

## CHARACTERISTICS OF AFRICAN POLITICAL LEADERS: PERSPECTIVES OF AFRICAN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Ralaivao Hanginiaina Emynorane<sup>1</sup>, Jean Tsitair Arrive<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Department of Public Administration, Universitas Hasanuddin, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Domaine des Sciences de la Société, Université de Toliara, Madagascar

[emynoranerh24e@ms.unhas.ac.id](mailto:emynoranerh24e@ms.unhas.ac.id), [tsitair@yahoo.com](mailto:tsitair@yahoo.com)

Corresponding author email: [emynoranerh24e@ms.unhas.ac.id](mailto:emynoranerh24e@ms.unhas.ac.id)

Received: 10-12-2024

Revised: 23-12-2024

Approved: 30-12-2024

### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to explore the characteristics of political leaders in Africa as perceived by international students from the continent. The characteristics of political leadership in Africa are often shaped by intricate historical, social and economic factors. This study uses a qualitative approach with interviews and surveys to gather data from international students from various countries in Africa. The main objective of this study is to comprehend how students perceive the characteristics of political leaders in their native countries, including characteristics such as charisma, communication skills, accountability mechanisms, transparency and good governance. This study also analyzes how these perceptions could contribute to a wider understanding of political leadership in Africa along with the challenges and opportunities encountered by political leaders in the region. It is hoped that the findings from this study will contribute to the advancement of political leadership theory in Africa and provide a more profound understanding of the political dynamics on the continent.*

*Keywords: Characteristics, African Leaders, Political Leaders, Democracy, International Students*

### INTRODUCTION

In many African countries, political leadership is often marred by major challenges, such as corruption, social injustice, repression of the opposition, and disregard for democratic principles (Ayee, 2021). Political leaders who should act as drivers of development are sometimes trapped in practices that harm the people and hinder the country's progress. Africa as a continent rich in natural resources and human potential is often trapped in cycles of political and economic instability caused by leaders who are unable to manage these resources wisely (Odhiambo, 2022). Corruption is one of the main problems that undermines the integrity of governments in many African countries. Many political leaders prioritize personal interests over the benefits of its citizens, which results in waste of budget, abuse of power, and deepening social inequality. The inability to eradicate corruption is a major obstacle in the country's development and improving people's living quality (Lindberg, 2020).

Additionally, nepotism and patronage are common practices among many political leaders in Africa. In such systems, public office is often given to relatives or individuals who have political loyalty to the leader, even if they do not have sufficient qualifications (Klingebiel & Petersen, 2020). This exacerbates inequality in the distribution of opportunities hampers the creation of a government that is efficient and responsive to the needs of the people. This practice also contributes to increasingly strengthening injustice and inequality in the society. Leaders who are trapped in patterns of nepotism and patronage often ignore the principle of meritocracy, where more talented and qualified individuals are not given the opportunity to lead (Okolo &

Tella, 2022). On the other hand, those with close ties to power obtain important positions, even without sufficient abilities. This situation worsens the effectiveness of government and hinders the country's ability to develop optimally. In many African countries, the results of this inefficient government are seen in the slow process of developing crucial infrastructure, education and health services for the people (Sarr, 2023).

Political leaders in Africa also often suppress freedom of expression and aggressive toward the political opposition. Many leaders feel threatened by criticism or protests from opposition groups and the public, so they take repressive steps to silence these voices (Ogunyemi, 2022). This crackdown on the opposition often involves the use of military or police force to suppress peaceful demonstrations, as well as the arrest of journalists and activists that criticize the government. This issue creates a climate of distrust and political tension that undermines the country's stability (Moyo, 2021).

The importance of democracy as a government system that provides space for freedom of expression, free elections and accountable government is progressively diminished under leadership that tends to be authoritarian (Klingebiel, 2020). In many African countries, elections are often manipulated to maintain the power of incompetent leaders, and restrictions on the opposition are very common. Elections that are not free and fair reduce the government's legitimacy and increase social dissatisfaction. When leaders cannot manage the government fairly, the people's right to choose their leaders freely is taken away (Moyo, 2021). Political instability caused by repressive measures, abuse of power, and corrupt practices can undermine public confidence and hamper the flow of investment which are very important for the economic growth. When people lose hope in the government, dissatisfaction arises and this can create a large protests or even armed conflict (Nnadozie, 2021).

In this context, this study aims to dig deeper into the factors that influence the quality of political leadership in Africa and its impact on political stability, social, and economic development. By understanding the bad characteristics that are often attached to political leaders in Africa, it is hoped that more effective solutions can be found to create better, fairer and more transparent governance in these countries.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses a qualitative approach with semi-structured interview and survey methods. The population of this study consisted of 150 international students from various countries in Africa, which are currently studying in Indonesian Universities. The selection of international students as respondents aims to gain a broader perspective on the characteristics of political leaders in Africa, considering that they bring direct experience from the political context in their home countries.

Interviews were conducted to explore students' views about the leadership qualities they consider important. In addition, surveys were used to collect quantitative data related to students' general perceptions of certain attributes possessed by African political leaders, such as charisma, communication skills, accountability mechanisms, transparency and good governance.

Data obtained from interviews and surveys were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns and themes that emerged related to international students' perceptions of political leadership in Africa. It is hoped that this study will provide deeper insight into the characteristics of political leaders in Africa through the perspective of international students.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The characteristics of political leaders in Africa can include several aspects that often hinder social, economic and political development in many countries on the continent. According to respondents, several characteristics commonly found in African political leadership include:

### **Corruption**

Corruption among Africa's political leaders has long been a problem that hinders social, economic, and political progress in many countries on the continent. Corruption is not only a moral issue, but can also have a major impact on a country's development (Hassan, 2020). In many African countries, resources that should be used to improve people's lives, such as education, health and infrastructure, are often misused by leaders for their personal or group gain (Lindberg, 2020). These corrupt practices create injustice and worsen social inequality, while people remain trapped in poverty. Corruption is often carried out in a highly organized and systematic manner (Ayee, 2021). Political leaders, government officials, and legislators often work together in corruption schemes to divert public funds to their or their groups' personal accounts. In some cases, state companies or contractors with close ties to government officials are awarded large projects that were supposed to be based on transparency and competition, but are instead exploited for personal gain. (Nnadozie, 2021).

One form of corruption that often occurs in Africa is misuse of state funds. Government leaders and officials often appropriate funds allocated for development programs or humanitarian aid. When funds that should be used for education, health care, or infrastructure development do not reach their proper places, people suffer from a lack of basic facilities (Sarr, 2023). It also undermines public trust in government institutions and exacerbates social discontent. In addition, corruption also causes severe inequality in African societies. Those in position of power often access state resources in unfair ways, while the majority of the population lives in poverty (Tshuma, 2020). These inequalities deepen, as those in lower positions do not have equal access to basic services or economic opportunities. Leaders who engage in corrupt practices tend to be insensitive to the difficulties faced by their people, as they focus more on accumulating personal wealth (Klingeziel, 2020).

In addition, rampant corruption also undermines good governance and the effectiveness of state institutions. When public officials engage in corruption, they are more interested in personal gain than in carrying out their duties with professionalism and responsibility (Tadesse, 2021). This has led to a decline in the quality of public services and the government's inability to address deep-seated social problems. Additionally, law enforcement agencies that are supposed to work to eradicate corruption are often part of the problem themselves, as they may accept to be involved in acts of corruption.

In many cases, leaders involved in corruption in Africa also use the legal system to protect themselves. They manipulate laws or control the justice system to avoid legal processes that would otherwise prosecute them for their crimes (Hassan, 2020). Even there is sufficient evidence to convict them, the legal system often fails to deliver justice, or the process is too slow and hampered by political and economic pressures. This creates a deep sense of injustice among the society.

Rampant corruption also hinders foreign investment and economic development. Countries known for high levels of corruption often have difficulty to attract international investors. When foreign companies feel that they have to pay bribes to obtain contracts or business permits, they tend to avoid investing in that country. This issue of course limits job opportunities and the development of the economic sectors. Additionally, legal uncertainty caused by corruption makes the business environment unstable, which in turn slows economic growth (Khan, 2020).

Efforts to handle corruption in Africa have faced many challenges. Although many African countries have adopted anti-corruption policies and established monitoring institutions, the results are often insignificant due to a lack of political commitment from leaders involved in corrupt practices (Tadesse, 2021). Several international organizations and financial institutions have also attempted to put pressure on the government to fight corruption, but they have often been met with strong resistance from interested parties. To create real change, leadership with integrity and a more transparent system are needed to effectively eradicate corruption. Corruption not only damages the economy, but also shakes the foundations of democracy and the rule of law (Lefort, 2022). If this issue is left without proper treatment, it can create a vicious cycle of injustice that is difficult to overcome. Society must be empowered to demand transparency and accountability, while leaders who have integrity and commitment to advance the country must be supported to replace those who only care about themselves (Klingebiel & Petersen, 2020).

### **Lack of Accountability**

Lack of accountability among political leaders in Africa is a major problem hampering democratic development and socio-economic progress in many countries on the continent (Tadros, 2023). Unaccountable leaders tend to avoid responsibility for their actions, often harming the people and exacerbating distrust of government institutions. In many cases, these leaders are never held accountable for failed policies or decisions that harm society (Munyua, 2022). When leaders do not feel obliged to explain their decisions to the public, it undermines the foundations of good governance and increases social injustice.

One of the main forms of lack of accountability is the government's inability or unwillingness to respond to criticism. In many African countries, critics or opposition media are often suppressed or silenced by the government (Teye, 2020). Unaccountable leaders often view themselves as beyond the reach of the law or public scrutiny. When a policy doesn't work or causes harm, they are reluctant to admit mistakes and correct them (Rodríguez & Arriola, 2020). Instead, they may look for ways to blame others or divert public attention from the real problem. The lack of accountability is also reflected in the lack of transparency in the management of state resources (Klingebiel & Petersen, 2020). Unaccountable leaders often do not provide clear information regarding the use of the state budget or development projects implemented. This often leads to waste of public funds or even corruption. In many cases, funds allocated to critical sectors such as health, education, or infrastructure are not used efficiently because leaders lack commitment to accountability or are unwilling to be closely monitored (Kipkemboi & Okoth, 2023).

Lack of accountability often leads to power imbalances that affect political stability in many African countries. Unaccountable leaders often use their positions to strengthen their personal or group power, while state institutions such as parliament,

supervisory institutions and the judicial system are weakened (Rodríguez & Arriola, 2020). When leaders are not accountable to its citizens, their power becomes more authoritarian and more likely to be abusive. As a result, people lose the opportunity to participate in the political process effectively, and the democracy becomes weak (Hassan, 2020). The injustices created by a lack of accountability also exacerbate social tensions in many countries. When people feel that their leaders are not responsible for their well-being, they become frustrated and lose confidence in the government system (Wambui, 2022). This can lead to protests, political tensions, and even social conflict (Lindberg, 2020).

To handle the lack of accountability, structural reforms and increased transparency in government are needed. Governments must create strong institutions to oversee the use of budgets and public policies, and ensure that leaders can be held accountable for their decisions (Rodríguez & Arriola, 2020). In addition, it is important to provide space for the opposition and the media to criticize government policies without fear of repression. By creating more accountable systems, African countries can minimize abuse of power, increase public trust, and promote more inclusive development (Chikwanha, 2023).

### **Abuse of Power**

Abuse of power by political leaders in Africa is a problem that has deep roots in many systems of governance on the continent. Leaders who abuse their power often prioritize their personal or group interests over the interests of the people they lead (Wambui, 2022). This abuse of power can take various forms, including control of the media, repression of political opposition, the destruction of democratic institutions, and non-transparent decision making (Olowu, 2021). This phenomenon exacerbates political instability, widens the gap in social inequality, and damages the country's development process (Rodríguez & Arriola, 2020). One common form of abuse of power in Africa is authoritarianism, where political leaders try to concentrate power in their own hands and limit the role of democratic institutions (Durojaye, 2023). Authoritarian leaders often change constitutions to extend their terms in office, or manipulate electoral systems to ensure that they remain in power. In some countries, political leaders even prohibit the opposition from participating in elections or hinder freedom of expression, such as limiting press freedom and threatening journalists who criticize the government (Klingebiel & Petersen, 2020). This issue creates an atmosphere where democracy fails to function, and people have no legitimate channels to voice their dissatisfaction.

Additionally, political leaders who abuse power are often use violence and intimidation to suppress political opponents. Oppositionists who try to challenge the government or express dissatisfaction are often met with repression, such as arbitrary arrest or even persecution. Some governments in Africa are known to use security forces to suppress criticism and protestors (Mamdani, 2021). This approach leads to serious human rights violations, creates social injustice and damages the relationship between people and government. Leaders who abuse power are also often involved in misuse of state resources (Olowu, 2021). This misuse of state fund embezzlement scandal not only harms the country's economy, but also increases social inequality, because most of people do not benefit from the resources that they should receive (Lindberg, 2020).

Abuse of power can also be seen in the way political leaders control and subjugate state institutions that are supposed to function independently (Kipkemboi & Okoth, 2023). The justice system, which is supposed to have a primary control over the government actions, is often manipulated to support government policies or to punish political opponents (Chikwanha, 2023). When leaders have control over these institutions, they can ensure that they will not be held accountable or subject to legal sanctions for their actions. This can create more legal injustice and makes people feel that the legal system is unreliable (Nhamo, 2021). In some cases, leaders who abuse power seek to destroy political pluralism by stifling freedom of expression and association. They may close down opposition organizations, or impose policies that limit political freedoms, such as bans on certain political parties or restrictions on civil society activities (Lefort, 2022). In this way, leaders who abuse power create a climate of fear in which opposition cannot thrive, and voices critical of the government become marginalized (Chikwanha, 2023).

Abuse of power often leads to prolonged political and social instability. When leaders cannot be monitored or held accountable, and when laws do not apply to all parties, political conflicts can escalate into broader social tensions (Teye, 2020). People who feel ignored by the government will increasingly lose trust in state institutions and this can lead to protests and even rebellion (Kipkemboi & Okoth, 2023). This instability worsens the economy, reduces the attractiveness of foreign investment, and exacerbates social inequality (Kriger, 2023).

### **Non-visionary Leadership**

Political leaders in Africa are often criticized for their lack of clear long-term vision, which hinders the country's progress and development. Many of them tend to focus on short-term goals, such as maintaining power or fulfilling personal interests, instead of designing sustainable policies for the future of the country (Lefort, 2022). When leaders do not have a clear vision of the direction of the country, the policies taken often seem directionless and unable to overcome the major challenges faced by the society, such as poverty, inequality and social instability (Tadros, 2023). One result of a lack of vision is uncoordinated and unsustainable development policies. Without a deep understanding of the long-term needs of the people and the country's potential, many leaders implement large projects that have only temporary impacts or are even detrimental in the long term (Rodríguez & Arriola, 2020). Leaders who are not visionary fail to understand that sustainable development requires a holistic and planned approach (Munyua, 2022).

Moreover, leaders who are not visionary often fail to develop important sectors such as education, technology and industry (Emynorane et al., 2024). Without significant investment in education and research, African countries often fall behind from the global competition. Poor quality education limits the ability of young generation to contribute to their country's economic and social progress. Without leaders who have the vision to improve the quality of human capital, these countries continue to struggle to develop the skilled and innovative workforce needed to drive sustainable economic growth (Ayee, 2021). A lack of vision is also evident in leaders' inability to address deep social inequalities. Many leaders in Africa tend to focus on meeting short-term needs, such as symbolically alleviating poverty, without considering the deep structures of inequality that affect many aspects of people's lives, such as access to education, health and employment (Durojaye, 2023). Leaders who do not have

a long-term vision will tend to ignore policies that can reduce inequality, so that social gaps continue to widen, and social stability is progressively threatened (Chikwanha, 2023).

Leaders who are not visionary are also often unable to face global challenges that have a direct impact on their country, such as climate change, economic globalization, or the health crisis. Without a broad global outlook and the ability to design adaptive policies, African countries are often caught up in their domestic problems and unprepared to face complex external challenges (Okolo & Tella, 2022). For example, many leaders have not developed adequate policies to deal with the climate crisis even though the African continent is highly vulnerable to environmental impacts. The inability to formulate long-term policies makes it increasingly difficult for African countries to face rapid global changes (Tadesse, 2021).

The inability of many African leaders to have a vision which is inclusive and based on the needs of the people results in leaders who are more concerned with personal power or narrow political interests (Gheorghe, 2021). Most of the leaders do not listen to the aspirations of the people or try to overcome the problems that the society are really facing. As a result, the resulting policies do not reflect the real needs of the people and cannot bring a significant change (Schwab, 2021). A country led by individuals without a clear vision will continue to be trapped in a cycle of poverty, injustice and instability which is difficult to overcome (Lindberg, 2020). To make a real change, leaders with a strong vision are needed, leaders who do not only see short-term interests, but who are able to design and implement policies that are oriented towards long-term development (Ochieng & Ibe, 2022). African countries need leaders who are able to plan and take action to create more justice, prosperous and sustainable societies for the future generations.

### **Lack of Honesty and Integrity**

According to respondents, political leaders in Africa are also lack of honesty and integrity in exercising their power. When leaders are dishonest, they are more likely to engage in corrupt practices that harm its citizens and undermine government systems. Many leaders abuse their positions to enrich themselves or their groups, while most of their people live in poverty (Akinola & Ademola, 2021). This fact shows that they do not have enough integrity to put the public interest above their personal or political group interests.

This lack of integrity can be seen from the inability to be accountable for their decisions and policies (Mamdani, 2021). Leaders who are less honest often avoid accountability for failures or mistakes they make in government. When policies fail or harm society, they often try to divert public attention, rather than admitting mistakes and finding solutions (Schwab, 2021). In this case, many policies implemented never achieve their goals due to leaders' lack of commitment to social justice. Existing policies are often more aimed at maintaining political power or providing benefits to certain groups, rather than addressing the real problems faced by the people (Lefort, 2022). Despite an international commitment to eradicating poverty and inequality, many leaders do not seriously implement policies that can reduce social inequality. These dishonest leaders tend to focus on their short-term interests, rather than building a sustainable system for the benefits of their people (Okeke, 2020).

### **Nepotism and Patronage**

Nepotism and patronage are two frequent forms of abuse of power among political leaders in Africa, which can create more social injustice and hinder the development of democracy on the continent (Klingebiel & Petersen, 2020). Nepotism refers to the practice of giving state positions or resources to family or close relatives, while patronage is a system of providing support or resources to certain groups who are loyal to or support the leader, often to gain political advantage. Both of these practices undermine the principles of justice and meritocracy, and often hinder the efficiency of the government (Sikazwe, 2021).

The practice of nepotism in Africa is often seen in the management of government projects which prioritize family relationships over competence or expertise (Okolo & Tella, 2022). Leaders who engage in nepotism tend to choose their relatives or close friends to fill important positions, even though they do not have sufficient qualifications. As a result, government performance becomes poor, because many officials are incompetent in carrying out their duties. When state resources are managed by individuals who do not have sufficient ability or experience, the entire nation's development and the social benefits of its citizens are hampered (Ochieng & Ibe, 2022). Additionally, patronage in African politics often creates political and economic dependencies that undermine democratic systems. Leaders who employ a patronage system often provide state resources to groups or individuals loyal to them, in exchange for political support or influence (Lindberg, 2020). This issue creates inequality, as only groups that are close to the power receive benefit, while other groups who do not have a direct relationship with the leader are marginalized. When resources only flow to those who support the leader, social and economic disparities widen, creating injustices that harm many people unreliable (Nhamo, 2021).

The patronage system also exacerbates corruption and lack of transparency in government. In many cases, officials appointed through patronage often feel indebted to the leader and are more likely to engage in corrupt practices to repay services if they want to maintain their position (Okolo & Tella, 2022). This system allows misuse of public funds and undermines government accountability, because decisions taken are no longer based on the public interest, but on personal or group interests. Leaders who use patronage to strengthen their political position are often ignore the needs of its people (Kriger, 2023). When positions and economic opportunities are made based on the personal relationships, but not by the ability or the achievement, many individuals talented from the country are left not considered because they will not have the opportunity to develop their potential (Angola & Araromi, 2022).

### **Aggressive against the Opposition**

Political leaders in Africa often employ harsh measures against the opposition as a strategy to maintain their power. In many cases, leaders who feel threatened by political opposition tend to use various means to silence critical voices (Okeke, 2020). These harsh measures can take the form of oppression, persecution, or even the physical disappearance of political opponents. This leads to restrictions of the freedom of expression, which is one of the basic principles of a democratic system. When leaders prevent the opposition from speaking or acting, they indirectly undermine the foundations of democracy itself (Nyamweya, 2022).

In several African countries, leaders who use harsh measures against the opposition often use security forces to silent protests or demonstrations by opposition

groups. Military or police forces are used to disperse protests in highly repressive ways, including violence. (Booth & Unsworth, 2020). Additionally, they often manipulate the legal system to criminalize opposition actions. The use of law to curb political freedoms is very common, with the opposition accused of violating the law or being a threat to the state security. Leaders often arrange for courts to indict their political opponents on trumped-up charges, leading to arbitrary detention or even unjust prison sentences. This fact creates a climate of fear where the opposition feels unsafe to carry out their political activities (Kriger, 2023).

Leaders who implement harsh measures against the opposition also seek to destroy press freedom. Media critical of the government often experience pressure to silence reporting unfavorable about incumbent leader (Ochieng & Ibe, 2022). Some governments in Africa have even close media that oppose the government or arrest journalists who write reports deemed detrimental to the authorities (Booth & Unsworth, 2020). When press freedom is suppressed, the public loses access to objective and transparent information, which is critical to maintaining government accountability. In addition, they use repression against civil society organizations that act as independent monitors of the government (Kriger, 2023). Non-governmental organizations that criticize government policies or focus on human rights are often targeted for restrictions, with threats to their existence or operations. Authoritarian leaders seek to silence institutions that have the potential to criticize their policies or provide alternatives for dissenting thought. This issue leads to the loss of space for healthy and constructive political discussions in the society (Lindberg, 2020).

The abuse toward the opposition contributes to ongoing political and social instability. When the opposition is not given space to participate in the political process, people feel deprived of channels to legitimately express their dissatisfaction (Ayee, 2021). This sense of injustice often gives rise to large protests. Countries led in such repressive ways are often trapped in cycles of violence and instability, which may hinder the development and socio-economic progress (Nyamweya, 2022). Overall, the abuse on the opposition implemented by political leaders in Africa illustrates a pattern of authoritarian leadership that undermines the principles of democracy and freedom. To achieve sustainable progress and create greater political stability, African countries need to ensure that the opposition can participate freely and openly in the political process. Respect for human rights, freedom of expression, and an independent judicial system are essential to create a government that is fair and responsive to the needs of the people (Nnadozie, 2021).

### **Abandonment of Democracy**

According to many respondents, political leaders in Africa often ignore the basic principles of democracy in running their governments. One of the most visible forms of disregard for democracy is the restriction of political freedom and the people's right to choose their leaders freely (Akinola & Ademola, 2021). There is a lot of manipulation in managing election vote results. The official results of elections in Africa could come out, at the earliest, after one month from the time of the election. The sector that manages elections in Africa is said to be independent but is not (Ogunyemi, 2022). Those who are from the central government uses various means to prevent opposition participation, from intimidation, media restrictions, to the use of force to suppress dissenting voices (Adesina, 2020).

The electoral process in Africa can be said to be fraudulent and not free. Many leaders have used their power to redraw electoral districts, disqualify opposition candidates, and even suppress media (Moyo, 2021). Elections, which are supposed to be a forum for choosing leaders freely and fairly, are often controlled in such way just to advantage the party in power. Additionally, the freedoms of association and assembly guaranteed in democracies are often threatened under governments that ignore democracy (Nyamweya, 2022).

The disregard for democracy by political leaders in Africa is leading to protracted political and social instability. When basic principles of democracy, such as the right to vote, freedom of speech, and separation of powers, are violated, this can create a deep sense of injustice among the people (Angola & Araromi, 2022). Thus, to achieve sustainable progress and stability, it is important for African countries to return to the basic principles of democracy, ensuring that governments remain accountable to their people and respect individual rights (Khan, 2020). Only with democratic governance, which makes room for free and fair political participation, can African countries achieve genuine social and economic progress.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the issues faced by the political leaders in Africa reflect the major challenges that hinder social, political and economic progress on the continent. Rampant corruption, lack of accountability, nepotism and patronage, as well as abuse on the opposition and disregard for democratic principles are some of the main problems that hinder the creation of good and sustainable governance. These practices often distance leaders from the needs of the people, causing distrust of government institutions and increasing social inequality.

Rampant corruption and a disregard for accountability among many political leaders in Africa creates a non-transparent and unfair environment, where state resources are misused for personal gain. This further exacerbates social inequality and slows down economic development that can improve people's welfare. In addition, nepotism and patronage are often ways to strengthen power, ignore the principle of meritocracy, and increase inequality in access to economic and political opportunities. Additionally, the crackdown on the opposition and free speech illustrates the leadership's inability to accommodate dissent and develop an inclusive political space. When leaders use power to suppress criticism and curb freedom of expression, this not only undermines democracy, but also creates social tensions that can lead to political instability. The disregard for democracy, whether through unfair elections, the elimination of freedom of expression, or the strengthening of executive power, further worsens political conditions in many African countries.

To create better and more sustainable governance, African countries must commit to improve transparency, increase accountability, and avoid abuse of power. Political reforms and stronger institutions, which prioritize the principles of democracy, human rights and the eradication of corruption, are important steps to overcome these challenges. Success in addressing these issues will pave the way for political stability, inclusive economic growth and better people's prosperity across the African continent.

## **REFERENCE**

Adesina, J. D. (2020). *Corruption and Political Leadership in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities*. Oxford University Press.

- Akinola, A. O., & Ademola, T. (2021). "Corruption and the Decline of Political Leadership in Africa: Implications for Governance." *African Politics Review*, 17(4), 334-348.
- Angola, J., & Araromi, S. (2022). "The Persistence of Corruption in African Political Leadership: A Case Study of Nigeria's 21st Century Political Landscape." *International Political Science Review*, 43(2), 209-226.
- Ayee, J. R. A. (2021). *Democracy, Governance, and Development in Africa: Politics, Corruption, and Power*. Routledge.
- Booth, D., & Unsworth, S. (2020). "Corruption, Political Leadership, and Development in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities." *International Development Review*, 22(4), 112-130.
- Chikwanha, A. B. (2023). "Leadership, Corruption, and the Dilemma of Democratic Consolidation in Africa." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 41(1), 31-49.
- Durojaye, E. (2023). "The Role of the Judiciary in Curbing Corruption in African Political Leadership." *Journal of Law and Politics in Africa*, 14(1), 78-94.
- Emynorane, R.H., Huda, M., Degeng, N. S., Supriyanto, A., & Citriadin, Y. (2024). Challenges and Supports for Enhancing Teacher Professionalism in Private High Schools of Malang: A Qualitative Study. *Al-Ishlah Jurnal Pendidikan*, 16(2), 1606-1615. <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v16i2.5215>
- Gheorghe, D. (2021). "The Role of Political Leadership in Combating Corruption in Africa: Lessons from South Africa and Kenya." *International Journal of African Politics*, 12(3), 145-167.
- Hassan, S. Z. (2020). "Corruption and Leadership in Africa: A Case Study of Nigeria's Democratic Transition." *International Journal of Political Science and Public Administration*, 7(1), 65-83.
- Khan, H. (2020). "Corruption and State Leadership in Africa: A Historical Perspective." *African Historical Review*, 49(4), 430-448.
- Kipkemboi, W. J., & Okoth, S. G. (2023). "Leadership, Governance, and Anti-Corruption Policies in Africa: A Critical Evaluation." *Journal of African Public Administration*, 29(3), 203-219.
- Klingebliel, S. (2020). "Corruption and Democracy: The Case of Post-Colonial Africa." *Journal of African Politics*, 45(2), 114-132.
- Klingebliel, S., & Petersen, R. (2020). *Political Corruption in Africa: The Struggle for Accountability and Good Governance*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kruger, N. (2023). "Corruption and Leadership in Zimbabwe: An Assessment of Political Reform and Democratic Governance." *African Studies Review*, 66(3), 87-101.
- Lefort, R. (2022). "Political Leadership and the Problem of Corruption in Democratic Transitions in Africa." *African Journal of Political Science*, 44(2), 207-227.
- Lindberg, S. I. (2020). "Corruption and Political Leadership in Africa: A Comparative Study." *African Studies Review*, 63(2), 215-238.
- Mamdani, M. (2021). "Corruption, Leadership, and State Capacity in African Democracies: A Case Study of Uganda." *International Journal of African Studies*, 46(2), 121-138.
- Moyo, D. (2021). "Democracy, Corruption, and Leadership in Africa: A Study of Electoral Integrity." *International Journal of African Studies*, 58(3), 58-79.
- Munyua, M. L. (2022). "Leadership and Governance: Corruption and Its Impact on Political Stability in East Africa." *Journal of African Governance and Development*, 34(2), 220-235.
- Nhamo, G. (2021). "Leadership and Governance: The Impact of Corruption on

- Zimbabwe's Democratic Landscape." *The International Journal of Politics and Governance*, 19(3), 175-191.
- Nnadozie, E. C. (2021). *The Political Dynamics of Corruption in Africa*. Springer.
- Nyamweya, R. (2022). "Corruption and Political Will in Africa: The Case of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Kenya." *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 35(1), 98-114.
- Ochieng, D., & Ibe, N. E. (2022). "Leadership, Corruption, and Democratic Accountability in Africa: A Critical Review." *Journal of African Politics and Society*, 24(4), 315-330.
- Odhiambo, M. A. (2022). *The Political Economy of Corruption and Governance in Africa*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ogunyemi, F. S. (2022). "Political Corruption and Democratic Development in Sub-Saharan Africa." *Democratization*, 29(1), 122-144.
- Okeke, A. (2020). "Corruption, Leadership, and Democratic Backsliding in Africa: The Case of Uganda." *Journal of Democracy and Development in Africa*, 9(1), 73-92.
- Okolo, S. E., & Tella, A. O. (2022). "Governance and Leadership in Africa: Combating Corruption in the Democratic Context." *African Political Science Review*, 26(1), 33-56.
- Olowu, D. (2021). "Political Leadership and Anti-Corruption Initiatives in Africa: Comparative Perspectives from Ghana and Kenya." *Journal of Comparative Politics in Africa*, 5(1), 33-47.
- Rodríguez, L., & Arriola, E. (2020). "The Politics of Corruption in Sub-Saharan Africa: Implications for Democracy and Political Leadership." *Democratization*, 27(5), 967-984.
- Sarr, M. O. (2023). "The Challenge of Corruption in African Political Leadership: A Comparative Study of Senegal and Nigeria." *African Governance Journal*, 19(2), 201-217.
- Schwab, R. (2021). "Democratic Governance and Corruption in Africa: Insights from Post-Colonial Transitions." *The Journal of Politics in Africa*, 35(1), 41-60.
- Sikazwe, R. (2021). "Corruption, Democracy, and Leadership in Zambia: A Case Study." *African Politics and Governance Journal*, 7(3), 45-62.
- Tadesse, A. (2021). "Corruption and Leadership in Ethiopia: From Authoritarianism to Democratic Transition." *African Journal of Democracy and Governance*, 8(2), 56-71.
- Tadros, M. (2023). "Corruption and Governance: A Study of the Failure of Democratic Reforms in Africa." *Governance: An International Journal of Policy and Administration*, 37(4), 601-617.
- Teye, J. (2020). "Corruption, Electoral Politics, and the Failure of Democracy in Ghana." *Global Politics and Democracy Review*, 13(2), 156-172.
- Tshuma, B. (2020). "The Role of Political Leadership in Combating Corruption in Southern Africa." *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 46(4), 705-724.
- Wambui, M. (2022). "Corruption, Leadership, and Public Sector Reforms in Africa: A Comparative Approach." *Global Governance Review*, 18(2), 76-93.