Political Leadership, Corruption, and the Crisis of Governance in Africa: A Discourse

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Abstract

Corruption is a common word often identified by scholars as a major barrier to growth and development. Every society condemns corrupt practices and often holds the leadership responsible. Across the globe, there are anti-corruption advocacy mechanisms aimed at promoting ethical leadership in government.

The African Union, for instance, has adopted a series of continental anti-corruption protocols to assist member states curb the rising tide of corruption and its consequences on human security. Using a qualitative method of data collection and analysis, this paper interrogates the leadership-corruption nexus in relation to the prevailing crisis of governance in Africa. It argues that the nature of political leadership in Africa engenders the proclivity towards abuse of power. We find that entrenched vested interests of the political elite have promoted corruption and abuse of power as the instruments of governance, and has reduced requisite statutory institutional oversight structures, to ineffective mechanisms. While the crisis of governance dominates society with the attendant consequences, the political elite lives in opulence. The paper submits, therefore, that the crisis of governance occasioned by mismanagement of public resources by political leadership will continue to fester if citizens continue to support unethical practices by the political leaders.

Keywords: *Corruption, Mismanagement, Accountability, Governance, Poverty, Epidemic*

Introduction

In January 2018, African leaders leaped to declare the year as an African year of anti-corruption. With the theme, "Winning the Fight Against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation", the leaders at the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa acknowledged the consequences of corruption on the growth of the continent. Nigeria's president, General Muhamadu Buhari, who officially launched the theme, identified corruption as "one of the greatest evils of our time" (cf. Tankou, 2018). Having recognised the fact that "corruption deprives our young citizens of opportunities to develop meaningful livelihoods", the leaders pledged to "work together to defeat this evil" (cf. Tankou, 2018). Two years after this declaration, corruption remains rife in Africa, with devastating consequences.

Transparency International (TI) indicated a worsening report of corruption on the continent in its 2019 report, as its Chairperson, Delia Ferreira Rubio, advised the leaders to "urgently address the corrupting role of big money in political party financing and the undue influence it exerts on our political systems" (TI, 2020: 7). Out of the 49 African countries that appeared in the index, only eight scored above 43%. The average score of the continent was 32%, and "corrupt activities continue to stifle economic growth and good governance across the continent" (Marais, 2019).

The consequences of corruption on governance in Africa are more pervasive (Appiah, Frowne, & Frowne, 2019; Mlambo, Zubane, & Mlambo, 2020). The impact of abuse of power in Africa continues to resonate at every stage of development despite several studies on its consequences (UNICEF, 2019). While sustainable development has been negative, civil society efforts have been ineffective. Yet, various developmental index and reports have continued to indicate worsening cases of pervasive crisis of governance (World Poverty Clock, 2020).

This scourge of manifested corrupt practices in public affairs became more pronounced in the management of the COVID-19 pandemic where the procurement process was characterised by corruption, as government officials and political leaders exploited the health care challenge to advance personal interests. In South Africa, for instance, the corruption that characterised the procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE) during the pandemic exposed how political leaders exploited the pandemic to advance personal interests (Nkanjeni, 2020; Cele, Amashabalala, Deklerk, & Shoba, 2020; Wicks, 2020). Similarly, in Nigeria, political leaders hoarded relief materials designated for public distributions while government officials allocated funds to themselves (The Observers, 27/10/2020; Obiezu, 2020; Shaban, 2020). In Zimbabwe and Somalia, government officials apprehended on COVID-19-related corruption were either removed or faced prosecution (Africa Research Bulletin, 2020). Allegations of corruption to the tune of US$400m characterised the activities of Kenya Medical Supplies Agency (Kemsa) during the pandemic (Africa Research Bulletin, 2020).

This paper presents a discourse on the consequences of corruption on African society, arguing that the worsening reports of the governance crisis are a function of leadership's penchant for corruption. This is a qualitative paper with primary and secondary data as instruments of analysis. Primary data were derived from various reports of relevant public institutions and archival materials, while extant literature constitutes the source of secondary data. Thematic presentation of the data was supported by relevant primary data for analytical purposes.

The paper has five sections. Following this introduction is the conceptualisation of, and linkages between leadership, corruption and governance, indicating the necessity of leadership in the promotion of public goods through prudent management of resources. The discussion on leadership and the challenge of corruption in Africa follows, where there is a presentation of an analysis of the nature of African leadership

and its consequences on the bourgeoning corruption regime in the continent. Section four presents the data on the parlous state of human security and capacity in Africa, using data from the Corruption Perception Index (CPI), Fragile State Index (FSI), Poverty Index, and the Human Capital Index (HCI). The last section concludes.

Leadership, Corruption and Governance

In the governing of any society, leadership is crucially important. Thus, the priority of any society is the choice of leaders charged with the responsibility of giving direction to advance collective interest (Walker, 2017; 2020). Early political thinkers like Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, for instance, were deeply concerned about the non-existence of an overarching central authority to regulate the activities of men in the state of nature. Hence, life in the Hobbesian state of nature was solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short (Carey, 2020; Zivanovic, 2013). John Locke harped on the necessity for leadership to promote justice because a well-ordered society, as Hobbes also reasoned, was of the best interest of all (Mouritz, 2010). While Hobbes saw a remedy to the dangers of the state of nature in a Leviathan, Locke posited the existence of a contract, based on the principle of laws governed by ethical leadership. In this respect, the laws are applicable to all citizens, the leaders inclusive, to safeguard the lives, freedom and property of all (Cawthon, 2017).

Leadership could be described as "a way of overcoming collective action problems in situations where there are no adequate institutions to regulate the collective action" (Schoeller, 2017: 3). The contention here is that the absence of leadership could expose the lives of the people to the danger of pains and destruction. Central to this is the concept of power, the instrument needed by the leadership to coordinate and organise society. Power, in this context, connotes the ability to affect and control, the behaviours of other people in a manner that would result in the realisation of certain outcomes (Nye, 2010; Fagbadebo, 2016; Schoeller, 2017).

There are three main defining characteristics of leadership: power, the pursuit of collective goods, and innovation (Schoeller, 2017). Leaders acquire power for the pursuit of collective goods with constant innovative measures and mechanisms. In practice, however, leaders could manipulate these features to serve their pecuniary interests. Innovative leaders are agents of change, who devise a variety of ways of

exercising powers to ensure equilibrium in the administration of the society. This requires the emergence of ethical leadership to advance governance.

Citizens would seek to follow leaders whose pedigree and qualities would help in directing the society for the realisation and accomplishment of their collective will. Impliedly, citizens would prefer to "follow someone whose vision we think is grand or at least worthwhile and who has special qualities or powers to direct us and help us accomplish the vision" (Crosby & Bryson, 2018: 1268). This as an ethical process whereby leaders and their followers engage in mutually beneficial interactions with a view to ensuring the promotion of maximum welfare of citizens and society at large (Crosby & Bryson, 2018).

Scholars have linked the proximal causes of corruption to leadership. The insatiable desires of the leaders, with disregard for the rule of law and sprawling discretional powers, among others, make leaders vulnerable to unethical practices (Kwon, 2014; Fagbadebo, 2019b). When public officials have discretional powers, proclivity towards corruption would be high (Sundstrom, 2016).

The World Bank (1999), in its definition of corruption "as the abuse of office for private gains", presented a description of its network between the private sector and the public sector.

> Public office is abused for private gain when an official accepts, solicits, or extorts a bribe. It is also abused when private agents actively offer bribes to circumvent public policies and processes for competitive advantage and profit. Public office can also be abused for personal benefit even if no bribery occurs, through patronage and nepotism, the theft of state assets, or the diversion of state revenues (The World Bank, 1999).

This definition establishes a link between at least two actors, colluding in a deliberate action to exploit the opportunity offered by their positions to circumvent the purpose of reasonable exercise of power for the promotion of collective good.

In developing countries, especially African states, corruption impairs good governance and, consequently, precipitates a series of crises of poor public service delivery. In the Annual Corruption Perception Index 2019 of Transparency International (TI), only six African countries –

Seychelles (67), Botswana (61), Cape Verde (58), Rwanda (53), Mauritius (52) and Namibia (52) – were found among countries with scores above the average. This is mostly a problem of leadership.

Leadership and the Challenges of Corruption in Africa

Leadership in Africa has remained the most potent factor that precipitates the crisis of governance. Most African political elite often appropriate the state for private use. As noted elsewhere, "most African leaders, overtly or covertly, usually convert the state to their personal properties, especially those who have the history of a long stay in power, thereby making political power a family lineage" (Fagbadebo, 2019b: 18). In May 2013, African leaders reflected on the state of the continent and decided to adopt Agenda 2063, tagged "The Africa We Want". The leaders were concerned about the need for an inclusive social and economic growth and development, regional integration, democratic governance and peace and security (MO Ibrahim Foundation, 2019).

In realisation of the damage of corruption on development and growth, African leaders initiated the continental anti-corruption legislation in 2003, and later ratified it as the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC) (Fagbadebo, 2019b). African Union leaders expressed their concern "about the negative effects of corruption and impunity on the political, economic, social, and cultural stability of the African States and its devastating effects on the economic and social development of the African peoples" (AUPCC, 2003). The convention identified some activities that amounted to corruption. These are solicitation or acceptance, offering or granting of bribes, any act or omission in the discharge of official responsibilities, diversion of public property, illicit enrichment, and soliciting or granting of influence on the advantage of an individual. Others include the use or concealment of proceeds derived from any of the acts thereof, and participation as a principal, co-principal, agent, instigator, accomplice or accessory, after the fact.

Article 5 of the Convention sets out the legislative and other measures to be undertaken by each state to fight corruption. These include the prescription of corrupt offences, control of the operation of foreign companies, the establishment of anti-corruption agencies, strengthening of internal accounting and procurement processes, and recognition and protection of whistle blowers. Others are the adoption

of measures that would make citizens free to report acts of corruption, adoption of national legislative measures to punish false corruption allegations and strengthening the mechanisms for anti-corruption education and awareness. Article 6 criminalises money laundering and other illicit capital flows, and Article 7 prescribes the declaration of assets by public servants, strengthened disciplinary and transparency, equity, and efficiency, as part of anti-corruption measures the AU member states would undertake. These measures are laudable but lack the effectual implementation.

While institutionalised looting of the public treasury became rampant in an environment defined by systemic corruption, legendary docility has increased the rate of incompetence in the handling of public affairs. In Nigeria, for instance, the bars of governance and leadership have fallen into the muddy floor of incompetence and corruption, "with the absence of good moral and ethical values in the conduct of the ruling elites" (Fagbadebo, 2019: 56-57). In the annual Corruption Perception Index, as shown in Table I, a high level of corruption is rampant in 46 out of the 52 African countries, making the continent the lowest scoring region among the 180 countries. With the mismanagement of public resources, the implication is that public service delivery is in jeopardy, and the well-being of the citizens compromised. This explains the spate of the governance crisis with its attendant consequence on stability.

Table I: African countries in the 2019 CPI

Country	Score	Rank
Seychelles	67	27
Botswana	61	34
Cape Verde	58	41
Rwanda	53	51
Mauritius	52	56
Namibia	52	56
Sao Tome and Principe	46	64
Senegal	45	66
South Africa	44	70
Tunisia	43	74
Ghana	41	80
Morocco	41	80
Burkina Faso	40	85
Lesotho	40	85
Ethiopia	37	96

The Gambia	37	96
Tanzania	37	96
Algeria	35	106
Cote d'Ivoire	35	106
Egypt	35	106
Eswatini	34	113
Zambia	34	113
Sierra Leone	33	119
Niger	32	120
Gabon	31	123
Malawi	31	123
Djibouti	30	126
Guinea	29	130
Mali	29	130
Togo	29	130
Kenya	28	137
Liberia	28	137
Mauritania	28	137
Uganda	28	137
Angola	26	146
Mozambique	26	146
Nigeria	26	146
Cameroon	25	153
CAR	25	153
Madagascar	24	158
Zimbabwe	24	158
Eritrea	23	160
Chad	20	162
Burundi	19	165
Congo	19	165
DRC	18	168
Guinea Bissau	18	168
Libya	18	168
Equatorial Guinea	16	173
Sudan	16	173
South Sudan	12	179
Somalia	9	180

Source: Extracted by authors from Corruption Perception Index, 2019

Corruption and the Crisis of Governance in Africa

That the African countries are under the siege of the governance crisis is not an exaggeration. Incessant security challenges, high rates of unemployment, poverty, high mortality rate, infrastructural decay, and

heightened criminal activities are evident on the continent (Fagbadebo, 2019b). The continent is rich in natural resources, which, unfortunately, the leaders could not transform to substantive wealth for the promotion of the well-being of the citizens. Rather, mismanagement of public resources through a series of corrupt practices such as capital flight, state capture, and inflation of contracts, outright stealing, and looting of public property, with impunity, among others, are common in African countries.

In the 2019 Organised Crime Index for Africa, only 20 African countries had records of low criminality and low resilience to crime, 21 had records of high criminality and low resilience, while Kenya, South Africa and Kenya had high rates of criminality and high levels of resilience (ENACT, 2019). In Nigeria and South Africa, for instance, heightened insecurity seemed to have normalised criminal activities such as kidnapping. Kidnappers had secured a haven in demand for ransom, which had become a lucrative means of livelihood, as security agencies have been unable to arrest the perpetrators. In February 2020, kidnappers abducted two school pupils at the gate of their schools in Gauteng, South Africa, while the kidnappers requested ransom from their parents (Shange, 2020). Justice for the arrested kidnappers took a very long time. For instance, it took almost two years to sentence Sthembiso Amon Mchunu, arrested of an attempt to kidnap a schoolchild in Middelburg, Mpumalanga South Africa (arrested on August 21, 2018, sentenced only in February 2020). In Nigeria, the litigation against Chukwudi Dumeme Onuamadike, arrested for leading a gang of kidnappers on June 10, 2017, has remained in limbo despite his self-confessions to a series of killings of some of his victims, even after they had made payments; he had also pleaded guilty for the charges (Jannah, 2019; Onyekwere et al., 2017). With the lacklustre attitude of the government to the menace of insecurity, kidnapping had become a "booming" business for criminals. The Boko Haram insurgents had on different occasions, kidnapped schoolchildren, and other citizens for ransom (Okoli, 2019).

Aside from insecurity, poverty in Africa is gruesome. In the global poverty ranking, about 422 million people in Africa live in poverty (as shown in Table II), representing 70% of the world's poorest people (Hamel, Tong, & Hofer, 2019). This means that one in every three Africans lives below the global poverty line, with a projection that, by 2030, 88% of the world's poorest people, and the top 10 poorest

countries will be in Africa (Baier & Hamel, 2018). Nigeria has the highest number of people living in extreme poverty, with 95.9 million (48%) out of its 201.6 million people living in extreme poverty (World Poverty Clock, 2020). By 2030, 377 million Africans will be living on less than $1.90 a day (Hamel et al., 2019).

Table II: People living in extreme poverty in Africa

Country	Population	People living in Extreme poverty	% of population
Angola	25.08M	5.2m	21%
Benin Republic	11.5m	5.3m	46%
Botswana	2.2m	354,931	16%
Burkina Faso	21.7m	7.2m	33%
Burundi	10.9m	8.3m	76%
Cameroon	23.7m	4.6m	19%
Cape Verde	538368	85,090	16%
CAR	5.3m	4.2m	80%
Chad	14.6m	5.7m	39%
Comoros Island	904969	181389	20%
Congo	5.1m	3.4m	67%
Djibouti	1.5m	145,708	14%
DRC	85.8m	63.7m	74%
Eritrea	6.8m	5.2m	765
Ethiopia	103.2m	26.5m	25%
Gambia	2.2m	144,290	7%
Ghana	30.3m	3.1m	10%
Guinea	11.9m	2.6m	22%
Guinea Bissau	1.8m	947662	52%
Ivory Coast	23.3m	4.3m	18%
Kenya	50.9m	8.17m	16%
Lesotho	2.4 million	1.2 million	52%
Liberia	5.7m	2.2m	39%
Libya	7.9m	229468	3%
Madagascar	26.7 million	20.3 million	76%
Malawi	20.03m	13.3m	67%
Mali	20.4m	7.1m	34%
Mauritania	4.3m	135, 905	3%
Mozambique	28.7m	15.9m	56%
Namibia	2.6 million	517,858	20%
Niger Republic	21.9m	13.7m	62%
Nigeria	201.6m	95.9m	48%
Rwanda	13.8m	6.3m	46%
Sao Tome and Principe	186968	35011	19%

Senegal	15.8m	4.3M	27%
Sierra Leone	7.3m	2.8m	38%
Somalia	11.3m	5.6m	50%
South Sudan	13.6m	10.7m	78%
Sudan	54.2m	13.4	25%
Swaziland	1.3million	522,034	39%
Tanzania	58.4m	22.5m	39%
Togo	7.3m	2.98m	41%
Uganda	45.5m	16.8m	37%
Zambia	16.99m	9.10m	54%
Countries with less than 3% of people living in extreme poverty			
Algeria			
Egypt			
Equatorial Guinea			
Gabon			
Mauritius			
Morocco			
Tunisia			

Source: Compiled by the authors from World Poverty Clock 2020.

Most of these countries with high poverty rates also have high rates of corruption.

In terms of child mortality, the figure in Africa is alarming. In 2018, out of the 5.3 million under-five deaths globally, 2.8 million were from sub-Saharan Africa (UNICEF, 2019). According to UNICEF, "half of all under-five deaths in 2018 occurred in five countries: India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Ethiopia. India and Nigeria alone account for about a third" (UNICEF, 2019). This means that the three African countries, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and the DRC, recorded a high proportion of the preventable child mortality in the year (UNICEF, 2019). Inadequate health care facilities, inappropriate medical interventions, and the prevailing socioeconomic challenges are responsible for this problem (Van Malderen, Amouzou, Barros, Masquelier, Van Oyen, & Speybroeck 2019). Inequality, arising from a high rate of unemployment and poverty, has denied many children of the best medical facilities and services.

In terms of human capital development, countries in Africa are lagging. Human capital (HC) is the totality of the improvement of the "knowledge, skills, and health that people accumulate over their lives, enabling them to realise their potential as productive members of society" (The World Bank, 2018a: 14). HC "is a central driver of

sustainable growth and poverty reduction" (The World Bank, 2018a: 2), which, unfortunately, governments and political leaders often neglect. "Countries often underinvest in human capital, thereby missing an opportunity to create a virtuous cycle between physical and human capital and growth and poverty reduction" (The World Bank, 2018a: 2). Human Capita Index (HCI) "measures the human capital that a child born today can expect to attain by age 18, given the risks to poor health and poor education that prevail in the country where she lives" (The World Bank, 2018a: 34).

In the 2018 HCI, African countries ranked least. From Table III, 22 African countries have HCI<0.40 in value, 16 have HCI >0.40, but <0.50, 4 have HCI>0.50, but <0.60, and 2 have HCI >0.60, but <0.70. This means that 38, out of the 44 African countries in the 157 countries measured, had a very low HCI, while only six had above average. The implication is that a huge proportion of African countries invested minimally in the future of young people in terms of their potential for productivity in health and education. This cannot be attributed to the paucity of funds, but mismanagement of resources.

Table III: Africa in HCI Index 2018

Country	Probability of survival to age 5	Expected years of school	Harmonized learning outcome (HLO)	Learning adjusted years of school	Adult survival rate	Fraction of children under 5 not stunted	Human Capital Index			Rank
							Lower Bound	**Value**	Upper Bound	
Algeria	0.98	11.4	374	6.8	0.91	0.88	0.51	**0.52**	0.53	93
Angola	0.92	7.9	326	4.1	0.76	0.62	0.33	**0.36**	0.39	147
Benin	0.90	9.3	384	5.7	0.76	0.66	0.38	**0.41**	0.43	127
Botswana	0.96	8.4	391	5.3	0.79	0.69	0.40	**0.42**	0.44	119
Burkina Faso	0.92	6.5	404	4.2	0.75	0.73	0.35	**0.37**	0.38	144
Burundi	0.94	7.5	423	5.1	0.71	0.44	0.36	**0.38**	0.40	138
Cameroon	0.92	9.1	379	5.5	0.67	0.68	0.37	**0.39**	0.42	132
Chad	0.88	5.0	333	2.6	0.64	0.60	0.28	**0.29**	0.31	157
Congo	0.95	8.8	371	5.2	0.75	0.79	0.39	**0.42**	0.44	120
Côte d'Ivoire	0.91	7.0	373	4.2	0.61	0.78	0.33	**0.35**	0.37	149
DRC	0.91	9.2	318	4.7	0.75	0.57	0.35	**0.37**	0.39	146
Egypt	0.98	11.1	356	6.3	0.85	0.78	0.47	**0.49**	0.50	104
eSwatini	0.95	8.2	440	5.7	0.59	0.74	0.38	**0.41**	0.43	124
Ethiopia	0.94	7.8	359	4.5	0.79	0.62	0.37	**0.38**	0.40	135
Gabon	0.95	8.3	456	6.0	0.77	0.83	0.43	**0.45**	0.48	110
Ghana	0.95	11.6	307	5.7	0.76	0.81	0.42	**0.44**	0.45	116

Guinea	0.91	7.0	408	4.5	0.75	0.68	0.35	**0.37**	0.39	141
Kenya	0.95	10.7	455	7.8	0.79	0.74	0.50	**0.52**	0.53	94
Lesotho	0.91	8.7	393	5.5	0.50	0.67	0.35	**0.37**	0.39	143
Liberia	0.93	4.4	332	2.3	0.77	0.68	0.31	**0.32**	0.33	153
Madagascar	0.96	7.5	351	4.2	0.79	0.51	0.35	**0.37**	0.39	140
Malawi	0.94	9.4	359	5.4	0.73	0.63	0.39	**0.41**	0.42	125
Mali	0.89	5.6	307	2.7	0.74	0.70	0.29	**0.32**	0.34	154
Mauritania	0.92	6.3	342	3.4	0.80	0.72	0.32	**0.35**	0.38	150
Mauritius	0.99	12.5	473	9.5	0.86	—	0.60	**0.63**	0.65	52
Morocco	0.98	10.6	367	6.2	0.93	0.85	0.49	**0.50**	0.51	98
Mozambique	0.93	7.4	368	4.4	0.69	0.57	0.34	**0.36**	0.38	148
Namibia	0.96	8.9	407	5.8	0.71	0.77	0.41	**0.43**	0.45	117
Niger	0.92	5.3	305	2.6	0.76	0.58	0.30	**0.32**	0.33	155
Nigeria	0.90	8.2	325	4.3	0.65	0.56	0.32	**0.34**	0.36	152
Rwanda	0.96	6.6	358	3.8	0.81	0.63	0.36	**0.37**	0.39	142
Senegal	0.95	7.2	412	4.8	0.82	0.83	0.40	**0.42**	0.43	121
Seychelles	0.99	13.7	463	10.1	0.84	0.92	0.65	**0.68**	0.71	43
Sierra Leone	0.89	9.0	316	4.5	0.61	0.74	0.33	**0.35**	0.37	151
South Africa	0.96	9.3	343	5.1	0.68	0.73	0.40	**0.41**	0.42	126
South Sudan	0.90	4.2	336	2.3	0.68	0.69	0.27	**0.30**	0.33	156
Sudan	0.94	7.3	380	4.4	0.78	0.62	0.37	**0.38**	0.39	139
Tanzania	0.95	7.8	388	4.8	0.79	0.66	0.39	**0.40**	0.41	128
The Gambia	0.94	9.0	338	4.8	0.74	0.75	0.37	**0.40**	0.42	130
Togo	0.93	9.1	384	5.6	0.74	0.72	0.39	**0.41**	0.43	122
Tunisia	0.99	10.2	384	6.3	0.91	0.90	0.50	**0.51**	0.52	96
Uganda	0.95	7.0	397	4.4	0.70	0.71	0.37	**0.38**	0.39	137
Zambia	0.94	9.2	358	5.2	0.71	0.60	0.37	**0.40**	0.42	131
Zimbabwe	0.95	10.0	396	6.3	0.67	0.73	0.42	**0.44**	0.46	114

Source: Generated by the authors from Human Capital Index 2018.

Among the 47 United Nations' designated least developed countries, 33 are from Africa; and they are among those projected with rapid population growth. This, according to the UN, would compound the governance crisis because the governments are already "struggling with reducing poverty and hunger as well as improve access to standard health and education systems" (cf. Kazeem, 2017a). In other words, most of them are fragile states. In terms of state fragility, many African countries are vulnerable to implosion, as indicated in Table IV.

Table IV: Africa in the 2019 Fragile State Index

Country	SA	FE	GG	ED	UD	HF	SL	PS	HR	DP	RD	EX	**SCORE**	RANK
VERY SUSTAINABLE														
SUSTAINABLE														
VERY STABLE														
Mauritius	1.7	3.2	3.8	4.5	2.9	4.3	2.4	2.9	3.8	3.0	2.3	4.1	38.9	150
MORE STABLE														
Seychelles	5.8	6.0	4.2	3.9	5.3	5.7	4.9	2.1	3.8	4.5	2.6	6.4	55.2	126
Botswana	3.8	3.3	4.3	5.8	7.2	5.5	2.7	6.5	5.1	7.9	3.9	3.5	59.5	120
WARNING														
Ghana	4.6	4.9	3.8	5.7	6.0	7.8	3.6	7.2	5.0	6.6	4.4	6.3	65.9	110
Namibia	5.1	3.5	5.2	7.0	7.9	6.8	3.0	6.8	3.2	7.8	4.4	5.8	66.4	107
Cape Verde	5.0	5.5	3.5	5.8	6.3	7.5	4.7	5.4	3.4	6.6	4.2	8.7	66.6	106
ELEVATED WARNING														
Tunisia	7.7	7.8	7.1	6.7	4.9	5.9	6.7	4.0	5.9	3.6	4.1	5.8	70.1	95
Gabon	4.8	7.9	3.2	5.8	5.9	5.8	7.8	6.3	7.4	6.5	3.9	5.1	70.5	92
South Africa	6.5	6.6	6.1	7.3	6.9	5.5	6.5	6.7	4.2	6.6	4.8	3.4	71.1	88
Sao Tome and Principe	5.0	6.3	4.2	8.2	6.0	8.5	5.0	5.3	2.9	6.4	4.8	8.5	71.1	88
Morocco	5.2	6.6	8.5	5.2	5.4	7.9	6.8	4.8	6.2	4.6	5.9	5.8	73.0	78
Benin	5.9 6	6.7	2.8	6.5	8.0	7.1	4.8	8.3	4.9	7.7	4.9	6.0	73.6	75
Algeria	6.6	7.1	7.4	6.3	6.0	6.1	7.4	5.4	6.6	4.6	7.4	4.3	75.4	72
Senegal	5.6	7.0	5.8	7.1	7.0	7.7	4.1	7.4	5.4	7.4	6.7	6.1	77.2	66
Lesotho	6.5	7.3	3.3	8.5	8.1	8.0	5.3	7.5	5.2	8.3	4.4	7.2	79.7	61
HIGH WARNING														
Tanzania	5.4	5.7	5.0	6.2	7.1	7.6	6.3	8.8	6.4	8.3	6.1	7.2	80.1	60
Madagascar	6.9	7.8	3.5	7.3	9.0	6.7	6.5	8.6	5.6	9.0	3.9	6.2	80.9	58
Equatorial Guinea	5.9	8.2	6.3	5.9	8.1	4.9	9.8	8.1	8.6	7.9	4.5	4.4	82.6	53
Malawi	4.8	8.1	5.3	8.0	8.1	7.4	6.1	8.0	5.9	9.1	5.2	7.4	83.3	49
The Gambia	6.3	7.7	3.2	8.4	6.3	7.9	7.8	7.3	8.4	8.2	6.0	6.4	83.9	47
Burkina Faso	8.2	7.8	3.9	6.9	7.6	7.2	6.5	8.1	5.6	8.5	6.0	7.5	83.9	47
Djibouti	5.9	7.3	5.9	7.0	7.7	5.2	8.1	7.6	7.7	7.8	6.7	8.2	85.1	43
eSwatini	5.7	6.8	2.8	9.8	8.2	7.0	8.5	7.5	8.8	8.6	4.3	7.3	85.3	42
Zambia	5.1	5.9	5.3	7.5	9.4	7.3	8.1	7.3	7.4	9.2	6.1	7.0	85.7	40
Sierra Leone	4.4	7.8	6.2	8.6	8.3	8.0	6.3	8.8	5.2	8.5	7.4	7.3	86.8	39
Togo	7.0	7.6	5.4	7.0	8.3	7.5	8.5	8.5	7.2	7.5	6.9	6.0	87.4	38
Rwanda	6.0	8.0	9.8	6.2	7.8	7.1	6.8	6.8	6.6	7.4	8.1	6.9	87.5	37
Angola	6.9	7.2	7.5	6.6	9.3	6.6	8.0	8.7	6.7	8.9	6.5	4.9	87.8	35
Egypt	8.2	9.1	8.9	7.9	5.7	5.3	8.6	4.3	10.0	6.3	6.7	7.3	88.4	34
Mozambique	6.7	6.6	5.6	8.6	9.3	7.7	6.8	9.1	5.6	9.3	5.9	7.4	88.7	33
ALERT														
Mauritania	6.3	8.8	7.0	7.1	6.2	6.9	8.3	8.6	7.5	8.5	7.4	7.4	90.1	31
Liberia	6.7	8.3	5.2	7.9	7.8	7.5	6.6	8.7	6.5	8.2	8.1	8.7	90.2	30
Côte d'Ivoire	7.4	9.1	7.5	6.7	7.6	7.0	7.3	8.2	7.3	8.3	7.2	8.4	92.1	29
Libya	9.0	9.7	7.5	7.7	5.3	6.0	9.7	6.4	9.1	4.3	7.7	9.7	92.2	28
Congo	7.0	6.7	7.8	7.6	8.1	7.4	9.0	8.9	8.4	8.1	7.0	6.5	92.5	27
Kenya	7.9	9.1	8.6	6.6	7.4	7.2	8.2	8.0	6.8	8.6	7.7	7.5	93.5	25
Ethiopia	8.2	7.9	8.5	6.4	6.5	6.6	8.0	8.3	8.2	9.0	8.7	7.9	94.2	23
Mali	9.5	5.4	8.1	7.4	7.0	8.3	6.5	8.5	7.6	8.3	8.4	9.6	94.5	21

Uganda	7.5	8.9	8.3	6.3	7.0	7.3	8.6	7.8	8.0	9.0	9.1	7.5	95.3	20
Guinea Bissau	8.3	9.6	4.9	7.7	9.2	7.5	8.9	8.9	7.2	8.5	6.7	8.0	95.5	19
Niger	8.7	8.9	7.7	7.1	8.0	7.6	7.3	9.3	6.8	8.8	8.3	7.8	96.2	18
Eritrea	6.6	8.1	7.7	7.7	8.4	8.9	9.4	7.8	8.7	8.4	7.7	7.0	96.4	17
Cameroon	8.5	9.6	8.5	6.5	7.5	7.5	9.2	8.2	7.7	8.3	8.3	7.2	97.0	16
Burundi	8.6	7.9	7.9	8.4	7.2	6.0	9.0	8.2	9.0	9.1	8.4	8.4	98.2	15
Nigeria	9.0	9.9	9.4	7.8	8.1	6.9	8.0	8.9	8.3	9.2	7.2	5.9	98.5	14
Guinea	8.6	9.6	9.1	8.6	7.3	7.1	9.8	9.2	7.1	8.6	7.6	6.8	99.4	11
Zimbabwe	8.8	10.0	6.7	8.1	7.9	7.3	9.4	8.6	8.2	9.0	8.2	7.3	99.5	10
HIGH ALERT														
Sudan	8.4	9.7	10.0	8.1	7.7	8.3	9.8	8.6	9.4	9.4	9.6	8.9	108.0	8
Chad	9.5	9.8	8.2	9.0	9.0	8.5	9.6	9.1	8.8	9.5	9.5	8.0	108.5	7
CAR	8.6	9.4	8.3	8.7	9.9	7.1	9.1	10.0	9.5	9.1	10.0	9.2	108.9	6
VERY HIGH ALERT														
DRC	8.8	9.8	10.0	8.3	8.6	7.0	9.4	9.2	9.6	9.8	10.0	9.7	110.2	5
South Sudan	9.7	9.7	9.4	9.8	8.9	6.5	10.0	9.8	9.3	9.7	10.0	9.4	112.2	3
Somalia	9.6	10.0	8.9	8.8	9.4	9.2	9.0	9.4	9.3	10.0	9.4	9.2	112.3	2

Source: Extracted by authors from the Fragile State Index (FSI) 2019

With the exception of Mauritius, Botswana and the Seychelles, in the stable category, and, lately, Ghana, Namibia and Cape Verde, in the warning category, other African countries ranked among countries with high risk of instability among 178 countries across the globe. The Fund for Peace (FFP) in its annual Fragile State Index (FSI), painted a gloomy picture for the African continent. The FSI measured four major indicators: cohesion, economic, political, and social and cross-cutting. Each of these indicators has different variables. The cohesion variables include: security apparatus (SA), factionalised elites (FE), and group grievances (GG). The economic indicator includes economic decline (ED), uneven development (UD), and human flight and brain drain (HF). In the political indicators, state legitimacy (SL), public services (PS), and human rights and rule of law (HR) are the variables to measure the fragility of a state. The social and cross-cutting indicators consider demographic pressures (DP), refugees, and IDPs (RD) and external intervention (EX) as the measuring variables.

These variables determine the nature of the fragility of each state, either as a very sustainable, sustainable, very stable, more stable, warning, elevated warning, high warning, alert, high alert, and very high alert. There are no African countries among the 18 countries in the two sustainable categories; Mauritius (38.9) is the only African country in the very stable category of 11 countries. Among the 30 countries in the more stable category, only Seychelles (55.2) and Botswana (59.5) are African countries, while Ghana (65.9), Namibia (66.4) and Cape Verde

(66.6) made the African list among the 24 countries in the warning category. Only nine out of the 35 countries in the elevated warning category are Africans, while 15 African countries, out of 29 countries, are in the high warning category. A majority of the 22 countries in the alert category are in Africa (17), while three each of the four countries in the high alert category, and the five countries in the very alert category, are, respectively, from Africa. The World Bank has noted that corruption exacerbates fragility, with its attendant consequences on governance. According to the World Bank, corruption "fuels and perpetuates the inequalities and discontent that lead to fragility, violent extremism, and conflict" (The World Bank, 2018b).

The conflict situation in Libya and Mali has left the two African countries among the ranks of the most-worsening countries in the past ten years of the FSI. There was a measure of improvement in the ranking of Ethiopia from the previous years. Nevertheless, Ethiopia is still embroiled in mounting instability, occasioned by its persistent ethnic conflicts (Getachew, 2020). The country is confronting ethnic extremism and tension. In Cameroon, the conflict between the English-speaking and French-speaking regions intensified in the past 30 months. Armed separatists had been campaigning for the independence of the region from mainly French-speaking areas (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Already, the conflict had claimed over 3,000 lives, and displaced more than 700,000 people (Aljazeera, 17/02/20; Africa News, 19/02/2020; Human Rights Watch, 2020).

Sudan was embroiled in two bitter civil wars (1955-1972 and 1983-2005) until Southern Sudan gained independence on July 9, 2011 (BBC News, 06/08/2018; Basil, 2013). The second civil war claimed more than two million lives, while more than four million people were displaced (Basil, 2013). Even after independence, South Sudan was embroiled in another round of civil war between December 2013 and April 2018, which claimed almost 400 000 lives (Specia, 2018). South Sudan is still embroiled in conflict. Only in February 2020 that the feuding parties agreed to form a government of national unity (Cumming-Bruce, 2020).

In Nigeria, aside the ravaging Boko Haram insurgents and other violent conflicts, like the Fulani herder-farmer clashes, the restiveness in the oil-rich Niger Delta areas has signalled a resurgent of violence protests against mismanagement of the country's oil resources (Campbell, 2020; Chinwokwu & Michael, 2019). The rise in cases of

violent crimes such as rape, kidnapping, armed robbery and banditry, among others, has continued to claim lives. In February 2020, in the midst of other killings in the country, the military, in a bid to arrest suspected assailants who had killed four soldiers and two civilians in an attack of a gunboat escorting a vessel, set some homes ablaze (News24, 18/02/2020). Similarly, in Plateau State, military officials set some houses ablaze in Gindin Akwati after the military discovered the killing of two soldiers by the roadside (Ibrahim, 2020). The soldiers were part of the military men deployed to the state to maintain security at the height of incessant attacks.

In Kenya, the Al-Shabaab militants have been carrying out series of attacks that have led to the death of several people. In January and February 2020, gunmen, killing people and destroying properties (Otsialo & Murimi, 2020), subjected Mandera County to a series of attacks. The Governor of the County, Ali Roba, recounted the agony of the people who suffered at the hands of the incessant attackers for the past seven years. "For the last seven years we have suffered a lot because of terrorism and radicalisation. The challenges of terror have created alienation of our region" (cf. Otsialo & Murimi, 2020). This has had consequence on the social and economic activities of the region, with the dearth of schoolteachers and investors, thereby leading to mass failure of students and hard economic conditions due to unemployment.

Leadership quality is crucial to the promotion of good and accountable governance. In realisation of this, the MO Ibrahim Foundation instituted the USD\$5million Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership in 2007, to, among other things, recognise and celebrate African leaders who excelled while in government, in strengthening democracy and good governance in their respective countries. Only five African past leaders had won the prize: Joaquim Alberto Chissano of Mazambique (2007), Festus Gontebanye Mogae of Botswana (2008), Pedro De Verona Rodrigues Pires of Cape Verde (2011), Hifikepunye Pohambaand of Namibia (2014), and the last recipient was Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia (2017). The late South African President, Nelson Mandela, was the honorary recipient of the award in 2007. None was qualified for the award in **2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016 2018, and 2019,** an indication of the paucity of ethical leadership in Africa**.** MO Ibrahim lamented that the continent was bereft of leaders capable of translating the challenges of governance to opportunities (Mo Ibrahim, 05/03/2020).

Conclusion: Leadership and the Future of the African State

In its 2019 Global Corruption Barometer, Africa, TI discovered that a high proportion of Africans bemoaned the rising tide of corruption in government activities and its consequence on service delivery (Transparency International, 2019). Participants in the survey agreed that corruption was getting worse with devastating effects on the well-being of citizens. Citizens were able to access public services, such as education and healthcare, only after the payment of bribes to government officials. Those who paid bribes were mostly the poorest citizens. In other words, a large population of African citizens has the perception that unethical behaviours characterise their political leadership in government. The implication of this is that Africans are disenchanted by the manner their leaders run the affairs of government. Public trust in government is a rarity, while members of the public feel alienated and abandoned by the government (Asala, 2020; Majavu, 2020). When leaders refuse to compromise the rule of law, and adhere to punishing unethical behaviours, the path to recover from the consequences of the past would begin. The warped societal values, which have ascribed wealth to leadership positions, compound the paucity of ethical leadership in Africa.

The resentment against corruption and the determination for good governance requires effective anti-corruption policies and concerted efforts to explore the possibilities offered by information technologies (The World Bank, 2018b). This paper subscribes to the position of TI on the need to strengthen the electoral process to prevent fraudulent practices. This requires the evolution of active civil society and independent oversight structures and agencies. Electoral integrity is a *sine qua* non for the emergence of credible political leaders. Electoral reforms and administration should discourage rigging and other voting malpractices. This will facilitate genuine demand for and response to the need for accountability and good governance.

In addition, inclusive and transparent public service delivery should be a priority. When citizens have equal access to public services, this would restore public trust in government and maintain prudent management of resources. Oversight mechanisms and institutions should be effective in the application and enforcement of requisite statutory accountability measures with a view to apprehending and punishing unethical behaviours (Fagbadebo, 2020). This will serve as a

deterrent against the rampant impunity in the abuse of power. This requires the reinforcement of checks and balances, with a truly independent judiciary capable of restoring sanity in the exercise of state power.

Above all, it is pertinent that members of the public should be vigilant and demand accountability in government. In the face of a docile civil society, spontaneous public protests to challenge the abuse of power should constitute a new oversight mechanism to ensure the promotion of good governance. In recent times, spontaneous public protests against failed accountability in Sudan and police brutality in Nigeria showed that when the formal institutions of government fail in their oversight responsibility, coordinated and sustained public protest could force the government to do the needful (Kirby, 2019; Aljazeera, 17/08/2020; Gladstone & Specia, 2020). While the Sudanese public protest led to the fall of its brutal leader, Al Bashir, sustained public protest in Nigeria forced the government to disband the cruel police unit known for its use of brutal force against innocent citizens (Aina, 2020; BBC News, 11/10/2020). With African leaders' penchant for abuse of power, sustained public protest has remained a new mechanism to enforce accountability.

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