

Are Women Really Less Corrupt Than Men? Evidence from Sudan

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ABSTRACT: *There is the suggestion in the literature devoted to corruption that women are less corrupt than men. As will be discussed in this paper, that suggestion has not been universally supported. This paper assesses gender differences in the payment of bribes for basic public services and is based on the responses of 1,200 respondents collected by the Afrobarometer project in Sudan. The research does take place in what appears to be a strange place to conduct such a study. Sudan is a Muslim country, with very low ratings on both the HDI (Human Development Index) and the GDI (Gender Development Index), factors that would appear to mitigate women being involved in paying bribes to public servants. Corruption is measured in this study by respondent's self-reported payment of bribes for basic public services, included obtaining documents, sanitation, medical and school services, as well as bribes paid to the police to avoid a problem. The study looked at the availability of services in the respondent's area, and then the bribes paid in each of those areas for various services by gender. When the total number of bribers paid was calculated, the findings were surprising. There were no significant differences in the payment of bribes by gender.*

Keywords: *Sudan, Corruption, payment of bribes, gender differences*

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper is a continuation of a series of papers devoted to corruption in sub-Saharan Africa. This search began with the determination of the extent of police corruption, and building on that effort (), the search then turned to evidence that cultures of bribery do exist in various African countries (). This paper takes a divergent path and looks at evidence related to gender differences in corruption, specifically the payment of bribes by gender. The study is based in Sudan, which is considered one of the most corrupt countries in the world. It is also a Muslim country, and common wisdom suggests that women would automatically be less prone to pay bribes than men. As in previous papers, this study focuses on respondent self-reported payment of bribes. The data for this research was collected from 1,200 respondents by the Afrobarometer Project's Round 5 in 2013; this was the first time Sudan was included in the Project's country level surveys.

Corruption

Corruption can occur on different scales. There is corruption that occurs as small favors between a small number of people (petty corruption). There is corruption that affects the government on a large scale (grand corruption), and corruption that is so prevalent that it is part of the everyday structure of society (systemic corruption). Petty corruption occurs at a smaller scale and within established social frameworks and governing norms. Examples include the exchange of small improper gifts or use of personal connections to obtain favors. This form of corruption is particularly common in developing countries and where public servants are significantly underpaid. This paper will focus specifically on petty corruption in Sudan, where that country's corruption also meets the criteria to be labeled systematic.

Corruption in Africa:

As Chitakunye et al. (2015) indicated, corruption has been described as an intractable global problem from which no nation or region can claim any exemption. Hope (2014) describes corruption in Africa as a culture and corruption is seen as part of the social fabric of African countries. According to Blundo and de Sardan, (2006), daily life in Africa is governed by the 'petty' corruption of public officials in services such as health, transport, or the judicial system. There is a growing body of literature about the extent and impact of corruption on other societal domains in developing countries, like infrastructure (Kenney, 2006), provision of health care (Siverson and Johnson, 2014), foreign aid (Asongu, 2012) and the public's confidence in public institutions (Clausen, Kraay and Nyiri, 2011). Anoruo and Braha(2005) reported that corruption directly retards economic growth by lowering productivity, and indirectly by restricting investment. Justensen and Bjornskov (2012) described corruption as a major source of slow development in Africa, and indicated that corruption and bribery are directly related to poverty, because poor people rely on services provided by the government and

therefore are more likely to be victims of corrupt behavior by street level government bureaucrats. This means poor people are those most likely to pay more than their fair share of bribes.

While some see corruption as the sand in the wheels of growth, like Wei (2000), others see corruption as having a positive effect on countries, acting as the grease that moves the economic development process along (Meon and Seekat, (2005). Some have argued that corruption may serve a useful function when it causes commerce to work more effectively. Some scholars take the position that bribery in general may be ethical in cases where it may be a helping hand, but unethical when it is paid to a grabbing hand where nothing is offered in return for the payment (Colombatto, 2003; Egger and Winner, 2005; Houston 2007.). Wong and Beckman (1992) developed a point system to determine whether the helping or grabbing hand predominates.

Gender and corruption

A large volume of the gender-corruption literature was generated by lab experiments (Alatas et al., 2009; Frank and Schulze, 2000). By comparison, others have been based on cross-country comparisons (Gatti et al., 2003; Swamy et al, 2001). Regardless of their data source, several themes run through the gender-corruption literature. These are as follows :1) large numbers of women in government and in the labour force are associated with lower corruption across countries; 2) women managers are less frequently involved in bribery than men; and 3) women have more critical attitudes towards the acceptability of bribery than men. Dollar et al. (2001) reported that higher representation of women in government is associated with lower levels of corruption. They reported that a 1-standard deviation increase in the percentage of women in parliament leads to a 10% decline in corruption. They used the International Country Risk Guide (ICRG) corruption perceptions index in a multivariate regression analysis on a sample of over 100 countries and controlled for other indicators of social and economic development. The authors conclude their findings are consistent with other social science literature, suggesting “women may have higher standards of ethical behavior and appear to be more concerned with the common good”.

While there are many potential reasons to expect a significant relationship between gender and corruption, much of the recent literature suggests women are not necessarily or automatically prone to be less corrupt than men, and the relationship between gender and corruption may be highly dependent on the social conditions in which opportunities for corruption arise.

It is clear that many questions remain unanswered about the relationship between gender and corruption in the existing literature, in part because of methodological challenges. As the recent Department of International Development report (2015) indicated, the causal mechanisms which drive the relationship between gender and corruption have not been clearly identified and have not yet been convincingly demonstrated. Based on an extensive review of the literature, the Department of International Development report mentioned above provided a list of hypotheses that can be utilized to explain the relationship between gender and corruption. These prominent hypotheses include the following: 1) women perceive corrupt behaviour as “risky” and tend to be more risk-averse than men; 2) women tend to be more “moral” than men; 3) women experience greater social pressures against “taboo” corrupt behaviours; 4) women are excluded from “old boys’ networks” of corruption and/or similar all-female networks are less likely to form; 5) women react more strongly against corruption because they tend to be less exposed to corruption in politics or business. While there are many potential reasons to expect a significant relationship between gender and corruption, existing evidence is insufficient to conclude that raising the percentage of women in government *per se* is likely to lower corruption levels. Much of the recent literature suggests women are not necessarily or automatically prone to be less corrupt than men, and the relationship between gender and corruption may be highly dependent on the social conditions in which opportunities for corruption arise. The assumption adopted by this paper is that differences at the country level are a proper starting point to look for those social conditions.

Corruption and Infrastructure

Transparency International also produced a study about public views on corruption in eight East African countries (Transparency International, 2012), with Sudan being one of those countries.

That paper provides support for the rationale taken in this paper. Other sources were provided by earlier studies generated by the Afrobarometer Project, the data source used in

this research. These papers include Peiffer and Rose (2014), Justensen and Bjornskov (2012), and Richmond and Alpin (2013). One important paper was produced by Leo, Ramachandran and Morello (2015) where they noted that infrastructure improvement is a top level economic, political, and social issue in nearly every African country. They also noted there is an extensive academic and policy literature about the impact of infrastructure deficits on economic and social indicators. Yet, very few studies have examined citizen demands for infrastructure. Leo, Ramachandran and Morello produced infrastructure data from 33 countries included in Afrobarometer Round 5. The purpose was to move toward a basic understanding of service availability as perceived by citizens in each country. They found a predictable pattern of infrastructure services across income

levels – lower-income countries have fewer services. The survey data also allowed the authors to observe the sequencing of infrastructure services. While survey respondents were most concerned with jobs and income-related issues, they were also concerned with the availability of infrastructure, specifically transportation and sanitation. These are priorities which transcend demographic factors, including gender and location (urban/rural).

Corruption in Sudan: the setting

Sudan is a Muslim country with a population estimated at 40 million in 2015. It is a country in north-east Africa, boarded by Egypt to the north, the Red Sea, Eritrea, and Ethiopia to the east, South Sudan to the south, the Central African Republic to the southwest, Chad to the west and Libya to the northwest. It is the third largest country in Africa. Recently,

Transparency International has rated Sudan one of the most corrupt countries in the world (Transparency International, 2013), and [www. Richestlifestyles.com](http://www.Richestlifestyles.com) (2016) rated Sudan the second most corrupt country in Africa. Concern with corruption does have a long history in Sudan (Caiden, 1992; Kameir and Kursany, 1985), and Sudan is ranked 174th (out of 177) in the Corruption Perception Index (2013).

The report on eight East African countries (Transparency International, 2012) surveyed 1,000 people in Sudan between May 5th and May 9th in 2011. The report stated that sixty-seven percent of Sudanese respondents thought the level of corruption had increased in the last three years.

The police were perceived to be the most corrupt institution, followed by public officials/civil servants, and the education system. The study showed that 21 percent of Sudan respondents reported paying bribes to one of the nine service providers on the study's list. Five of the nine are included here; namely, the police, education, utilities, medical services, and what we are calling obtaining documents. Not included in this study were customs, tax revenue, land services and the Judiciary. Respondents provided three major reasons the bribe was paid; these were to speed things up, to avoid problems with authorities, and to receive services they were entitled to. What provides the impetus for this study is what was not included in the report. There were two major issues not addressed. The first was gender, where no breakdown about payment of bribes and gender was provided. The second was the fact that all of the respondents were urban residents; no rural respondents were included in the report. As will be apparent when this study sample is displayed, those critical variables are included in this study.

II. METHOD AND MATERIALS

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across more than 30 countries in Africa. Five rounds of surveys were conducted between 1999 and 2013, and Round 6 surveys are currently under way (2014-2015). Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples of between 1,200 and 2,400 respondents.

Like all of the previous surveys, Round 5 consisted of face to-face interviews with respondents 18 years of age and older. The Sudan sample consists of 1,200 respondents based on interviews conducted in multiple languages. The sampling frame included all of Sudan's provinces and the final sample provides estimates of the national population of all adults in Sudan that is accurate to within a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points at a confidence level of 95 percent. The sampling procedures that are used in all Afrobarometer surveys are explained in detail in Bratton, Mattes and Gyimah-Boadi (2005).

Measures and Statistics:

The dependent variable:

The study's dependent variable is payment of bribes to receive public services. Survey respondents were asked a series of questions about payment of bribes for specific services. These include payments to receive documents, sanitation services, medical services, to the police to avoid a problem, and for school services. The questions were asked as "in the past year, how often, if ever, have you had to pay a bribe, give a gift or do a favor to government officials?" Fixed responses for all of the questions in the series were as follows ; never, once or twice, a few times, often, no experience with this the last year and don't know. Responses to the public services questions were re- coded as follows: never and no experience with this in the last year were coded 0 (no), and once or twice, a few times and often became 1 (yes).

The independent variables:

The interviewer and supervisor attempted to verify the availability of the public services of interest in the respondent's local area. Respondents were also asked about their perceptions of the police; did the respondents trust them? Did they think the police are corrupt? Other questions related to the police were recorded by the interviewer and verified by the supervisor, namely whether the police were visible in the area

and whether a police station was located in the area. Respondents were asked whether they had been a crime victim within the last year, either a property crime victim (was something stolen from their house?) or were you or someone in your family a violent crime victim (Were you or someone in your family physically attacked in your home?) These Sudanese respondents were not asked to report their income in the Afrobarometer survey. As Bratton (2008) indicated, this is because many citizens in poor countries operate in informal markets where cash transactions, including income, are unrecorded and difficult to measure. Instead, this research used two poverty related measures. One is called an Asset-based Wealth Index, a summed index created from three questions that ask about household assets. The survey asks respondents: “Which of these things do you personally own: A radio? A television? A motor vehicle, car or motorcycle?” The second is the Lived Poverty Index adopted from Mattes et al. (2003). The question which generated poverty related responses was over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without the following: enough food to eat, enough clean water for home use, without medical care, enough fuel to cook your food and a cash income. The reliability coefficient for this index for this study was .82 (Cronback’s alpha).

Some of the study’s control variables were measured by a single item, like age, gender, employment status, residence (rural or urban) and education, which was collapsed into 5 categories, which ranged from a none category to college/university graduation and graduate school. The samples basic demographic characteristics are displayed in Table 1

Table 1. Demographic and Social Characteristics of the Sudan Sample (N=1,200)

Variable	N (%)
Age	
18 through 25	379 (32.)
26 thru 39	465 (39)
40 and over	343 (29)
Gender	
Male	600(50)
Female	600 (50)
Race	
Black African	654 (55)
Colored/mixed race	273 (23)
Arab/North African	222 (19)
Other	43 (4)
Education	
No formal/informal schooling	156 (13)
Some / Primary school completed	258 (22)
Some /completed high school	410 (35)
Post-secondary/qualifications	199 (17)
Completed University/Grad school	151 (13)
Employment	
Unemployed	719 (62)
Employed part time	201 (17)
Employed full time	234 (20)
Residence	
Urban	490 (41)
Rural	710 (59.)
Assets owned	
Radio	843 (70)
TV	873 (73)
Vehicle (car or motorcycle)	249 (21)

Table 1 shows that the Sudan sample was relatively young, with 71 percent of respondents under 40 years. There were equal numbers of males and females, which is an Afrobarometer sampling objective. Over half of the sample were classified as Black Africans, 55 percent, 23 percent as coloured/mixed race, 19 percent as Arab/North African, and 4 percent as other. About equal numbers of respondents had either no formal education or completed university and graduate school; 13 percent of respondents fell in either groups. Sixty-two percent of the sample were unemployed, with 20 percent working full time. The sample was more rural than urban, 59 percent compared to 41 percent. Seventy percent of the respondents owned a radio, 73 percent a TV and 21 percent a vehicle, car or motorcycle. When a total assets index was created, 10 percent of the sample did not own any of three items (data not shown).

The next issue was to determine the extent to which basic infrastructure services were available in the respondent’s area. The results from that search are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Availability of public services in residential area and Assessment of Police (N=1,200)

Variable	N (%)
On electric grid	
Yes	960 (80)
No	240 (20)
Piped water in area	
Yes	790 (66)
No	410 (34)
Sewer system in area	
Yes	900 (75)
No	300 (25)
Police Station in the area	
Yes	840 (70)
No	360 (30)
Police Visible in the area	
Yes	690 (58)
No	510 (43)
Trust the Police	
Yes	663 (60)
No	437 (40)
Police corrupt	
Yes	872 (89)
No	111 (11)
Health Clinic in the area	
Yes	810 (68)
No	390 (33)
School in area	
Yes	1,160 (97)
No	40 (3)

Table 2 shows the availability of certain public services to the respondent. Eighty percent of the respondents were on the electric grid, 66 percent had access to piped water, and 75 percent lived where there was a sewer system. A school was located in 97 percent of the respondent's areas, police stations were located in 70 percent of the respondent's areas, as was a health care facility which was located in 68 percent of the respondent's areas; police were visible in 58 percent of the respondent's areas. The next task was to look at self-reported payment of bribes by gender. These results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Payment of bribes for public services by Gender in Sudan (N=1,200)

Variable	Gender			
	Men N (%)	Women N (%0	Total	P.
Bribe Payments				
Paid Bribe to obtain document				
Yes	97 (55)	78 (45)	175 (15)	.13
No	495 (49)	510 (51)	1,005 (85)	
Paid bribe to receive water/sanitation services				
Yes	77 (58)	56 (42)	133 (11)	.06
No	515 (49)	531 (51)	1,046 (89)	
Paid bribe to receive health care/ treatment				
Yes	71 (51)	67 (49)	138 (12)	.71
No	519 (50)	523 (50)	1,042 (89)	
Paid Bribe to police				
Yes	117 (54)	101 (46)	218 (18)	.24
No	475 (49)	490 (510	965 (83)	
Paid bribe for school services/placement				
Yes	64 (50)	64 (50)	128 (11)	.97
No	528 (50)	524 (50)	1,052 (89)	
Total number of bribes paid				
None	407 (49)	419 (51)	826 (71)	.26
One	76 (53)	67 (47)	143 (12)	
Two	38 (51)	37 (49)	75 (6)	
Three	30 (57)	23 (43)	53 (5)	
Four	13 (38)	21 (62)	34 (3)	
Five	22 (65)	12 (35)	34 (3)	

Table 3 reveals a fairly consistent percentage of respondents reported paying bribes. Of the 1,165 respondents that answered this question, 339 (29) percent, indicated they had paid bribes and 826, (71) percent, did not reporting bribes. In terms of what these self-reported bribes were for, the two lowest percentages,

both 11 percent, were for sanitation services and school placement services. As was expected, the highest percentage of respondents, 18 percent reported paying bribes to the police. What was not expected was that there was no statistically significant gender differences on any of the reported bribe measures. Bribes paid to receive sanitation services fell just short, $p=.06$. The reason for that result is clear in Table 3, where men were more likely to pay bribes for sanitation services than were women, but the difference was still not enough to reach significance. Women and men paid an equal percent of bribes for school/placement services, but men paid a slightly higher percentage of bribes in all other categories. This result leads to the final task in the analysis, namely to determine whether multivariate statistical techniques would reveal whether there was a statistically significant difference in the payment of bribes by men and women in Sudan. The answer to the question appears in Table 4 which displays the results of a logistical regression analysis run with all of the study's independent variables included.

Table 4. Logistic regression with Payment of bribes as the Dependent Variable.

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	Z-score	P value
Trust the police	-.50	.15	-3.27	.001
Lived Poverty Index	.09	.04	1.98	.05
Gender	-.09	.15	-.60	.55
Property crime victim	.11	.17	-.66	.51
Violent crime victim	-.22	.30	-.73	.47
Piped water	-.10	.24	-.42	.67
Employment status	.01	.10	-.08	.94
Urban-rural	-.24	.17	-1.47	.14
Age	.00	.00	-.14	.89
On electric grid	-.31	.20	-1.14	.25
Sewer	-.17	.21	-.85	.40
Police station in area.16	.19	.87	.39	
Police visible in area	.13	.20	.63	.53
Education	-.04	.07	-.52	.61
Police corrupt	.33	.26	1.29	.20
Assets	.05	.09	.50	.62
Constant	.21	.57	-.37	.71
Number of observations = 858				
Chi Square=29.36				
Pseudo R2= .03				

Table 4 reveals that there were two statistically significant factors that were identified by the logistical regression analysis. The strongest was respondent trust of the police, $Z=3.27$, $P=.001$ and the second was the Lived Poverty Index, $Z=1.98$, $P=.05$. These findings further confirm the findings presented in Table 3. There was no statistically significance in the payment of bribes by women and men.

III. DISCUSSION

Before the findings are discussed in more detail, several comments appear to be in order here. For one, it should be noted from the data presented in Table 3 show that what is defined as a culture of bribery is apparent in Sudan. Table 3 shows that the total number of bribes paid by this Sudanese sample was 762. Of these, 618, 81 percent, were paid by multiple bribe payers, persons who self-reported payment of two or more bribes. It also should be noted that this paper utilized self-report measures to record payment of bribes. Even though crime victim surveys have used them over the years, there is no discussion in the victimization literature about their reliability and validity. Since bribery is a crime, the self-reported crime literature is relevant here. For a complete discussion of the issues on self-reported crime, see Klein (2012).

One of the comments often made about the Afrobarometer Project is that the surveys and the reports it generates at that country level cannot be used to generalize about all of sub-Saharan Africa. The results of this study reaffirm that statement. The findings also border on the unbelievable. The Gender Development Index (2016) ranks Sudan as 102 out of 102, or at the very bottom, of the rankings. The Report indicated that women were extremely disadvantaged on all of the components that comprise the index, including access to financial services and civil liberties. The results presented here are more than just surprising findings.. Gender had been found to be a significant predictor of the payment of bribes in Kenya in an earlier paper (), but that was an expected finding, and interpreted as “well, men are the people who do pay bribes.”

The unexpected findings about women paying bribes at the same level as men may be partially explained by the results presented in table 3. Note that payment of bribes to the police was the largest category of self-reported bribes; 18 percent of the respondents reported paying bribes for this service. Women reported paying 368 bribes, and Table 3 shows that 101 (27 percent) of these bribes women paid were to the police. These findings point to the reason that trust in the police was the strongest predictor of payment of bribes in the logistical regression. There are several ways to approach explaining that finding. One of them is to suggest the

need for an improved measure regarding paying the police a bribe. As presently presented the question asks if payment was made to the police for passing a check point, avoiding a fine or arrest. An earlier paper () reported that the police in Kenya are known to routinely ask motorists for bribes to pass checkpoints and/or road blocks. That is not the same as avoiding a fine or arrest, especially an arrest. So a better question about avoiding an arrest in warranted and would help clarify why the bribe is paid to the police. If respondents seem willing to report payment of bribes, why not ask the reason the bribe was paid?

A second explanation is perhaps more disturbing, one that suggests that payment of bribes to police is directly related to police corruption. In the earlier study it was discovered that when payment of police bribes was cross-tabulated with being a violent crime victim, it was discovered that more than half of the violent crime victims had paid the police a bribe. (130 of 258 or 50 percent). Although not as strong, property crime victims also paid a higher percentage of bribes to the police (288 of 778 or 37 percent), higher than would be expected. Two explanations follow from those findings. On the one hand, it suggests that if you get in an altercation, you may be the victim and not the perpetrator if you pay the police a bribe or more money than the other person. If you are a property crime victim, it may be that you think you need to pay a bribe if you expect the police to look for or even return your stolen property. None of these scenarios casts the police in a good light.

IV. CONCLUSION

The research question was whether women are less corrupt than men, and the answer received from this study was, not in Sudan, There was no statistically significant difference between men and women regarding payment of bribes in this study. Trust of the police was the strongest predictor of paying a bribe in the study's logistic regression analysis. The findings appear to suggest that the police may be the key to understanding these divergent, unexpected results. The study suggests that the Afrobarometer surveys need an improved measure of police bribe payments, one which attempts to determine the payee's motivation. Substantively, the findings indicate there is the need to look further for the reasons women pay about equal number of bribes to the police, and if these bribes are paid in order for women to receive justice regarding their victimization, for both violent and property crimes. The possible implication that bribes need to be paid to the police in order for them to do their jobs is a very sad, and disturbing commentary.

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Afrobarometer Data, Sudan, round 5 available at <http://www.afrobarometer.org>.

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