The International Anti-Corruption Movement

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Outline

Corruption is a longstanding concern in domestic politics, and governments have often set up anti-corruption agencies after crises or scandals. However, following initiatives taken in the late 1970s, there has been an explosion of international interest in anti-corruption activity since the early 1990s. Regardless whether this intensity of concern about anti-corruption is a response to a real increase in the number of occurrences and their sophistication or simply product of the sharpening of perceptions about the phenomenon, a sort of fin-de-siècle hysteria, it would be difficult to deny the importance of corruption and anti-corruption to today’s public debate and policy-making at different levels. Governments, regional and international organisations reacted to corruption and its pervasiveness, and so did civil society.

Anti-corruption was shaped by the interplay of a key number of ‘social forces that were hitherto largely held in check or lacked the muscle to stand up against the arrogance and corruption of the elites’ (Della Porta & Mény 1997). At the forefront the press, but also magistrates, opposition party leaders, disaffected party members, populist parties/movements, watchdog groups and NGOs have intervened in the public arena to make their points of view valid about what they believed to be unacceptable behaviour in public life.

Further to the role played by the traditional anti-corruption actors, we also witnessed the rise of a key number of new (or renewed) governmental and social forces both at the domestic and international levels. Two of the most prominent “moral crusaders” of the 1990s was the renewed interest in anti-corruption agencies, commissions or committees (hereafter ICACs) and the birth of Transparency International (TI), an INGO based in Berlin whose primary mission has been recently defined as ‘to work to create change towards a world free of corruption’.
The interplay of these actors constitutes the organizational tissue of the international anti-corruption movement and the complex knitting of control measures and instruments the process of value. In so far these actors are actively engaged in creating a common process of value change in society, they qualify as a movement.

The international anti-corruption movement has a few particularities:

- *it is constituted of traditional and new anti-corruption actors* with different interpretations of the facts unveiled and the measures to address them;
- *it is not a single-tone movement, despite its apparent cohesive outlook* – the degree of consensus over the policy salience of corruption is not always harmonious across all actors involved and does not reach all forms or types of occurrences with the same degree of concern;
- *it aggregates the efforts of governmental and non-governmental organizations* – the fight against corruption is no longer a state-business only. Civil society, in its multiple forms has equally been engaged, thus raising interesting considerations has to the accountability and legitimacy of their initiatives and the relationship between governmental and non-governmental actors: challengers, instrumental or mutually-supportive?
- *it marries global and local initiatives* – The fight against corruption is no longer contingent to State jurisdictions, actors and measures. International control initiatives are cumulative to those taken at the domestic level. The globalisation of corruption mechanisms and transactions raises the need for an externalisation and internationalisation of control initiatives, whilst international initiatives need to be transposed into national jurisdictions where most anti-corruption work carried out. National actors, such as the Judiciary and ICACs look outwards to international fora and higher levels of decision-making to compensate for the insufficiency of domestic instruments and responses in addressing cross-border mechanisms and occurrences of corruption; whereas international efforts, such as the awareness raising and lobbying for international conventions promoted by TI have to look downwards in search of national partners and constituencies where most of these instruments need to be ratified, implemented and, hopefully, evaluated;
- *it is both a movement of global awareness raising and opinion mobilization* as well as a *network of policy transfer and institutional mimetism* – the notion of movement implies both an organized effort by different actors and supporters towards a common goal and a tendency or trend of ideas, policies, institutions. International actors and fora have not only been successful in raising awareness about corrupt practices, they have equally contributed to fostering the diffusion, transfer and assimilation of knowledge on the general format of anti-corruption tools and institutions, highlighting best practices through comparison.
Anti-corruption activity now takes place in a wider context of international insistence on good governance, not only among developing and formerly socialist countries but also in the prosperous countries of the OECD. Anti-corruption reforms are now sometimes required as a condition for loans, or requirement for accession to the EU. A small industry of training and technical assistance has grown up to ensure compliance. As ‘anti-corruption’ has become institutionalised, the founders of the movement are reconsidering their roles or moving on. The international environment may also be changing around it.

The purpose of the workshop is to understand the rise, future, and implications of the global anti-corruption movement. We want to give priority to the two actors mentioned above – one governmental (ICACs) and one non-governmental (TI) – and to locate them in a wider context and history of anti-corruption activity. We are also interested in the way the movement has constructed ‘corruption’ as a problem; the international spread of doctrine and models; international linkages between government anti-corruption agencies; the relationship between governmental and ‘civil society’ actors; and the relationship between corruption, anti-corruption and democratic politics.

Relation to existing research

The workshop relates to a large body of literature on corruption and its control. It is equally of interest to research on social movements, internal governance of governmental and non-governmental organisations, policy design and transfer, value change, and comparative politics and institutions.

The two workshop directors have been collaborating on a three-year research project on ‘Transparency International and the Problem of Corruption’ funded by the Australia Research Council.

Potential participants

The workshop aims at excellence by striking a balance between matured and fresh input research. Well-established experts will be contacted and selected
directly and will not constitute more than one-third of the total number of participants (around 16). The remaining applications are aimed at advanced research students, hopefully coming from different academic backgrounds, and will be selected through an open call adequately advertised in our institutions’ websites and by institutional mailing lists.

We will equally ensure that fairness of geographical spread, gender and age will be taken into consideration when selecting participants.

**Shortlist of participants (by direct invitation):**

**Co-directors**
- Luís de Sousa (CIES/ISCTE, Portugal)
- Barry Hindess (ANU, Australia)
- Peter Larmour (ANU, Australia)
- Jeroen Maesschalck (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium)
- Steven Sampson (Lund University, Sweden)
- Nathalie Behnke (FernUniversität Hagen, Germany)
- Jon S.T. Quah (National University of Singapore, Singapore)
- Marianne (Lala) Camerer (Centre for Public Integrity, USA; South Africa)
- Frank Anechiarico (Hamilton University, USA)
- Michael Johnston (Colgate University, USA)
- Alan Doig (University of Teesside, UK)

**Type of paper**
The co-directors wish to attract both single case and comparative papers that strike a balance between empirical data (quantitative and qualitative) and relevant, critical and audacious general theoretical questions/debates. Purely descriptive papers will not be welcomed.
Developmental, institutional, legal and historical approaches are favoured. Papers should focus on the two entities mentioned above: governmental and non-governmental anti-corruption actors.

**Funding**
Participants will cover their own travelling and accommodation expenses. The co-directors will seek sponsoring from aid agencies and national research councils.

**Biographical note**


**Luís de Sousa** got his Ph.D. in Social and Political Sciences at the European University Institute, Florence, Italy, on 12 July 2002, following public defence of a thesis entitled *Corruption: Assessing Ethical Standards in Political Life*