



Editorial

Guest Editors' Introduction

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1. INTRODUCTION

Corruption has increasingly become an important phenomenon for understanding general development processes and policies (Qizilbash, 2001; Sen, 1999; UNDP, 1997). Since the mid-1970s, corruption has been the focus of an increasing number of academic studies from a number of different disciplines, including Law, Economics, Political Science, History, Public Administration, and Social Anthropology. This set of papers originated out of a symposium on corruption at the University of East Anglia, United Kingdom, that provided a forum for leading researchers and practitioners to contribute to an interdisciplinary approach to corruption and to facilitate understanding of corruption and its implications on development policy. The symposium was designed to give impetus to debate and collaboration across disciplinary boundaries.

To understand the link between corruption and development, we felt it was essential to look at corruption from a perspective that includes a wide variety of social artefacts such as culture, norms, and values, along with the impact of history and prosperity. Since typically disciplinary based approach focuses at only particular aspects and issues related to corruption, the study of corruption from an interdisciplinary perspective should be able to provide deeper insights into the extent and causes of corruption. However, due to methodological differences between disciplines, it has often been problematic for researchers to bene-

fit from or undertake joint research with other disciplines. Problems of definition, scope, comparability, meaning, and importance abound across disciplines.

These problems naturally affect the analysis and measurement of corruption (Duncan, forthcoming; Johnston, 2001a, 2001b). In analyzing corruption, economists, for example, have generally focused on bureaucratic corruption (Bardhan, 1997) where the underlying assumption is of a sharp distinction between the public and private sphere. However, rich anthropological case studies (Gupta, 1995) from developing countries have pointed out the difficulty of clearly distinguishing between the public and private spheres. Similarly political science has focused on issues of grand corruption (Andvig & Fjeldstad, 2001; Rose-Ackerman, 1999, 2001) without integrating social norms and cultural factors that influence such corruption (Chabal & Daloz, 1999). An interdisciplinary approach, therefore, would be better able to look in to the rich and complex link between corruption and development without which the causal process cannot be fully understood.

Furthermore, when it comes to measurement issues, there are inherent difficulties associated with collecting cross-country data on corruption because of issues of comparability and the hidden nature of the phenomenon (Andvig & Fjeldstad, 2001). Nonetheless, policy deci-

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sions by international organizations and national governments are increasingly being informed by such data, as well as more detailed data collected at a national and local level. The nature of the problem becomes significant when one undertakes cross-country research on corruption. For policy, one needs to bring in the causal information of qualitative studies and at the same time be able to use a general empirical analysis in multiple contexts. A pure disciplinary based approach risks being narrow in focus and limited in scope.

Careful analysis of how corruption is constructed, re-constructed, measured, interpreted, and used is necessary if research is to avoid contributing to policies that may be inappropriate or even counterproductive. To establish a credible understanding of any link between corruption and development, then, one has to accommodate the richness of cases with where appropriate the general characteristics of a phenomenon. Much of this work requires a careful understanding of the intentions and limitations of the research, models and conclusions reached. Failure to take proper account of the limitations of one or other method can lead to misleading outcomes either in terms of general policy panacea (which have so far proved elusive in application) or complete relativism in which corruption becomes a chimera.

2. THEME OF THE SPECIAL SECTION

The papers in this special section provide an attempt to go beyond standard disciplinary boundaries and integrate broader issues both empirically and analytically that enhances the understanding of the link between corruption and development. Further, when it comes to policy, the papers show how narrow disciplinary based approach to corruption may be problematic.

We have divided the papers, broadly based on the issues they cover, into two categories: (a) analytical and (b) measurement. The analytical papers are discussed first. We also illustrate the link between the different papers that have been selected in their respective categories.

(a) *Analytical issues*

This set of papers looks at the limitations of analyzing corruption within strict disciplinary boundaries and confirms the need for an integrated approach to the study of corruption

and development that incorporates an understanding of the social system.

In a paper particularly relevant to the link between corruption and development, Andvig argues that in situations of rapid development many of the shortcomings in our analysis of the relationship between development and corruption are exposed. It focuses on the reason for corruption and provides fresh insights by explicitly bringing in a role for institutions. The paper explores the micro-co-ordination issues that occur within organizations under rapid changes in the rules of transactions. It goes on to show how the change affects the behavior of those organizations particularly with respect to corruption.

Pranab Bardhan identifies some of the strengths and weaknesses of the disciplinary approach in economics. The paper further discusses issues of political accountability and highlights the role of NGOs in combating corruption. He shows that modeling corruption in a multiple equilibrium framework may be better able to integrate issues of culture, norms, and history.

Taking this further, Ajit Mishra argues for an economic analysis that endogenizes cultural and social characteristics as a primary requirement for a fuller modeling of corruption, and thus provides the basis of a link to other disciplines that have often been excluded due to the theory of choice used in economics. The paper argues that purely incentive-based approaches cannot lead us to a proper understanding of corruption. It is difficult to treat corruption purely as an incentive problem because corruption endogenizes and undermines the incentive system itself. These need to be supplemented by considerations of values and norms.

(b) *Measurement issues*

For obvious reasons, the measurement of corruption is methodologically challenging. It is all the more so, because corruption is very often not an isolated event but part of a systemic set of networks and constraints that conditions the behavior of the actor. Looking at the "corrupt act" in isolation provides only a partial view of that system and thus inference between this level and impact on development processes run the risk of being fragile. The papers in this section provide substantial contributions to the methodology of capturing the levels of corruption both in the system of, for example, a supply chain, and also on the effect

that corruption has on the relationship between the individual and their perceptions about many of the social artifacts that surround them.

Ritva Rienikka and Jakob Svensson consider and elaborate methods recently developed and used to very significant effect in quantifying corruption in formal supply chains, thus linking input, output, and leakage through a number of organizations. In the microtechniques described in the paper, several common issues for corruption research are brought out; firstly, measurement is indeed possible within a well-specified definition, and in a relatively formal environment. Secondly, meaning from data should be subject to triangulation with qualitative data. Thirdly, the paper illustrates that the results of such efforts in tracking quantitative corruption can result in the development of testable hypotheses and successful anti-corruption strategies, and this is illustrated with a case example.

Through an empirical study, William Miller explicitly addresses the role of norms and values and how it affects choice and behavior. Rather than taking a qualitative approach to this problem Miller has developed quantitative empirical methodologies. Miller tests, on the basis of these extensive empirical data, the interaction between individual behavior and held values. This work provides an explanation for the apparent contradiction where people value honesty while also confessing to acting corruptly.

Mitchell Seligson uses extensive empirical studies in Latin America to measure how individuals in a number of different categories experience corruption, and discusses the implications on perceptions and trust in organizations and institutions. The paper explores the

problems with the existing measures of corruption. It then, using detailed survey data, puts forth an approach to measure the victimization that people feel when they experience corruption.

3. CONCLUSIONS

We hope, that by bringing together this set of papers from different disciplines, we are not only able to show the frontier work in these fields on corruption, but also are able to highlight some responses to complexities of corruption and outcomes of interdisciplinary research. This we hope, will encourage more research on corruption from an interdisciplinary angle, which will be better able to exploit the synergies from the different disciplines as has been shown in these set of papers.

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