

**Workshop Title:****The intricacies of accountability: horizontal, vertical and diagonal mechanisms to combat corruption****Outline of topic:**

Recent decades have seen a groundswell of research on political corruption, yielding a wealth of new knowledge regarding the economic, political and institutional conditions that curtail venality or allow it to flourish. Political corruption distorts the political and policy processes, introducing favoritism, undermining predictability, and generally rendering a political system less effective and more regressive. Many questions remain, however, regarding the conditions, or combinations of conditions, that might bring about change in the prevalence of corruption in contemporary polities. While the range of possible conditions that warrant consideration is vast, this session focuses on factors relating to accountability mechanisms of various forms, whether horizontal (intragovernmental), vertical (electoral) or diagonal (societal, in which non-state actors are instrumental).

Evidence exists that the effectiveness of each of these accountability mechanisms is highly contingent on a range of contextual factors, such as the autonomy of media actors, the existence and nature of meaningful political competition, the level of education in a polity, the strength and autonomy of civil society, the politicization of corruption as an issue and the existence of an anti-corruption discourse in political debates, and of course on the specific design of the governmental and electoral institutions themselves. For example, the existence of civil society associations focused on anti-corruption may result in a higher likelihood of the removal of corrupt politicians via elections. An audit office that routinely publishes performance reports may prove instrumental to the success of civil society efforts to hold corrupt offices to account. This panel deals with the dynamic interplay between accountability systems and their contextual environment to either affect or fail to affect the prevalence of political corruption in a polity.

**Relation to existing research:**

Considerable research has now emerged exploring the interrelationships between government corruption and factors such as economic growth, levels and history of democracy, press freedom, and civil liberties, as well as various aspects of societal well-being (Holmberg, Nasiritousi and Rothstein 2009; Lambsdorff 2006; Rose-Ackerman 1999; Treisman 2000; Treisman 2007). Taken cumulatively, this research convincingly shows that government corruption is interrelated with many of the factors we see as components of political development, with the notable exception that democracy exhibits an inverted U-shaped relationship with corruption (Bäck and Hadenius 2008).

More recent research on government corruption has begun to unpack the concept of corruption itself and explore the conditions—political, institutional and societal—which may account for variations in specific types of political corruption. These conditions can span from the very specific, in the form of anti-corruption policies and agencies, to large scale legal and institutional transformations that seem to disrupt norms of using public resources to private gain, resulting in a system in which rule-bound behavior becomes the prevailing norm (Rothstein 2011). While piecemeal anti-corruption reforms in isolation have proven quite ineffectual in diminishing corruption (Batory 2012), evidence suggests that the large scale societal transformations have generally occurred under the tutelage of authoritarian rulers, and may therefore be less instructive for anti-corruption efforts in democratic regimes.

Between these two endpoints exists a broad range of institutional, legal and societal factors which either in isolation but more plausibly, in light of existing evidence, in combination with one another, may contribute to strengthening accountability and diminishing corruption. This session seeks to advance this line of enquiry and invites papers dealing with various aspects of horizontal, vertical or diagonal/societal accountability and how they independently or in an interactive way relate to circumscribing the scope of corruption.

Horizontal accountability may include the anti-corruption agencies, but may also include the powers and efforts of specific government offices, such as audit agencies, legislative or executive offices, as well as the relationship between political and administrative institutions (Gustavsson 2014; Dahlström, Lapuente, and Teorell 2012). Moreover, the composition of legislatures, and in particular the gender distribution among elected representatives, has also been observed to affect corruption, though the mechanisms remain poorly understood. Various aspects of the relationship between politicians and administrative institutions correlate strongly with levels of corruption in a country, and of foremost importance seems to be the degree to which politicians exert control over the appointment of administrative personnel.

Vertical accountability, realized via elections, has in contrast proven less effective than democratic theory would predict, though the failure of this mechanism remains difficult to explain fully and may vary depending on the specifics of the political context, such as the existence of anti-corruption parties or the behavior of media actors (Chang, Golden, and Hill 2010; Golden and Picci 2008).

Research on diagonal, or societal, accountability, directs attention to the involvement of non-state actors in accountability efforts, and this research suggests that numerous contextual conditions shape the strategies, opportunities and effectiveness of non-state actors' efforts to curtail corruption (Grimes 2013; Johnston 2005; Lee 2007; Peruzzotti and Smulovitz 2006). In addition to the economic and political independence of the media, favorable conditions include political competition, transparency, and the existence and minimal operability of formal institutions of accountability willing to field complaints and act upon suspected malfeasance.

In sum, this session welcomes papers on a broad range of accountability mechanisms as they relate to enhancing good government, and especially invites investigations that consider the intrinsic as well as extrinsic conditions that enhance or inhibit their effectiveness.

**Type of Papers required:** The session welcomes empirical papers on legal, institutional, political and societal aspects of. A broad range of methodological approaches including historical, contemporary or diachronic case studies, as well as experiment-based and comparative analyses will help to enrich the overall exploration of these issues.

**Biographical notes:** Marcia Grimes is Associate Professor at the University of Gothenburg and research fellow at the Quality of Government Institute. Her research interests include the link between transparency and corruption, as well as the roles of female representatives and civil society in combating corruption and how these efforts are shaped by and interact with political and institutional conditions. Recent publications have appeared in *Governance*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *American Public Administration Review*, and *Studies in Comparative International Development*.

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