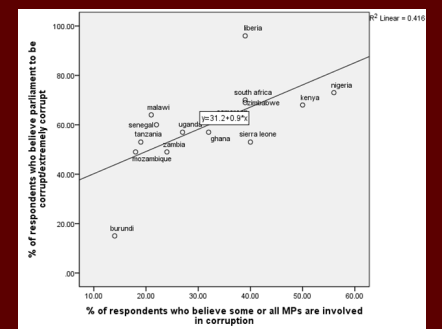
Figure1: Approval and Trust

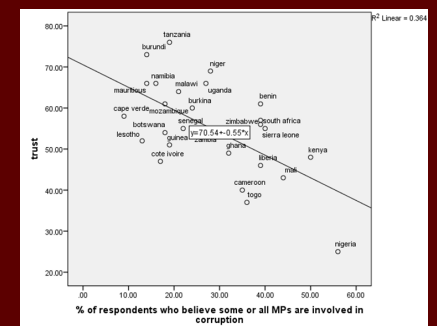Figure2: Corruption in Legislature

Figure3: Corruption and Trust

Museums in Africa

By Kristina Bekenova

This May was marked for by efforts to preserve and promote African culture such as the "Proud and United Nation" in Botswana, the return of two Nok Terracottasculptures to Nigeria, and the new appointments in Cameroonian Ministry of Culture. Moreover, 53 years ago, the month of May was declared by the Organization of African Unity as Month of Africa, and this year celebration was under the theme "Building a Better Africa and a Better World: for Peace and Friendship".

International Museum Day (IMD), which was established by the International Council of Museums on 18th May 1977 "to raise awareness on how important museums are in the development of society", was one of the most significant activities carried out in May. This year Museum Day celebrated "Museums and Cultural Landscapes".

Celebrated in more than 100 countries, IMD did not bypass Africa, it is simply impossible …. the landscapes of Africa are perfect composition of natural beauty, rich wildlife, unique culture and fascinating people. On the online pages of African Politics and Policy we have already introduced to our readers some of the African wonders: the amazing Omo Valley (Ethiopia), the extraordinary Spiny Desert (Madagascar), the stunning Okavango Delta (Botswana) and others places that construct our unforgettable impression of Africa.

Taking into account the increasing role of museums in preserving not only cultural heritage inside the walls but outside their walls as well, this year theme of the IMDis very crucial for discussing the problems that African museums face in the conservation and management of the outstanding cultural and natural heritage of the African continent.

It is worth noting, that the development of museums in Africa, first seen as "white elephants staffed by eccentric colonialists" and in after-independence period as the prima cause of the debates, is now characterized by the increasing convergence of the processes going in both directions: bottom-up, and top-down.

Top-down direction is characterized by the African governments' "revolutionary" holistic and culture-centered understanding of country's development. The sustainable development is considered inseparably with culture and nature preservation. Cultural policies are aimed to take reasonable steps in safeguarding their tangible and intangible heritage with a strong focus on "not-to-forget-our-own-history" – pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial – for the local as well for the international community. The forthcoming establishment of an Intercontinental Slavery Museum in Mauritius, of the Ethnographic Museum in Northern Malanje Province in Angola, of the Olduvai Museum in Tanzania, and of the Benin-City Museum in Nigeria are proper cases in point.

The departments of culture and tourism are very active in organizing special events, seminars and discussions to know the problems the regions meet ("Thinking Ahead" seminar to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the African World Heritage Fund; National Summit on Culture and Tourism in Nigeria; the workshops on Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage in Angola, etc.) and in modernizing already existing museums in an effort to develop infrastructure and boost tourism: the National Museum at Onikan (Nigeria),

It is very encouraging to write about the bottom-up activities designed to preserve the community's natural and cultural history by the efforts of grassroots. One of the best examples, in this respect, is represented by the Gunjur village Museum in The Gambia set up by Lamin M Bojang. The museum follows not only traditional concept of collecting artefacts (masks, sculptures), but it also explores the concept of living in harmony with the surrounding landscapes — to protect and display the unique flora and fauna, to learn traditional medicine, and to become simultaneously a cultural and an eco-tourism destination.

As a rule, these museums are very small, and they are devoted to the national or tribal symbols of identity, and to their cultural and historical representation. For example, the Kankurang Museum in Janjabureh Village in The Gambia presents the traditional male and female masquerade costumes. The local communities are also interested in providing special training sessions to enhance the skills of people involved in art and museum management, like Rwanda Arts Initiative, Africalia, Chitungwiza Arts Center and the efforts of the National Museums themselves.

The museums in Africa highlight educational programs for children, run awareness-campaigns, and promote historical, cultural and archaeological research.

Of course, the museums in Africa face the problem of insufficient funding to finance their programs (as case of Ghana illustrates), to train their staff, to purchase special technologies and equipment (as in the case of Tanzania), institutional and representational management, or on the people's level – the issue of donation of the objects that are still considered as family inheritance, sacred and filled with spirituality of ancestors.

There are still much to do in this direction in Africa, but at the same time the awakening consciousness of the necessity to have special museum programs to preserve and promote the African-Self representation, its memory in our post-modern age, brings new understanding of heritage as "a privileged space in which the sense of loss and disruption can be contemplated and assessed and finally cured". And the mission of the museums, by displaying the objects and artifacts, is exactly that of engaging into a dialogue the gaze of the present and the voice of the past to tell the story of the future.
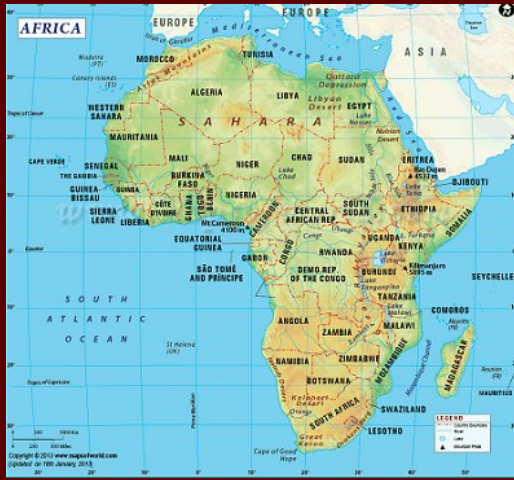
Technology, youth activism and accountable governments

We cannot talk about accountability without pointing out the question of corruption. In fact, corruption has significant negative impact on countries economic growth; so that, an important factor in determining a country's level of corruption is its form of government.

Today the new generation of young activists is using several technology based means, to help have transparency in countries governance. In fact, to fight corruption, transparency is needed but one aspect that has to be highlighted is that, countries with higher levels of corruption are poorer and have lower rates of literacy.

The result of this previous analyses brings young activists in any part of Africa lay out techniques trough technology based platforms in the view to spoor questions related to Africa's development since that development is strongly linked to model of governance and the choice of accountability.

Different types of accountability emerged from different schools of thinking, as horizontal, vertical, diagonal and social accountability, so that today youth activism is using Media and Information literacy to help frame out practices and models that best suit to Africa's indigenous problems. In summarize, technology is helping youth activism to increase people media and information literacy for transparency and good governance.

Ornella Ohoukoh

Togo: O'Lodge Hotel

Planted on Togo rivers, O'lodge hotel is in 30 minutes of Lome, Agbodrafo to Aneho road. Attration of all ages O'lodge offers all needs like : swimming pool sled and smallest one, kind games places, sport rooms, TV room, sport nautical and careless beach that makes this location attractive and so admirable.

This evenemental place with dynamic and professional equipment, offers different activities, distraction service, better restauration like : europeans and international foods, private services and rooms, air condition rooms with wifi.

O'lodge, your dream place, natural, relaxer, perfect for your leisure and vacation.

Joshua Agblewonou

African Politics and Policy is rising

African Politics and Policy is read in 121 countries worldwide and growing. Read in two-thirds of African countries, it is set to double its average number of African readers who read us on a daily basis.
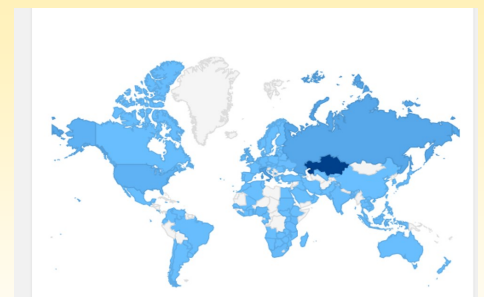
Kazakhstan and Africa

For the last three years Kazakhstan has been pursuing a more active policy in Africa. The interest seems to be mutual in such fields as energy, sustainable development, public policy and multilateral diplomacy.

For Astana, high politics and economic rationality underlay the motivations behind increasing attention to the African vector of its foreign policy.

As explicitly stated in the Foreign Policy Concept for 2014-2020: "Kazakhstan will pay attention to expansion of relations with the African continent, to the development of political and economic cooperation with African nations and bodies." Indeed, Kazakhstan's physical presence in Africa has risen threefold with the opening of two new embassies in the last three years. For nearly two decades the only diplomatic mission of Astana on the African continent was the embassy in Egypt (not counting the intermittently functioning mission in Libya). However, in 2013 a new embassy in the Republic of South Africa was opened and another one in Ethiopia in 2015.

The political momentum for Kazakhstan in Africa was gained in 2013 with obtainment of a status of Member Observer in the African Union (hence the embassy in Addis-Ababa). This step is best understood as an advance along the South-South multilateral diplomacy track and is essentially a function of a more ambitious global role Astana aspires to play in the coming future.

On a practical side, in 2015 Astana committed itself to the so-called Africa–Kazakhstan Partnership for the SDGs under which it contributes to the $2 million cost-sharing agreement with the UNDP for technical support to foreign affairs ministries and other state institutions in 45 African countries participating in the scheme.

In terms of economic cooperation, there are lessons in contemporary history of African development that can and should be learned by Astana. One important story to follow and analyze would be Chinese investment policies and mechanisms used on the continent. Of particular interest here are deals in energy and extractive sectors as well as investment protection instruments secured by Beijing. This should be a good basis for comparison with China's investment practices in Central Asia.

Not less important, for many developing African nations Kazakhstan may as well represent an interesting case of economic development and diversification of a developing country. It may be possible that Astana's national programs of infrastructure and industrial development can be used as references, if not benchmarks, for African countries' own developmental strategies.

Anuar Ayazbekov

Why do African firms pay bribes?

The June issue of the African Development Review, published by the African Development Bank, features an article on the Determinants of Bribery in Sub-Saharan Africa.

By analyzing the responses of over 10000 firms from 30 African countries the authors were able to show that "securing a government contract is the most significant motivation for bribery and that overall, the propensity to bribe depends on the size of the firm as well as the predictability of the regulatory environment."

http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-8268.12192/abstract

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