

T02P13 / Confronting Theories of Institutional Change in Anticorruption Research

Topic : T02 / Comparative Public Policy sponsored by Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis

Chair : Denis Saint-Martin (Université de Montréal)

Second Chair : Daniel Weinstock (Institute for Health & Social Policy)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

In recent years, new conceptions of systemic corruption as a dysfunctional informal institution consisting of a series of collective action dilemmas (social traps) have emerged in anticorruption research. These approaches emphasize the role of social norms and cultural beliefs as coordinating devices or mechanisms that sustain particular equilibria. Definitions of systemic corruption as an informal institution are a welcomed addition to the analyst's toolkit. But they describe an all-encompassing form of corruption that leaves very little room for human agency. And they refer only to extreme cases, supposed to represent the exception more than the rule. This panel seeks to fill those gaps.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Systemic corruption is typically associated to the developing world, not to rich countries with advanced welfare states. In anticorruption studies, the theory is that these countries were once systematically corrupted, but broke free from it in a revolutionary moment of abrupt and wholesale transformation. Bo Rothstein calls this the "big bang approach" to change, which suggests that societies cannot escape the "social trap" of systemic corruption gradually, but only through "dramatic", radical reconfigurations. The big question then becomes how systemically corrupt social orders make the transition to a non or less corrupt one? Discontinuous models of change exaggerate the rupture between past and present and pay insufficient to the adaptive nature of corruption networks in societies. This especially the case in the developed world, where the theory assumes that corruption is residual, but where instances of endemic corruption in banking (the LIBOR scandal in the UK), in engineering (the downfall of SNC-Lavalin in Canada) or in construction (the Schiphol train tunnel in The Netherland) have recently been uncovered and led to major public inquiries. This panel invites papers that address the issue of change in anticorruption research.

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Session 1

Thursday, June 29th 13:30 to 15:30 (Li Ka Shing LKS 1 - 1)

Discussants

Daniel Weinstock (Institute for Health & Social Policy)

Corruption in Post-Communist Countries. How does radical rupture between the past and present influence the space for corruption?

Vladimira Dvorakova (University of Economics, Prague)

One-Two Punch Approach to Fighting Corruption in Public Infrastructure

Paul Lagunes (Columbia University)

The Small World Effect: Legislative Size and Political Resistance to Anticorruption Reform

Denis Saint-Martin (Université de Montréal)

Corruption in public administration: an ethnographic approach

Davide Torsello

The Uruguayan Way from Particularism to Universalism

Daniel Buquet (Universidad de la República)