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**World Bank Anticorruption Efforts: Ensuring Accountability and
Controlling Corruption**

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(Abstract)

Recently the World Bank published a report indicating that control of corruption is a key element for good government performance. The report explores the impact of corruption on government and concludes that serious problems with corruption lead to a poor situation in global public affairs. Thus, governments should seriously combat corruption. But how we can control corruption in the public sector? This is a crucial aspect of public management. Coordinating accountability and anticorruption measures plays a key role in developing coherent policy in this field. Preventing corruption is as complex as the phenomenon of corruption itself and a combination of accountability mechanisms and effective law enforcement mechanisms are needed for success. Public organizations need to be effective and accountable to the public. This means that there must be proper mechanisms of control as a way of assuring accountability and preventing corruption. In fact according to Governance Matters IV, World Bank 2005, “corruption” and “accountability” are highly correlated. Thus, in countries with highly accountable public organizations we can expect low levels of corruption. In this vein, for effective prevention of corruption, greater attention must be devoted to developing: clear policies and procedures, quality and ethical standards, systems of transparency, and effective, law enforcement mechanisms. The implementation of these systems will require a lot of effort and it definitely is a tough challenge. However, by improving accountability systems we can expect higher levels of integrity in the public sector. By applying this empirical evidence, World Bank’s anticorruption efforts in Latin America are evaluated at the last part of this paper.

World Bank Anticorruption Efforts: Ensuring Accountability and Controlling Corruption

Introduction

Corruption involves an abuse of the public trust for private benefit. Thus, it irresponsibly violates the fundamental principles of democracy such as accountability. Recently the World Bank published a report indicating that control of corruption is a key element for good government performance. The report explores the impact of corruption on government and concludes that serious problems with corruption lead to a poor situation in global public affairs. In the same vein, several scholars argue that corruption causes political distrust among citizens, thus leading to the sense that the political system and those entrusted with running it have become deeply corrupt. Indeed, during the last 30 years in Latin America several corruption scandals not only jeopardized the integrity of the political system, including the bureaucracy, but they also decreased the level of respect for the rule of law. But how we can control corruption in the public sector? Given the significant impact of corruption in public administration, the World Bank has developed worldwide governance indicators (WGI) to monitor government performance in controlling corruption. This paper argues that when trying to combat corruption governance matters. Thus, the WGI play a major role in monitoring government accountability. In this vein, the paper is divided into three main parts. The first one addresses theories on the concept of corruption in public administration. The second focuses the world governance indicators including a research data analysis to control corruption, and the last section includes final evaluation and conclusion.

I. The Theoretical Framework of Corruption in Public Administration

Corruption

The concept of corruption varies depending on the perspective from which it is studied. It is impossible to cover every aspect of every form of corruption in each country. Thus, in an effort to simplify the case, corruption is defined as the misuse or abuse of public power for private gain (Warren 2006, Fantaye 2004, Kauffman 2005, Rose-Ackerman 1999, Klitgaard 1988, and others). This concept involves all activities in which public officials use their power not for the public benefit but for their own gain. This principally includes such behavior as bribery. The bribed official typically agrees to undertake or to forego a designated action in return for a bribe. For instance, a customs officer receives a bribe for not charging customs duties for importation.

While the concept of corruption mentioned above may lead us to relate corruption mostly to “bribery”, it actually includes many other activities. For instance, Nye’s (1967) definition of corruption includes not only bribery but also nepotism (bestowal of patronage due to a personal relationship rather than merit), and misappropriation (illegal appropriation of public resources for private uses). Caiden (2001) observes that Nye’s definition covers almost all operational activities of corruption because it stresses the behavioral element of intentional deviation for personal gain (whether pecuniary gain or not).

The forms of corruption mentioned above permit a practical classification or identification of typologies of corruption, which will help in understanding the next sections of this paper. There is high-level (grand) and low level (petty) corruption, as well as political and administrative (bureaucratic) corruption (World Bank, 2006). The former distinguishes

the amount of money involved in the corrupt activity while the latter highlights the political or administrative environment involved.

Administrative corruption refers to misapplication of laws, rules, and regulations in order to provide advantages to individuals resulting in illicit private gains to public officials (World Bank, 2006). Several empirical studies show that deficiencies in public administration processes and procedures lead to increased administrative corruption (World Bank, 2000). According to Campos (2001), political corruption (sometimes called “clientelism”) refers to the misuse of public power by elected and senior officials to shape the rules according to those who pay them, at the expense of the rest of society.

Although the World Bank differentiates administrative from political corruption, the distinction is not clear enough to distinguish them. Indeed, corruption committed by a public official may include both the misapplication of laws or rules and political influence on the process of issuing a new law. In an effort to clarify this concept, Campos (2001) refers administrative corruption to corrupt activities committed by lower-ranking bureaucrats and functionaries, and political corruption to corrupt activities perpetrated by elected and senior officials. Applying this classification, corruption committed by customs officers in charge of granting importation clearance should be called administrative corruption. This situation neglects the spirit of the principal-agent theory, which is a theory for achieving accountability.

The Principal-Agent Theory

The political institutions (i.e. judicial, legislative and executive, depending on the issue) need to be accountable to each other (Campos Ed. & Lateef, Sarwar, World Bank 2006). According to the Principal-Agent theory, which is used to evaluate accountability, the

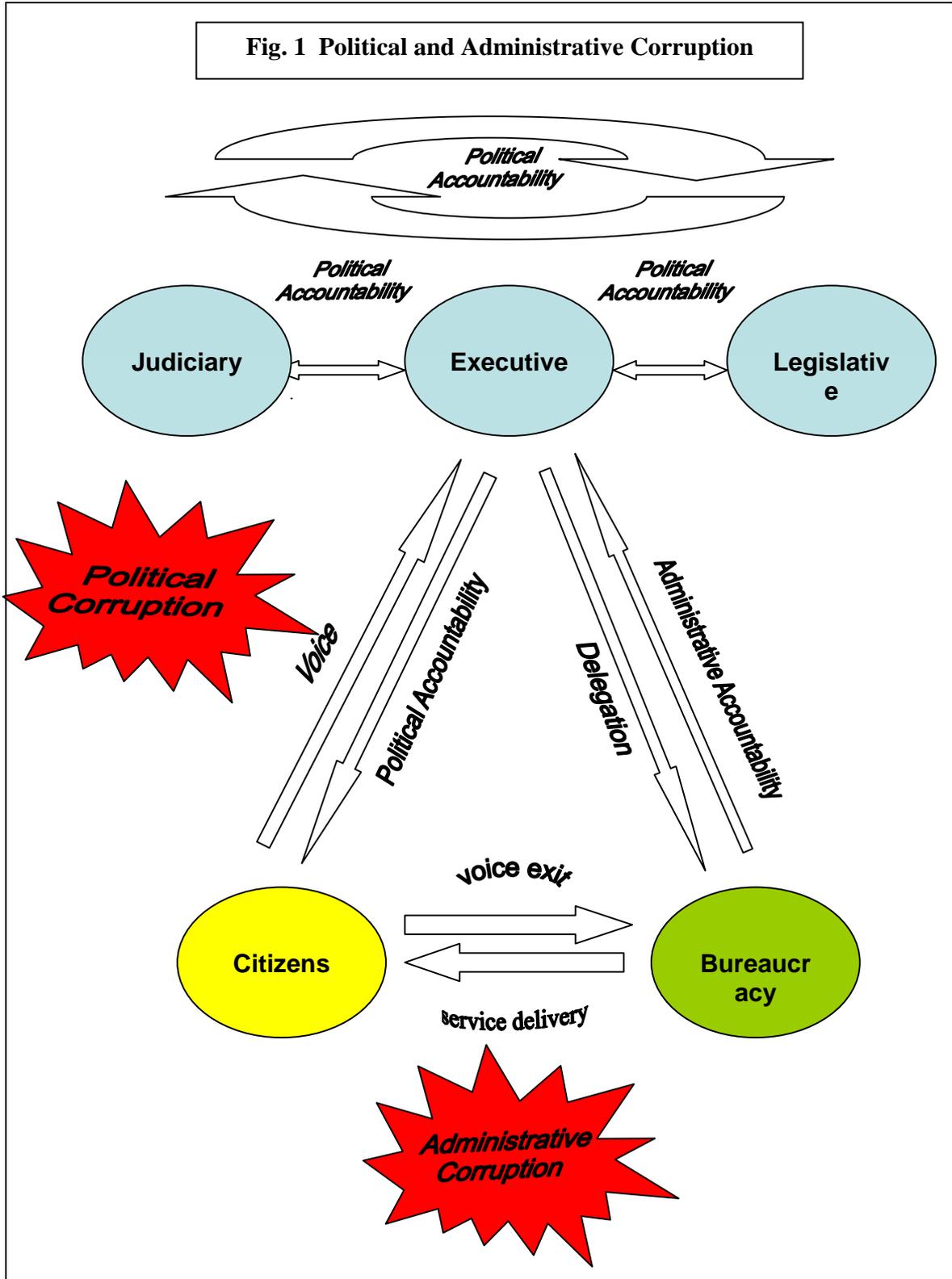
principal is an actor who enters into a contractual relationship with another actor, an agent.

The agent is entrusted to take actions that lead to outcomes specified by the principal.

When delegating, the principal may face problems with adverse selection and moral hazard as he can not be completely sure about the ability and integrity of the agent (Gormley and Balla, 2004). In fact, as Moe (1984) noticed, there is no guarantee that the agent will do what is in the best interest of his/her principal. Likewise, there is no guarantee that the agent will not accept a bribe. This likelihood of bribery threatens the principles of the principal-agent theory.

Corruption involves the breaking of the aforementioned contractual relationship between principal and agent. In this situation, the actor who abuses his authority for private gain is called the 'corrupt agent' and the actor who receives a benefit from this illegal behavior is called the 'client'. The agent breaks a rule (given by the principal) in order to give the client an illegal benefit (Banfield 1975). Thus, corruption involves the breaking of a (formal or informal) contractual relationship between principal and agent. The client pays off the agent for the abuse of his office (Graeff 2005). Below, figure 1 illustrates this situation.

Fig. 1 Political and Administrative Corruption



A general condition implied in the three-actor model explained above is reciprocity. The relationship is reciprocal only if every actor assumes that his partner will accomplish his part of the deal. It also implies the existence of norms and trust. For instance, in a highly corrupt country such as Paraguay, customs officers demand an illegal processing fee in order to not apply regular customs duties or restrictions (Franks, Jeffrey, Valerie Mercer-Blackman, Randa Sab, and Roberto Benelli, 2005). There is only a minimal risk if an actor offers or accepts a bribe because the likelihood of being prosecuted and getting punished is small. In this case we observe that the bribe impedes the right application of customs laws in the Paraguayan Customs. The bribe constitutes itself a sort of a 'corruption norm' to avoid the law. If this activity is ignored by the supervisors or superiors, this new 'regulatory procedure' becomes "regular". It is acceptable in the Paraguayan customs service and can be established as a norm.

Corruption Norms

A country's executive branch delegates a bureaucracy to deliver a public service. In implementing this activity public servants need to apply the laws that regulate it. This implies expertise in knowing and managing public laws and regulations. Indeed, as early in 1947 Weber pointed out that only a person who has demonstrated adequate technical training is qualified to be a member of the bureaucracy. Due to their expertise, the effectiveness of bureaucrats is supposed to be one of their principal virtues. Moreover, Merton (1957) argued that "the chief merit of bureaucracy is its technical efficiency, with a premium placed on precision, speed, expert control, continuity, discretion, and optimal returns on input". While this can be true for several public servants, those virtues can be absent in a large number of

bureaucrats. Also, a bureaucrat will need more than “expertise” to apply the law correctly. He will need to understand that the work he is running is not his own property (i.e. business) but belongs to the state.

So, one important point in the exercise of public functions is the distinction of public and private goods. As Weber (1947) mentions, all the means, including the function itself, belong to the organization or “office” and not to officials. This is a critical issue because it clearly points out that when a public officer is exercising his function he is actually representing the public agency (or even more, “the state”). Accepting a bribe for not applying the law significantly damages the reputation of the agency (and the state) itself. But what does make a public official break the law? The answer may rely on the effectiveness of the rule of law.

Corruption norms emerge more often in societies where there are fewer opportunities for sanctioning (Graeff, 2005). In this vein, for instance, corruption norms are more likely to emerge in Paraguay because of the low level of law enforcement and rampant corruption in the criminal system (Franks, Jeffrey, Valerie Mercer-Blackman, Randa Sab, and Roberto Benelli, 2005). But digging deeply into this corruption case in Paraguay, several questions come up. How have these corruption norms become “acceptable”? Is everybody accepting these new norms? What are the “incentives” to stay corrupt? Or to remain honest?

The answer to the question above depends on several factors. It may be a matter of compensation or the need for more economic resources or greediness. For instance, there is a huge difference between the salary of a Paraguayan and a Chilean customs officer (Lambert, Peter, 1999; Reinhard, Nola, Wilson Peres, and Nelson Correa, 2006). The first will be more willing to accept a bribe than the latter. While the monetary factor plays a significant role in

the bureaucrat's decision on accepting a bribe, the existence of mechanisms for respecting the rule of law is also important.

In a country where people have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, low levels of corruption can be expected. According to the last index of rule of law prepared by the World Bank (2005) the level of respect for the law is higher in Chile than in Paraguay. This situation may explain why a Paraguayan customs officer will be more willing to accept a bribe than his/her colleague in Chile.

To sum up, according to the theories on corruption detailed above, the key variables to control corruption are accountability and quality of bureaucracy (i.e. expertise) detailed below.

$$\text{Control of Corruption} = B_0 + \text{Accountability} + \text{Quality of bureaucracy}$$

II. Data Analysis

To analyze the controlling corruption formula detailed above I am going to use the worldwide governance indicators data developed by the World Bank Institute.

Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI)

In the late 1990s, the World Bank Institute and the Research Department of the World Bank initiated a long-standing research program on governance indicators. At that time, virtually no internationally comparable measures of governance or corruption existed (World Governance Indicators Booklet 2006). Since 1996, Daniel Kauffman and Aart Kraay, with the assistance of Pablo Zoido-Lobaton and Massimo Mastruzzi, have been developing six

governance indicators called the “Worldwide Governance Indicators” (WGI), which were published every other year between 1996 and 2002 and annually for 2002-2005 (the WGI 2006 version will be released in July 2007).

The WGIs capture six dimensions of governance: voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption (Kauffman, Daniel, Aart Kraay and Massimo Mastruzzi (KKM, 2006). For now on, I will refer to Kaufmann, kraay and Mastruzi as KKM). In short, these authors define the WGI as follows:

1. Voice and accountability (VA) -- the extent to which a country’s citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media.” It measures accountability rates of public officials. This variable also includes the presence or absence of public channels to denounce unaccountable behavior of public administrators.
2. Political stability and absence of violence (PV) -- perceptions of the likelihood that the government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including political violence and terrorism.
3. Government effectiveness (GE)-- the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government’s commitment to such policies. Overall this indicator is measuring the “quality of bureaucracy”. Thus I prefer to call this indicator “quality of bureaucracy” instead of “government effectiveness”. Moreover, by reading all the survey questions for this indicator (detailed in the appendices of the Governance Matters IV 2004) all the questions are related to the quality of bureaucracy.

4. Regulatory quality (RQ) -- the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development.
5. Rule of Law (RL) -- the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence.
6. Control of Corruption (CC) -- the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as “capture” of the state by elites and private interests. It contains data related to frequency of “additional payments to get things done (i.e. bribes) and frequency of payments to gain public contracting out (kickbacks).

Several hypotheses can be formulated by applying these concepts. Here are two of them:

- 1) In a country where there is no voice and accountability, it may be hard to pressure public administrators to be accountable to the public. As a result, it is hard to control corruption.
- 2) In the same vein, in a country where the quality of the bureaucracy is high, there may be fewer opportunities for corruption.

These “theories” can be tested by running ordinary least square (OLS) regression using the WGI data available at www.govindicators.org. However, the results will never be highly reliable (i.e. 99% confident) because the WGI data are based on perceptions and is itself an aggregate figure. Below I statistically describe the indicators and the methodology used by KKM to measure governance.

Statistical Description of the Data

The World Bank data are based on surveys of firms and individuals, as well as the assessments of commercial risk rating agencies, non-governmental organizations, and a number of multilateral aid agencies. They cover 203 countries for 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2004 (a sample of questions included in the surveys evaluating perceptions on corruption, voice and accountability, and quality of bureaucracy are listed in table 1).

The data include more than three hundred individual variables provided by more than 30 organizations, measuring governance performance through the six indicators detailed above. Each of those organizations has its own methodology and scale. Thus, the bank normalizes their surveys' scores into a 0-1 scale to be comparable and then uses them to produce the normally distributed indicators (i.e. aggregate indicators) detailed in the Governance Matters IV report (2005).

The estimates for each indicator are then the result of a maximum likelihood function and therefore are normally distributed (i.e. standardized to mean zero and unitary standard deviation). As such, 99% of the values are between -2.5 and 2.5 with higher scores corresponding to better outcomes. For instance, in the Governance Matters IV report (World Bank 2005) countries such as Sweden (2.20), Denmark (2.38), Iceland (2.43), and Finland (2.5) get good positive scores indicating that they are doing well in controlling corruption. In contrast, countries such as Afghanistan (-1.33), Turkmenistan (-1.34), Central African Republic (-1.36), and Equatorial Guinea (-1.65) obtains negative scores indicating that they are doing poorly in controlling corruption.

Since the scores mentioned above are elaborated from the results of the surveys made each year, the situation of control of corruption, voice and accountability, and quality of

bureaucracy in each country may vary from one year to another depending on successful implementation of anti-corruption plans.

Regression Results Analysis

Independent Variables

X

Voice and Accountability
Quality of the bureaucracy
Control of corruption (2002)

Dependent Variable

Y

Control of Corruption (2004)

As expected, the regression results confirm the theory (see table 2). By obtaining a “p” value .007 for “voice and accountability” we may say there is a significant positive relationship between accountability and control of corruption. The R^2 for this model is 0.92 indicating that how we control accountability and quality of bureaucracy explains 92% of the variance in controlling corruption.

The coefficient for “voice and accountability” indicates that for every one point increase on accountability, control of corruption improves .08 degrees controlling for “quality of bureaucracy”. Quality of bureaucracy has even a better impact on controlling corruption. The coefficient for “quality of bureaucracy” indicates that for every one point increase on the quality of the bureaucracy, control of corruption improves .89 degrees controlling for accountability. The effect is important, as in the situation of not achieving great quality of bureaucracy, control of corruption gets “0” degrees meaning that controlling corruption is not improving.

We can be more than 95% confident that every one point increase on accountability is associated with an increase between .02 and .14 in control of corruption, controlling for quality of bureaucracy. Every one point increase in the quality of bureaucracy is associated with an increase between .84 and .95 in control of corruption, controlling for accountability.

In order to prevent an endogeneity problem, meaning that accountability may lead to better control of corruption, or control of corruption may lead to high levels of accountability, another variable is included in the model: control of corruption for a previous year (2002). After running regression, the model has not experienced substantial changes. In fact, it has almost the same results as previously (see table 3). The coefficients for “accountability” and “quality of bureaucracy” have not substantially changed. Moreover, the coefficient for “control of corruption 2002” obtaining a “p-value” .739 is not statistically significant. Furthermore the R-squared is maintained at 92%. Therefore, controlling corruption in public organizations is highly dependent on the level of accountability and the quality of bureaucracy.

III. Final Evaluation and Conclusion

Final Evaluation

From the theory and data analysis detailed above the problem of corruption in public organizations can be combated by addressing quality of the bureaucracy and accountability systems, which are key variables in controlling administrative corruption (i.e. corruption in public organizations).

According to the Centro Latinoamericano de Administracion para el Desarrollo (CLAD)’s report 2006, the World Bank has been helping Latin America with the implementation of effective strategies to reach better government performance ‘in Latin America. The strategies largely include transparency reforms aiming at reducing levels of rampant corruption. In this vein, transparency should be added in the regression model

developed in previous section. It will require, though, further research on the actual level of transparency in each Latin American country.

Although administrative corruption cannot completely be eliminated, reforms in the public sector may help to reduce it (United Nations 1997). In this regard, reform attempts need to include control mechanisms that help improve accountability, and ethical training programs, which may help bureaucrats in choosing ethical behavior rather than corrupt behavior.

Additional recommended anticorruption measures for reforming bureaucracy are based on successful anticorruption experiences in the Philippines (2000), and Hong Kong (1990) detailed in Klitgaard 1988. These measures include professionalization of employees by recruiting high honors graduates from high quality universities in the target country, rotating officials in order to avoid potentially corrupt personal relationships with taxpayers, participation of outside auditors to supervise tax revenues, and promotion of honest and good performance through the implementation of a system of rewards and penalties.

Conclusion

Several motives induce bureaucrats to commit corruption. The motives range mainly in administrative deficiencies of the bureaucracy itself. These inefficiencies include the lack of accountability of public servants and the low level of quality of the bureaucracy. Both issues are important foundations of public administration and government. Indeed, in the fight against corruption governance matters. In this vein, the World Bank's worldwide governance indicators are significantly useful to monitor government performance and corruption. However, the ultimate decision in being accountable depends on the bureaucracy itself.

Table 1

**Survey Questions used by the World Bank Data Sources
 (Governance Matters IV, World Bank, 2006)**

Survey Questions Sample	Data Source
<p>Questions for measuring perceptions on Corruption</p> <p>-Is there an Anti-Corruption plan being implemented?</p> <p>-Does bribing exist in the economy?</p> <p>-To what extent does corruption exist in a way that detracts from the business environment for foreign companies?</p>	<p>Freedom in the World</p> <p>Institute for Management Development</p> <p>Political Economic Risk Consultancy</p>
<p>Questions for measuring perceptions on Accountability</p> <p>-Is there transparency of Government policy?</p> <p>-How responsive government is to its people?</p> <p>- Do you trust in the government?</p>	<p>Institute for Management Development</p> <p>Political Risk Services</p> <p>United Nations Economic Commissions fro Africa</p>
<p>Questions for measuring perceptions on Quality of the Bureaucracy</p> <p>-Are there policies to improve efficiency of public sector?</p> <p>-Are there implemented procedures for budget management?</p> <p>- Bureaucratic delays?</p> <p>-How is the efficiency of the bureaucracies overall?</p> <p>-Assess how much strength and expertise bureaucrats have.</p> <p>-What is the quality of public agencies?</p>	<p>Africa Development Bank</p> <p>Business Environment Risk Intelligence</p> <p>Columbia University</p> <p>Political Risk Services</p> <p>World Business Enterprise Survey</p>

Table 2: Modeling the Effects of Voice and Accountability, quality of the bureaucracy in Control of Corruption

Independent Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	P-Value	95% Conf. Interval	
Voice and accountability	.08	.0300576	0.007	.02	.14
Quality of the bureaucracy	.89	.0298511	0.001	.84	.95
cons	.00	.0202741	0.894	-.04	.04

R-Squared= .92

N= 203

Table 3: Modeling the Effects of Voice and Accountability, quality of the bureaucracy, and Control of corruption 2002 in control of Corruption 2004

Independent Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	P-Value	95% Conf. Interval	
Voice and accountability	.08	.03	0.006	.02	.14
Quality of the bureaucracy	.89	.03	0.001	.83	.95
Control of corruption 2002	-.00	.02	0.739	-.05	.04
Cons	.00	.02	0.992	-.04	.04

R-Squared= .92

N= 191

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<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/WBI/EXTWBIGOVANTCOR/0,,menuPK:1740542~pagePK:64168427~piPK:64168435~theSitePK:1740530,00.html>