

Article

The proliferation of neoliberal ideology: A study of international anti-corruption discourse through the lens of institutional entrepreneurship theory

Ivy Abat Brown¹, Mai Thi Thanh Thai^{2,*}¹ Queens' College, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB3 9ET, United Kingdom² Department of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, HEC Montreal, Montreal, QC H3T 2A7, Canada* **Corresponding author:** Mai Thi Thanh Thai, mai.thai@hec.ca

CITATION

Brown IA, Thai MTT. (2024). The proliferation of neoliberal ideology: A study of international anti-corruption discourse through the lens of institutional entrepreneurship theory. *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development*. 8(8): 4295. <https://doi.org/10.24294/jipd.v8i8.4295>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 18 January 2024

Accepted: 18 April 2024

Available online: 15 August 2024

COPYRIGHT



Copyright © 2024 by author(s).

Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development is published by EnPress Publisher, LLC. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Abstract: This study examines the development and influence of the international anti-corruption regime, utilizing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to dissect the discursive practices that shape perceptions of corruption and the strategies employed to combat it. Our analysis reveals how Western institutional entrepreneurs play a pivotal role in defining corruption predominantly as bribery and governance failures, underpinned by a neoliberal ideology that prescribes societal norms and identifies corrupt practices. By exploring the mechanisms through which this ideology is propagated, the research enriches institutional entrepreneurship theory and highlights the neoliberal foundations of current anti-corruption efforts. This study not only enhances our understanding of the institutional frameworks that govern anti-corruption discourse but also demonstrates how discourse legitimizes certain ideologies while marginalizing others. The findings offer practical tools for altering power dynamics, promoting equitable participation, and addressing the imbalanced North-South power relations. By challenging established perspectives, this research contributes to transformative discourse and action, offering new pathways for understanding and combating corruption. These insights have significant theoretical and practical implications for improving the effectiveness of corruption prevention and counteraction strategies globally.

Keywords: institutional entrepreneurship; institutional logic; corruption; critical discourse analysis; divergent change; neoliberal ideology

1. Introduction

Corruption, broadly defined as the “abuse of entrusted power for private gain” (Transparency International, 2020c), presents significant challenges for developing nations due to its far-reaching socio-economic consequences. It is well-documented that corruption diverts resources meant for societal progress into the hands of influential individuals. However, limited attention has been given to the process behind the rise of neoliberal ideology and the establishment of the international anti-corruption framework.

The international anti-corruption regime, built upon Transparency International’s definition, has faced scrutiny, sparking debates regarding its effectiveness and implications for developing nations. Critics (Della Porta and Vannucci, 1999; Rose-Ackerman, 1999) argue that its focus on corruption as a principal-agent issue predominantly addresses the public sector, overlooking equally pervasive corruption in the private sector. Instances of Western multinationals engaging in bribery to secure foreign contracts, sometimes with the involvement of Western financial institutions,

have raised concerns. Furthermore, tax deductions for bribery in export-oriented economies like Germany have raised questions about the unintended consequences of anti-corruption strategies.

Additionally, some scholars (Kajsiu, 2018) challenge this narrow view of corruption, contending that it excessively confines corruption to the principal-agent dynamic within the public sector. This perspective appears questionable when considering the involvement of Western multinationals in bribery to secure foreign contracts and the tax-deductible status of such practices. A cadre of academics (e.g., Galtung, 2006; Hansen, 2012; Warren and Laufer, 2009; etc.) asserts that the anti-corruption strategies endorsed by the international community may inadvertently perpetuate narratives that legitimize power imbalances in global governance. Consequently, they advocate for reevaluating the dominant anti-corruption discourse to foster a more equitable global governance landscape (Everett et al., 2006; Kajsiu, 2018).

Emerging scholarship suggests that the pervasive influence of neoliberal ideology imposed by Western actors (Brown and Cloke, 2004; Hansen, 2011; Kajsiu, 2018; Kaufmann, 2008; Ledeneva, 2018; etc.) may underlie these dynamics. These actors have played a pivotal role in promoting contemporary globalization, which disproportionately benefits Western nations (Ikenberry, 2007). Pogge (2005) contends that globalization represents the culmination of centuries of colonialism, slavery, and genocide, resulting in substantial socioeconomic inequalities, environmental degradation, and structural injustices (Pogge, 2005; Scholte, 2017). The unbridled neoliberalism characterizing our current world order is often considered a zero-sum game with adverse consequences for developing nations (Pogge, 2005). A recent study by Reinsberg et al. (2019) suggests that neoliberal globalization inadvertently fuels corruption.

As Fukuyama (Fukuyama, 1989, 1992) has pointed out, although this system is imperfect, no superior alternative currently exists. Neoliberal ideology's appeal and anticipated outcomes have been extensively explored and effectively disseminated. Its ascent gained momentum following the victory of the allied forces in WWII (Ikenberry, 2007) and solidified as the dominant ideology in the post-Cold War international arena (Antonio, 2007). Often synonymous with Westernization, neoliberalism's influence is deeply ingrained in our current world order, dictating the range of economic activities possible in various countries (Baumol, 2010). Understanding how neoliberalism ascended to prominence and the institutional logics underpinning our present global order is of paramount importance. This knowledge bears significance for those advocating alternative changes to the prevailing global anti-corruption regime (Colomy, 1998; Galtung, 2006; Warren and Laufer, 2009; Hansen, 2012).

However, there remains a significant gap in our understanding of the global proliferation of neoliberalism. Few systematic analyses have explored the coordinated efforts of Western actors in shaping the current global anti-corruption regime. While existing research primarily focuses on the effects of corruption and adopts a rational choice-institutionalist perspective (Gephart, 2009), investigations have mainly centered on defining, measuring, identifying causes and effects, legitimacy, and the liberal-rationalist values central to the predominant corruption paradigm (Bratsis,

2003; Galtung, 2006; Gephart, 2009; Johnston, 2005; Kaufmann, 2008). Given this lack of contextualization of the universal anti-corruption concept, a pressing need exists to delve deeper into how the anti-corruption regime itself was institutionalized and the ensuing norm conflicts and questions of domination (De Maria, 2008; Gephart, 2009; Ivanov, 2007). This exploration carries far-reaching implications, as contextualizing the fight against corruption allows for a better understanding of how the anti-corruption regime may inadvertently perpetuate neo-colonial North-South relations through the lens of the neoliberal agenda (Hindess, 2012; Polzer, 2001).

To address this research void, our study seeks to answer several pivotal questions: “How did the international anti-corruption regime evolve to its current state? What underpins its institutional logics? What mechanisms were deployed to establish these logics, and how?” To elucidate these inquiries, we meticulously examined the international anti-corruption discourse through the theoretical lens of institutional entrepreneurship. Our analysis encompassed the isolation, identification, and eventual conceptualization of corruption as an object of knowledge. Through qualitative examination, we uncovered how international actors institutionalized the concept of corruption and crafted anti-corruption measures aligned with Western ethical standards and governmentality. Our study responds to Su et al.’s (2017) call to incorporate regular institutional entrepreneurs into the research design, exploring the diverse motivations and interests of the agents engaged in these processes.

The results of our study yield several substantial contributions to the literature in the fields of corruption and institutional entrepreneurship. Theoretically, it enhances our understanding of corruption by revealing the discursive practices that shape international anti-corruption institutions and drive institutional change. Practically, it offers insights into improving the quality of prevention and counteraction to corruption by identifying and comprehending the tools employed by Western institutional entrepreneurs. This knowledge creates pathways for those seeking alternative transformations, thereby contributing to a more nuanced and equitable approach to global governance.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Nature of corruption

Corruption is commonly defined as the abuse or misuse of public discretionary power for private benefit (Bardhan, 1997; Rose-Ackerman, 1999; Treisman, 2000). However, it is essential to recognize that corruption is a dynamic phenomenon, manifesting in various forms and evolving (Graaf et al., 2010). It encompasses practices such as nepotism, bribery, embezzlement, abuse of power, and clientelism, hindering modernization (Kajsiu, 2018). Economically, corruption entails unscrupulous rent-seeking behavior, betrayal of the principal’s interests, and the sale of public goods for private gain (Kajsiu, 2018). Politically, it leads to injustice, exploitation, and betrayal of political interests and undermines the foundations of liberal democracy (Kajsiu, 2018). Corruption erodes the rule of law, disrupts good governance, imposes a high cost on taxpayers, and often prompts a legalistic approach rooted in consequentialism and utilitarianism (Hamir, 1999; Caiden et al., 2001).

Corruption often emerges within principal-agent relationships, where information asymmetry allows agents to pursue personal gains at the expense of principals' interests (Klitgaard, 1988). Becker (1968) suggests that activities enticing individuals to seek private gain in public decision-making amplify corruption. Agents, typically public officials, are more susceptible to corruption when they possess a monopoly over a service, wield significant discretionary powers, and face limited surveillance mechanisms (Klitgaard, 1988; Riley, 1998). However, some studies indicate that higher risks may deter individuals from succumbing to corruption, notably when societal standards invoke moral inhibitions (Chan, 2001).

Organizational context also plays a significant role in fostering corrupt behaviors, often reflecting and perpetuating dysfunctional cultures (Itzkovich and Heilbrunn, 2016). Corruption can become a normalized part of an organization's operations (Pillay and Kluvers, 2014; Rostami et al., 2015). An organization's structure and culture may facilitate corruption under four main conditions: opportunity, willingness, low perceived risks, and expertise in leveraging corruption (Zyglidopoulos et al., 2020). These conditions are prevalent in organizations within corrupt environments and are linked to operational costs like bribes and poor infrastructure (Fisman, 2001; Mauro, 1998). However, they also present opportunities to fight corruption (Zyglidopoulos et al., 2020).

The perception of corruption is influenced by a nation's culture, which is shaped by legal, political, and socioeconomic factors, history, and colonial legacies (Peterson and Smith, 1997). Different cultures may view corruption as anything from organized bribery, akin to taxation, to unpredictable kickbacks. The institutional frameworks shaped by these cultural contexts mediate the levels of discretion and accountability, thus affecting the prevalence and arbitrariness of corruption (Pillay and Dorasamy, 2010; Rodriguez et al., 2005).

As societies evolve, so does corruption. It has grown more complex with globalization and technological advancements like digital banking and cryptocurrencies, which both facilitate and complicate corruption (Bardhan, 1997; Klitgaard, 1988; Rose-Ackerman, 1999). However, technologies such as blockchain may also enhance transparency and aid in combating corruption (Treisman, 2000; Graaf et al., 2010).

In conclusion, corruption's perception and manifestation are profoundly shaped by varying cultural, legal, and economic frameworks across societies. These differences affect what is considered corrupt and the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures (Peterson and Smith, 1997; Rodriguez et al., 2005). Institutional frameworks developed under these cultural norms critically mediate the balance between discretion and accountability, influencing the prevalence and detectability of corruption. The complexity of these dynamics highlights the need for anti-corruption strategies that are sensitive to local conditions yet address the globalized nature of modern corruption, especially in an era of rapid technological change. This nuanced understanding, informed by both historical insights and current challenges, is vital for effective governance and the promotion of integrity globally.

2.2. Anti-Corruption discourse

The prevailing global order is dominated by neoliberal ideology, deeply embedded in economic policies, laws, and international relations. Western actors significantly shape institutions in this world order, often imposing Western-centric conceptions of reality (Hickel, 2017; Klein, 2007). This includes the legalistic definition of corruption as proliferated by the international community, encompassing activities like bribery, illegal gratuities, economic extortion, and conflicts of interest (Wells, 2017). However, contextual factors, environmental settings, and time can influence perceptions of corruption (Gephart, 2009). As a result, the critical question becomes not what corruption means but who determines its meaning and how widely those determinations are accepted (Johnston, 1999; Le Billon, 2005). Currently, discussions on corruption are evolving, with a strong emphasis on legal definitions shaped by Western legal norms and international policies. This is evident in the application of the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), which has led to numerous international prosecutions and debates over its extraterritorial reach (Rhee et al., 2023). Additionally, there is a growing recognition of the importance of judicial independence and the alignment of national laws with international principles as critical factors in effective anti-corruption measures (Kukutschka, 2024; Adam, 2024).

2.3. Institutional entrepreneurship theory

Institutional entrepreneurship, as elucidated by scholars such as Battilana et al. (2009), DiMaggio (1988), Jesson et al. (2011), and Seo and Creed (2002), involves embedded actors within a specific environment leveraging their available resources to drive institutional change. In the context of our study, we posit that the prevailing international anti-corruption regime is a product of institutional entrepreneurship. Specifically, we attribute this phenomenon to Western actors who have played a central role in shaping and disseminating the global anti-corruption regime, often driven by a neoliberal agenda. The foundation of our research rests on institutional entrepreneurship theory, as it provides a comprehensive framework to comprehend how Western actors have orchestrated the development and diffusion of anti-corruption institutions that align with their economic and political interests. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that institutional entrepreneurship is not exclusive to Western actors, as other actors can also harness the power of discourse to instigate transformative change, as emphasized by Suddaby and Greenwood (2005).

Eisenstadt (1980) identified various variables influencing social change, with institutional entrepreneurs emerging as a significant factor. These entrepreneurial individuals and groups assumed leadership roles, actively working towards the transformation of established institutions (Colomy, 1998; Eisenstadt, 1964, 1980). Building on Eisenstadt's foundational work, DiMaggio (1988) incorporated the concept of institutional entrepreneurship within the framework of institutional theory. This conceptualization aims to elucidate how actors can spearhead institutional change even in the face of formidable inertia (Holm, 1995; Seo and Creed, 2002). Consequently, institutional entrepreneurship counters the deterministic aspects of institutional analysis, emphasizing the pivotal role of actors and agency.

Institutional entrepreneurs employ a myriad of tactics to drive divergent change.

They often begin by crafting a compelling vision that unifies their actions, underlining the importance and necessity of institutional change (Battilana et al., 2009). The objective is to establish common ground by sharing a vision for change with other stakeholders (Wijen and Ansari, 2007). Framing strategies play a critical role, appealing to shared identities and common interests (Ansell, 1997; Benford and Snow, 2000). These strategies encompass diagnostic framing, which exposes existing problems and assigns blame to current institutionalized practices (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005), and prognostic framing, which elucidates the benefits of the proposed institutional change compared to the existing arrangements. Subsequently, institutional entrepreneurs proceed to delegitimize current institutional structures, including those supported by opponents (Creed et al., 2002; Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005), while advocating for the legitimacy of the proposed change among stakeholders and potential allies (Déjean et al., 2004; Demil and Bensédrine, 2005). Additionally, motivational framing is employed to provide persuasive reasons for action (Rao et al., 2000; Snow and Benford, 1992).

To mobilize individuals and gain approval for new practices, institutional entrepreneurs identify potential figures such as heroes and villains who may become involved in the change initiative (Scully and Creed, 2005). Redefining and defining identity are crucial steps in attracting support and forming viable coalitions (Rao et al., 2000). The goal is to unite allies, address inconsistencies within the coalition, and underscore contradictions among opponents by highlighting the shortcomings of the current institutional arrangement and demonstrating that proposed changes will yield improvements (Fligstein, 1997; Haveman and Rao, 1997; Holm, 1995; Rao, 1998; Seo and Creed, 2002; Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005). Furthermore, institutional entrepreneurs utilize discourse to motivate others to embrace and sustain the vision for institutional change. Employing rhetorical strategies (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005), they gather narratives, construct arguments, and develop narratives to make a compelling case for change.

Institutional entrepreneurs also play a crucial role in creating incentive structures (Wijen and Ansari, 2007), designing institutions to reduce transaction costs (North, 1990), and raising awareness of non-compliance costs (Barrett, 2003). They often appeal to principles of fairness, goodwill, and equity to promote the adoption of ethical guidelines (Wijen and Ansari, 2007). They may invoke formal authority to lend legitimacy to their cause (Phillips et al., 2000). It is essential to recognize that the characteristics of the institutional field can significantly impact the process of institutional change (Wijen and Ansari, 2007). Institutional entrepreneurs operating in highly institutionalized fields construct discourses that align with the interests and values of the dominant regime constituents (Greenwood et al., 2002; Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005). Conversely, when the field is fragmented and composed of various groups rather than a single entity, institutional entrepreneurs strive to construct a discourse that resonates with the interests and values of all the diverse actors (Fligstein, 1997; Hsu, 2006).

3. Methodology

3.1. Critical discourse analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) serves as the cornerstone of our research methodology, emphasizing the examination of power, ideology, and societal critique through what we define as both retrospective and meaningful analysis (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). Rooted in Weberian principles, CDA views power as the capacity of an actor to assert authority, even in the face of resistance (Weber, 1978). This approach is grounded in the belief that power dynamics are central to social interactions and shape various aspects of human experience within their societal contexts (Bourdieu, 1984).

In CDA, discourse is not merely linguistic expression but a product of intertwined political, social, and linguistic practices that evolve, reflecting and reinforcing power structures (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). By controlling cultural tools like language, images, and symbols, dominant groups can influence societal agents and legitimize their power.

Employing a retrospective analysis, CDA allows us to trace the historical context and evolution of these discourses, providing a deeper understanding of their current implications. Simultaneously, a meaningful analysis of semiotic data—textual, spoken, or visual—helps us to identify and address misconceptions, aiming to enlighten and empower marginalized groups (Van Dijk, 1993). Hermeneutics is employed as a method for interpreting this data, enabling a deep understanding of both overt and covert messages across communication modes (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

Our research utilizes CDA to explore how institutional entrepreneurs promote norm diffusion. CDA provides a framework to examine how power and domination are enacted in capitalist societies (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2003). This analysis builds on debates from the Institute of Social Research at the University of Frankfurt, which discussed whether language serves as a base influenced by economic conditions or as a part of the cultural superstructure that shapes those conditions (Ives, 2004).

CDA is also pivotal in analyzing how ideologies are taught and accepted globally. It has been applied across disciplines by sociolinguists, linguistic anthropologists, and communication ethnographers to study various cultural and educational dynamics (Gumperz, 1982; Hymes, 1972; Labov, 1972; Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975; Silverstein and Urban, 1996). In educational settings, CDA helps elucidate how discourse structures within classrooms reflect and perpetuate social hierarchies (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984; Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Oakes, 1986; Willis, 1977).

In this study, we integrated CDA with critical social theory and institutional entrepreneurship theory to analyze social interactions and the influence of discourse on our understanding of the world (Rogers et al., 2005). We employed a temporal and meaningful periodization to examine the dynamic shifts in the content of paradigms used by institutional actors for combating corruption, highlighting their non-sequential and varied strategies. Specifically, we conducted a detailed chronological review of international legal documents, policies, and frameworks that have shaped the global anti-corruption agenda. This temporal analysis allowed us to trace the historical development of these paradigms and to understand the timing and sequence of significant shifts in anti-corruption strategies. By mapping out these changes over time, we highlighted key moments and decisions that influenced the direction of anti-corruption efforts. In conjunction with our temporal analysis, we implemented a periodization approach to critically examine how the content of anti-corruption

paradigms evolved. This involved segmenting the timeline into distinct periods, each characterized by predominant themes, strategies, and policy orientations. For each period, we analyzed the underlying causes and implications of these thematic shifts, focusing on the mechanisms through which new paradigms were proposed, debated, and eventually adopted. This analysis not only shed light on the evolution of thought and practice in anti-corruption efforts but also helped in understanding the causal relationships between historical events and paradigm shifts.

To visually represent our findings, we developed a process model (presented in section 4.2), which illustrates the progression from ex-ante stages (decision to change institutions) to ex-post stages (establishment of new institutions). The model delineates the mechanisms that first create dissatisfaction with existing paradigms, then advocate for new paradigms, and finally generate commitment and loyalty to these new approaches. This model is instrumental in explaining the non-sequential and dynamic nature of anti-corruption strategies as employed by different actors at various times. This model illustrates the transitions from the decision to change institutions (ex-ante) to the establishment of new institutions (ex-post). It details the mechanisms that generate dissatisfaction, pitch new paradigms, and foster commitment and loyalty, effectively encapsulating the evolution and impact of anti-corruption strategies over time.

3.2. Data

Our research melds detailed linguistic analysis with critical scrutiny to explore the prevailing international anti-corruption discourse as a phenomenon. We meticulously examined the discursive processes and practices that propelled corruption conceptualizations to prominence. Following the principles of theoretical sampling outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998), we selected documents that best represented the international anti-corruption discourse, prioritizing those originating from influential state and non-state actors involved in its formulation and implementation (**Table 1**). Written documents and archival records were favored due to their comprehensiveness and their ability to reflect both formal and informal discourses within the international community. Our dataset encompasses landmark laws, conventions, and reports from leading international organizations. We also considered information published on the official websites of these organizations. Refer to our supplementary data file for a chronological list of our data sources. Saturation was reached when the data exhibited a robust pattern of formulaic repetition.

Table 1. Data sources in chronological order.

Data	Generated by	Accepted by	Theoretical dimension for divergent change implementation
US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, 1977 (FCPA)	USA	USA	Diagnostic framing
Governance and Development	World Bank (1992)		Motivational framing
Organisation of American States Inter-American Convention Against Corruption, 1996 (OAS Convention)	Member countries of the Organisation of American States	34 countries	Diagnostic framing

Table 1. (Continued).

Data	Generated by	Accepted by	Theoretical dimension for divergent change implementation
OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transaction, 1997 (OECD Convention) Includes related documents: 1) Commentaries on the OECD Convention (1997); 2) Recommendations of the Council for Further Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions (2009); 3) Recommendations of the Council on Tax Measures (2009); 4) Recommendations of the Council on Bribery and Officially Supported Export Credits (2019); 5) Recommendations of the Council for Development Co-operation Actors on Managing the Risk of Corruption (2016); 6) OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (2011)	Member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	43 countries	Diagnostic framing Field characteristics
The United Nations Declaration Against Corruption and Bribery in International Commercial Transactions	United Nations (1996 and 2013)	All U.N. Member States	Field characteristics
Helping countries combat corruption: The Role of the World Bank	World Bank (1997)		Diagnostic framing Prognostic framing
Council of Europe Criminal Law Convention on Corruption, 1999 (COE Convention)	Council of Europe	14 ratifications	Diagnostic Framing Mobilising allies
ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Initiative, 1999	Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).	31 countries	Mobilising allies
Anti-Corruption in Transition: A Contribution to the Policy Debate	World Bank (2000)		Prognostic framing Motivational framing Mobilising allies
Anti-corruption Policies and Programs: A Framework for Evaluation	World Bank (2000)		Prognostic framing Motivational framing
Anti-corruption	World Bank (2001)		Prognostic framing Motivational framing
African Union Convention of Preventing and Combating Corruption, 2003 (AU Convention)	African Union	Ratified by 43 countries, Signed by 49	Diagnostic Framing
Council of Europe Additional Protocol to the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption, 2003 (COE Protocol)	Council of Europe	5 ratifications	Diagnostic Framing
The United Nations Convention Against Corruption, 2003 (UNCAC)	United Nations	Ratified by 30 countries, Signed by 140	Diagnostic Framing Mobilising allies
United Nations Global Compact		85 Local Networks	
Principles 1-9, (2000) Principle 10: Anti-Corruption (2004)	United Nations	advance the initiative at a country level	Field characteristics
World Bank sanctions Lahmeyer International for corrupt activities in bank-financed projects	World Bank (2006)		Mobilising resources
The World Bank's Anti-Corruption Guidelines and Sanctions Reform	World Bank (2008)		Mobilising resources

Table 1. (Continued).

Data	Generated by	Accepted by	Theoretical dimension for divergent change implementation
Corruption in the Education Sector	Transparency International (2009)		Diagnostic Framing Motivational Framing Mobilising allies Mobilising resources
Global Corruption Report: Corruption and the Private Sector	Transparency International (2009)		Mobilising resources
World Bank Country-Level Engagement on Governance and Anti-Corruption	World Bank IEG (2010)		Prognostic framing Motivational framing Mobilising allies Mobilising resources
Corruption Hunters Rally for Action Against Fraud	World Bank (2010)		Prognostic framing Motivational framing
Fighting Corruption in the Education Sector	UNDP (2011)		Diagnostic framing Prognostic framing Motivational framing
Short Biography of Peter Eigen	Transparency International (2011)		Field characteristics
Global Corruption Report: Education	Transparency International (2013)		Diagnostic Framing Motivational Framing Mobilising allies
Preventing Corruption in Humanitarian Operations	Transparency International (2014)		Diagnostic Framing Mobilising allies Mobilising resources
Transparency in Corporate Reporting: Assessing the World's Largest Companies	Transparency International (2014)		Mobilising resources
United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, 2015 (SDG)	United Nations	193 countries	Field characteristics
Civil Society Participation, Public Accountability and the UN Convention Against Corruption	Transparency International (2015)		Diagnostic Framing Mobilising allies
Combating corruption	World Bank (2018)		Prognostic framing Motivational framing
Exporting Corruption: Assessing Enforcement of the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention	Transparency International (2018)		Field characteristics
Corruption Perceptions Index (Map and Explanatory Video)	Transparency International (2018)		Prognostic framing Motivational framing Mobilising resources
FAQs on Transparency International	Transparency International (2018)		Field characteristics
What is Corruption?	Transparency International (2020)		Diagnostic framing Prognostic framing Field characteristics
Corruptionary A-Z	Transparency International (2020)		Diagnostic framing
Worldwide Governance Indicators	World Bank (2020)		Prognostic framing Motivational framing
Global Corruption Barometer	Transparency International (2020)		Mobilising resources
Corruption Perceptions Index reports from 1995 to 2023	Transparency International (1995-2023)	180 countries	Diagnostic Framing Prognostic framing Field characteristics

Table 1. (Continued).

Data	Generated by	Accepted by	Theoretical dimension for divergent change implementation
Corruption report series	World Economic Forum (2019-2023)		Diagnostic framing Field characteristics
F&D Finance & Development report series on corruption	International Monetary Fund (2024)		Diagnostic framing Prognostic framing Field characteristics
Anti-Corruption	United Nations Global Compact (2024)		Prognostic framing Motivational framing

3.3. Analytical procedure

Our analysis commenced with an exploration of the international anti-corruption discourse across various domains of global governance. We initiated our investigation by referring to documents issued by influential entities such as the World Bank (WBG) and Transparency International (TI), given their pivotal roles in shaping the international anti-corruption discourse. The WBG, having faced longstanding allegations of corruption, devised strategies to enhance its internal operations. TI, with its mission to combat corruption and promote transparency and accountability, provided another crucial perspective (Transparency International, 2018c). Through an extensive review of reports from these organizations, we corroborated their assertions by cross-referencing them with other documents in our study. We scrutinized how the international anti-corruption discourse permeates the realm of education, emphasizing the profound implications for impoverished populations. Our propositions evolved iteratively by closely examining both literal and theoretical parallels. This iterative approach allowed us to elucidate how similar corruption cases are treated uniformly for consistent reasons, while divergent treatment can be traced back to anticipated causes. Our findings were continually cross-referenced with scholarly commentaries and supported by social and historical context drawn from existing literature. This process empowered us to critically assess the interplay between power and discourse in shaping the international anti-corruption regime, enriching our comprehension of global norm diffusion within the framework of institutional entrepreneurship theory.

To categorize concept variations dimensionally along different properties, we relied on institutional logics for diverse change implementation (Battilana et al., 2009) when segmenting and analyzing the data. **Figure 1** illustrates our analytical process, highlighting how we identified these variations. To fortify internal validity, our study navigated between fragments of meaning uncovered through intertextual analysis and the holistic meaning emerging from the corpus of text. We scrutinized and revised our propositions to resolve any potential contradictions with the theoretical preconceptions guiding our research design. Variances in interpretations were elucidated by contrasting and comparing quotes and their underlying significance in shaping the prevailing international anti-corruption discourse. We rigorously examined methodological processes to expose biases and systematic distortions. Notably, considerable effort was devoted to developing a set of theoretically and empirically grounded abstractions related to institutional logics and the mechanisms upon which institutional entrepreneurs rely to effect change.

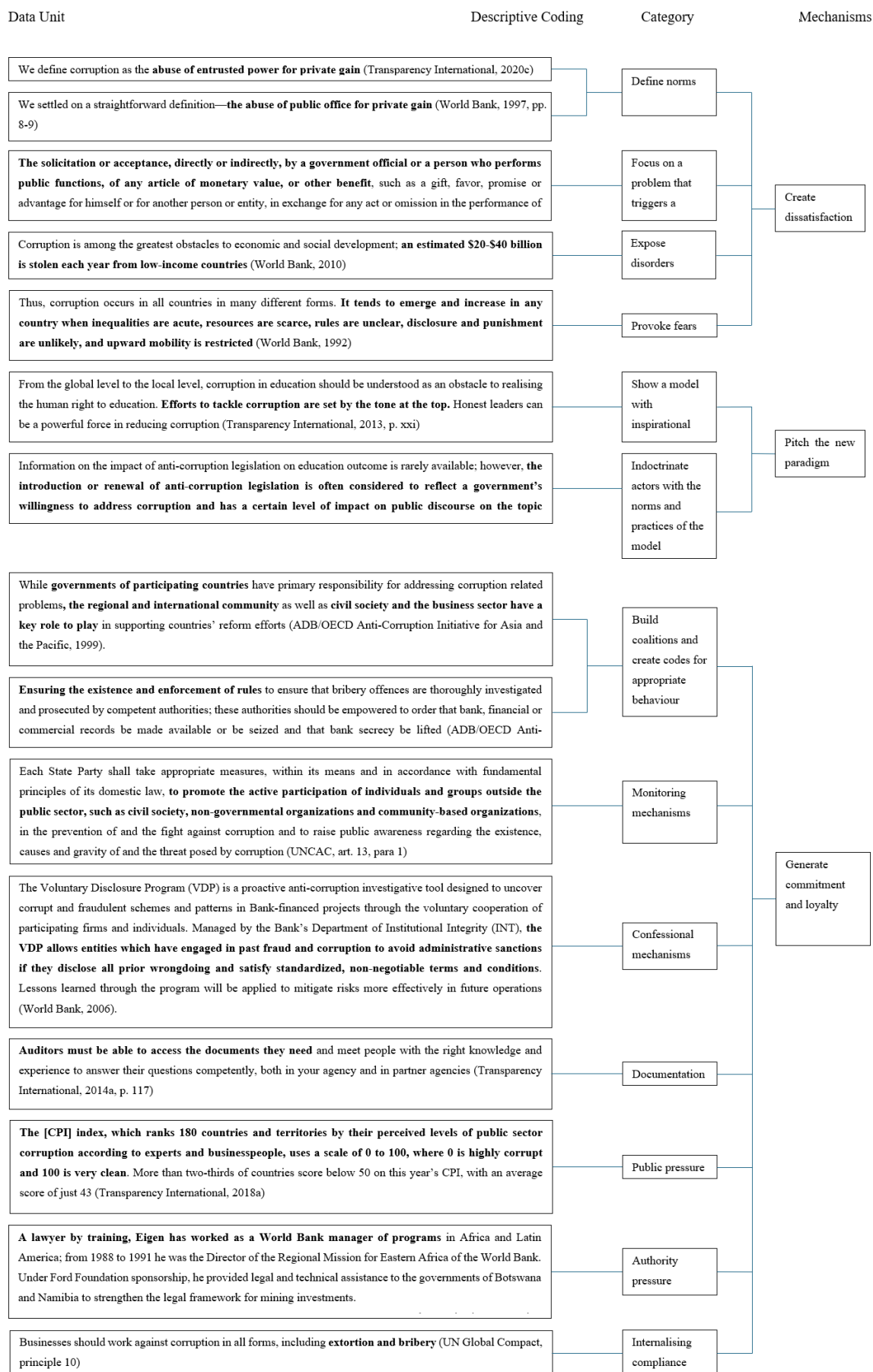


Figure 1. Illustration of the analytical process.

4. Findings

In this study, we adhere to the common convention that associates the Global North primarily with the Western world. As observed by Gebel (2012), contemporary approaches to combating corruption often overlook specific local contexts, as the prevailing discourse tends to equate ethics with rules and integrity with conformity. The origins of the global anti-corruption regime can be traced back to extensive political and economic interventions worldwide, driven by the United States, as part of its efforts to promote neoliberalism. This regime itself represents the collective work of Western institutional entrepreneurs who, by initially sowing seeds of dissatisfaction within the international community regarding existing institutional arrangements, propagated a Western-centric anti-corruption discourse. Subsequently, they garnered support and allegiance from various regions of the world through reinforcement strategies. In this section, we will first provide an overview of the historical development of the international anti-corruption regime to highlight key milestones in the evolution of the global anti-corruption discourse. Following that, we will elucidate the specific mechanisms employed by institutional entrepreneurs during the establishment of these milestones. This analysis will shed light on the underlying neoliberal ideology that continues to be disseminated through this discourse.

4.1. History of the international regime against corruption

During the 1950s and 1960s, many Western nations, particularly the United States, viewed corruption as a symptom of underdevelopment (Kajsiu, 2018). Joseph S. Nye defined corruption as behavior that deviates from the formal duties of a public role due to personal wealth or status gains or violations of rules against the exercise of certain types of private influence (Nye, 1967). This definition highlighted numerous administrative and political issues in non-modernized regimes where clear boundaries between the public and private sectors were often lacking (Kajsiu, 2018). It was believed to explain the prevalence of bribery, embezzlement, and nepotism in economically disadvantaged countries, underscoring the stark divide between the developing and developed worlds, the traditional and the modern, and the particular and the universal (Huntington, 2006; Kajsiu, 2018). Implicitly, this definition assumed that the capitalist systems of industrialized countries were free from corruption. This notion has been challenged in recent history, particularly following widely publicized corruption scandals in developed nations.

The U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) of 1977 marked the initial official step against corruption, encompassing provisions related to transparency in accounting and bribery of foreign public officials (Hansen, 2011). Enacted in the aftermath of the Watergate scandal during the Nixon presidency, the FCPA aimed to criminalize bribery by corporations engaged in transnational business. The end of the Cold War played a significant role in catalyzing discussions about corruption, as it brought the issue to the forefront of global attention. The early 1990s ushered in a new era of globalization characterized by rapid technological advancements, substantial capital flows, knowledge exchange, mass media proliferation, and increased human labor migration. These developments necessitated state efforts to create conducive conditions for market access. During this period, critical elements of the FCPA,

initially designed for domestic application in the United States, were disseminated globally, inspiring various interstate conventions aimed at addressing corruption.

The 1996 Organisation of American States Inter-American Convention Against Corruption (OAS Convention) exemplified the American government's pursuit of international collaboration to combat bribery, which was perceived as detrimental to corporate profits. The convention introduced non-discriminatory provisions that forced governments to rethink the concept of private actors. The OAS Convention held significant implications for the global marketplace by mandating equal treatment for national and foreign companies competing for contracts. Corruption, viewed as an obstacle to impartiality and fairness in public procurement, was condemned as an illegal means of securing undue advantages. Under this new framework of market anonymity, personal relationships, clan structures, and affiliations were considered irrelevant in the selection process. Governments were encouraged to select the best supplier based on established criteria evaluating efficiency and performance.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) served as a forum for advancing the norms embodied in the FCPA to other Western countries. This effort culminated in the 1997 OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions (OECD Convention). A distinctive feature of the OECD Convention is its reliance on self-surveillance rather than judicial enforcement. Member states are subject to pressure through peer monitoring and exposure mechanisms, often involving non-state actors. In 2003, the normative consensus on anti-corruption was further solidified with the adoption of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). UNCAC addresses various aspects, including asset recovery and bribery in both the private and public sectors. Notably, both the OECD Convention and UNCAC are characterized by relatively weak enforcement mechanisms. Subsequently, financial institutions like the World Bank Group (WBG) and international organizations like Transparency International (TI) also internalized the international anti-corruption discourse, using it to articulate and promote global economic strategies and political agendas aimed at increasing global capital flows.

The historical evolution of the international regime against corruption indicates that anti-corruption initiatives initially aimed to protect businesses and commerce (Johnston, 2005). These efforts have primarily remained rooted in an analytical perspective that emphasizes policies safeguarding the free market. Following the end of the Cold War, new forms of governance emerged, and several countries in the Global South gained independence. This shift called for a re-evaluation of the relationship between the international community and sovereign nations. Market integration was perceived as a means to enhance the sovereignty of nations, and this perspective will be explored further to demonstrate how American actors employed strategies typical of institutional entrepreneurs to establish and propagate the global anti-corruption regime. Consequently, the anti-corruption discourse promoted by international and regional conventions and prominent international organizations reflects an American vision of corruption aligned with neoliberal ideology. Subsequent sections will provide a detailed exploration of this process.

The most recent developments in the international regime against corruption focus on enhanced international cooperation and the integration of technology in

governance. In 2023, the G20, under India’s leadership, implemented new initiatives aimed at bolstering global efforts to combat corruption (G20 India). These measures emphasize the sharing of information and best practices among nations, with a particular focus on tackling environmental crimes and reinforcing integrity in both the public and private sectors. Moreover, technological advancements are increasingly recognized as essential tools in the anti-corruption field (Transparency International, 2013; Timilsina, 2021). Digital platforms are being promoted to increase transparency and accountability, particularly in government operations and financial activities (Jaiyeola, 2023). This move towards digital governance aims to minimize human intervention in administrative processes, potentially reducing corruption opportunities (Raycraft and Lannquist, 2020). These developments represent a shift from traditional punitive approaches to a more comprehensive strategy that includes preventive measures through system improvement and technological integration. This evolution indicates a broader trend of adapting anti-corruption frameworks to meet contemporary challenges and effectively utilize new technologies to maintain integrity on a global scale.

4.2. Mechanisms used to proliferate an ideology

In this section, we will delve into the mechanisms utilized by various actors, predominantly from Western countries, in promoting the international anti-corruption regime. These mechanisms are dynamic and not strictly sequential, as different state and non-state actors may employ diverse strategies at various times to uphold the status quo. Presented below are the mechanisms, as illustrated in **Figure 2** (process model), that have played a pivotal role in shaping the discourse surrounding international anti-corruption efforts.

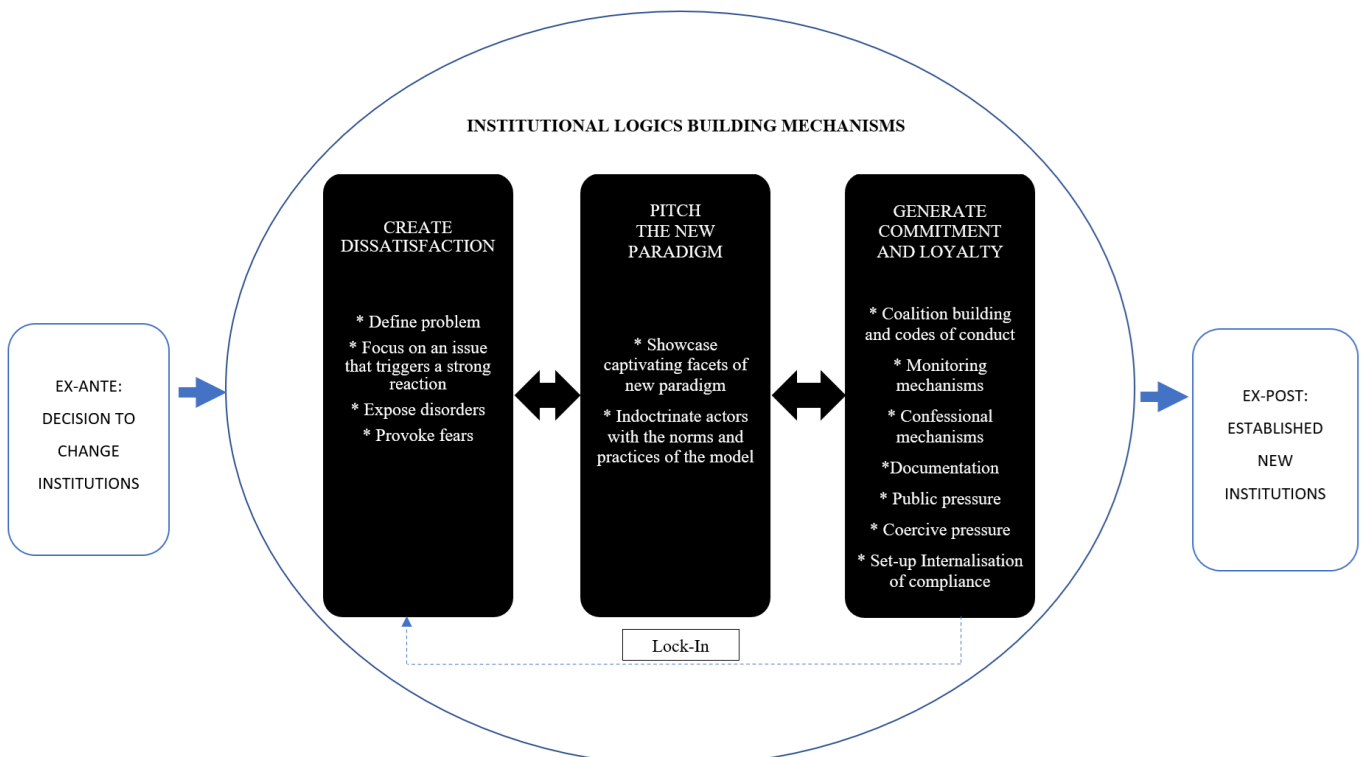


Figure 2. Institutional logics building process model.

4.2.1. Create dissatisfaction

Actors from Western countries have significantly influenced the perception of corruption by framing it as the abuse of public power for private gain. They have positioned corruption as a societal issue intertwined with poor governance and linked to poverty. By highlighting disorder and raising concerns, these actors have generated frustration with existing institutional arrangements and presented the Western model of governance as a potential solution.

Define the problem

In examining the concept of corruption, it is evident that various definitions exist across different organizations and contexts. Transparency International (TI), in its 2020 report (Transparency International, 2020c), defines corruption as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain.” This concise definition highlights the detrimental effects of corruption, such as eroding trust, weakening democracy, hindering economic development, exacerbating inequality, perpetuating poverty, fostering social division, and contributing to environmental crises. Furthermore, TI emphasizes that combating corruption requires a deep understanding of its underlying mechanisms and the systems that enable it.

The World Bank presents a similar definition in its 1997 report (World Bank, 1997), which characterizes corruption as “the abuse of public office for private gain.” This definition acknowledges that corruption can manifest in various forms, including the acceptance, solicitation, or extortion of bribes and private agents offering bribes to gain a competitive advantage or profit. It also recognizes that corruption extends beyond bribery to encompass patronage, nepotism, the theft of state assets, and the diversion of state revenues.

The prevalent trend in these definitions is their legalistic perspective, framing corruption as a violation of established laws and regulations. For instance, TI’s Civil Society Participation, Public Accountability, and the UNCAC report (Transparency International, 2015) assert that corruption is inherently a human rights violation, diverting public resources for private interests. This perspective aligns with the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Freedoms (UNDHR), emphasizing the influence of Western liberal ideals. Similarly, TI’s Global Corruption Report: Education (2013) defines corruption as a “violation of the law,” highlighting its juridical nature. This definition implies the existence of a set of rules governed by legislative texts, making corruption a public offense rather than a moral relativistic issue. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) also contributes to the understanding of corruption by defining it as “the misuse of entrusted power for private gain” (UNDP Primer on Corruption and Development, 2008). This definition underscores the harmful consequences of an individual’s exercise of entrusted power, regardless of malicious intent. Furthermore, the focus on the public sector is evident in these definitions, as the international anti-corruption discourse predominantly draws from this perspective. For example, the African Union Convention (2003) targets government corruption and defines public officials as individuals elected, selected, or appointed to perform functions on behalf of the state.

In conclusion, the concept of corruption is multifaceted. It is often viewed through a legalistic lens and is closely associated with the violation of laws and

regulations, especially within the public sector. These definitions lay the groundwork for the ethical norms promoted by Western-based international organizations, shaping global perceptions and control strategies surrounding corruption.

Focus on an issue that triggers a strong reaction

The international community places significant emphasis on the damaging impact of corruption on corporate profit. Bribery, often used to facilitate other forms of corruption, has garnered widespread attention. The OAS Convention (1996) represents a pivotal development, as it criminalized the bribery of foreign state officials (Articles 6, 8, 9). This move was driven by the competitive struggles of American companies seeking overseas government contracts, with bribery viewed as a hindrance to their success (Hansen, 2011). To address this, companies were encouraged to maintain records to track resources and identify corrupt practices. This emphasis on bribery is best understood within the post-Cold War context, where globalization was promoted as dependent on the free market, democratic governance, and the rule of law. The OAS Convention's introduction set the stage for the diffusion of American standards of accountability and transparency in the global anti-corruption discourse. However, it is essential to note that corruption extends beyond bribery, encompassing various forms. By focusing primarily on bribery and linking corruption solely to the public sector, the international discourse potentially downplays the corrupt activities of Western corporations dominating the private sector. This approach, while addressing bribery in anti-corruption strategies, also imposes Western-based neoliberal ideology on developing nations.

In subsequent years, media outlets were inundated with corruption scandals involving wealthy nations, particularly in public procurement contracts, licensing, and foreign direct investments (Carr, 2007). This compelled the international community to recognize that corruption is not confined to developing countries but can also manifest in affluent developed nations (Carr, 2007). Commentaries on the OECD Convention (1997b), for example, clarified technical terms and emphasized active bribery as a primary concern. This form of bribery targets those offering or promising bribes rather than the government officials receiving them, potentially rendering acts of corruption by those in power less visible.

The COE Criminal Law Convention on Corruption (1999) sought to combat both active and passive bribery involving domestic public officials, acknowledging that offering a bribe is as much a crime as receiving one (Articles 2–3). It extended its reach to officials in international organizations, parliamentary assemblies, judges, and international courts. The convention also recognized corporate liability, holding legal entities responsible for active bribery, trading in influence, and money laundering (Article 18). It introduced provisions covering trading in influence, money laundering, accounting offenses, and bank secrecy (Articles 12, 13, 14, and 23). The importance of documentation for gathering evidence and confiscating proceeds was underscored (Article 23).

These international and regional conventions often approach corruption as an economic malfunction. They primarily focus on bribery and bureaucratic mechanisms such as rigorous documentation as effective solutions. For instance, the UNCAC (2003) recommends establishing central financial intelligence units to collect, analyze, and

disseminate crucial information about bribery and money laundering. The AU Convention (2003) denounces active and passive bribery in the private sector, emphasizing corporate liability. Member states commit to adopting measures to prevent companies from paying bribes to secure tenders (Article 11). Additionally, state parties empower courts or authorities to address injustices related to bank secrecy (Article 17). The punitive stance on bank secrecy implies a malicious intent to conceal corruption, as opposed to lawful restrictions on client information access based on privacy rights. Privacy laws are sometimes abused by corrupt entities for money laundering, highlighting the need for precise legislative mechanisms to distinguish tax evasion from tax avoidance. Ambiguous laws and regulations create opportunities for companies to blur the line between these activities, facilitating money laundering.

Expose disorders

The utilization of “Expose Disorders” as a tactic within the corruption regime is substantiated by concrete evidence derived from the operations and rhetoric of influential international institutions. The World Bank Group, acknowledging that corruption poses a significant barrier to economic and social development, estimates that a staggering \$20–\$40 billion is siphoned away annually from low-income countries (World Bank, 2010). In their expansive definition, corruption encompasses all activities that deplete resources to the detriment of impoverished populations (World Bank, 2018). Central to their anti-corruption strategy is the belief that human behavior is primarily driven by self-interest. Corruption thrives where ample opportunities exist with low costs and incentives to encourage corrupt behavior. Therefore, anti-corruption strategies aim to reduce opportunities for corruption while increasing the expected cost, primarily the risk of being caught and severely punished (World Bank, 2001).

The WBG contends that anti-corruption measures should be designed to align with market dynamics, societal forces, and behavioral patterns. It advocates for the protection of a competitive private sector through economic and policy reforms, the competitive restructuring of monopolies, and simplified market entry regulations (World Bank, 2000). Furthermore, fostering incentives for transparency in corporate governance and establishing collective business associations are considered essential components of their strategy (World Bank, 2018). These normative assertions are underpinned by two core assumptions: 1) human beings are rational economic agents primarily motivated by self-interest rather than moral principles, and 2) a government’s primary role is to facilitate the smooth functioning of a free market. Western actors, in their capacity as institutional entrepreneurs, employ these assumptions to uncover and highlight widespread disorder, evoking concerns within the international community. Through consistent repetition, these normative claims become ingrained in our collective understanding as self-evident truths.

For the WBG, corruption is not just corrosive but also an inherent feature of poor governance. In their report “Anti-corruption in Transition: A Contribution to the Policy Debate” (2000), the WBG emphasizes that corruption hinders investment, reduces economic growth, restricts trade, distorts government expenditure, weakens the financial system, and fortifies the underground economy. In countries transitioning to a market economy, the phenomenon of ‘state capture’ emerges as a significant

challenge. ‘State capture’ refers to actions taken by individuals, groups, or firms in both public and private sectors to influence the formation of government policies to their advantage through illicit and non-transparent provision of private benefits to public officials. The report contends that governments often prioritize enhancing enforcement mechanisms over addressing the structural roots of administrative corruption. It underscores the importance of examining power dynamics within broader structural relationships, encompassing the internal organization of the political system, interactions among state institutions, relationships between the state and businesses, and the state’s engagement with civil society.

A discursive analysis of the WBG’s anti-corruption strategy reveals a dual movement. On one hand, the anti-corruption concept is constantly expanded. On the other hand, the concept of corruption is intended to be confined to the public sphere, as evident in the definition of ‘state capture.’ This typology obscures corruption in politically and economically powerful countries, equating corruption driven by greed with that motivated by survival.

In conclusion, the “Expose Disorders” tactic within the corruption regime is underpinned by the World Bank Group’s anti-corruption strategy. This strategy seeks to uncover and highlight the destructive impact of corruption on economic and social development. It relies on normative assumptions about human behavior and governance, ultimately shaping the international discourse on corruption.

Provoke fears

The World Bank Group (WBG) has supported the development of numerous indices aimed at predicting corruption in developing countries and guiding prevention strategies (Hansen, 2012). For instance, the Worldwide Governance Indicators assess governance using various dimensions, including “control of corruption” (World Bank, 2020). However, this approach aggregates the concept of “state capture” with other forms of corruption, like bribery and embezzlement. This omission is significant because defining corruption based on “state capture” would reveal higher corruption levels in the United States, challenging Western hegemony (Kaufmann, 2008). Western institutional entrepreneurs strategically avoid such an index to hide the extent of corruption and its ties to privatization policies championed by industrialized nations (Kaufmann, 2008).

The WBG overlooks corruption in wealthy nations, attributing corruption’s emergence to acute inequalities, scarce resources, unclear rules, lack of disclosure, and restricted upward mobility (World Bank, 1992). By omitting the historical reasons behind poverty in developing countries, including colonialism and exploitation, Western institutional entrepreneurs exploit fears of material poverty to promote neoliberal ideals.

An intertextual analysis reveals mutual influence between the WBG and Transparency International (TI) in the anti-corruption discourse (Kaufmann et al., 2009). TI’s Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) spotlights large bribe recipients while ignoring major bribe payers and safe havens for illicit funds (Galtung, 2006). The CPI visually divides the world into “highly corrupt” and “clean” countries, perpetuating the notion that corruption is inherent in the Global South. This dichotomy reinforces neoliberal frames like democracy, market economies, and the Washington Consensus

(Ledeneva, 2018). Such a portrayal legitimizes economic reforms favoring privatization, as corruption is framed primarily as a public sector issue, with little focus on the private sector (Kajsiu, 2018). Developing countries remain trapped in this narrative, furthering Western influence.

4.2.2. Pitch the new paradigm

Western institutional entrepreneurs have leveraged neoliberal ideology to identify perceived villains, pinpoint corrupt opportunities, and establish norms of behavior. This approach positions Western governance as superior and Western ethics as the standard to emulate globally. These institutional logics rest on the belief that a non-interventionist Western-style government benefits the free market. To induce other nations to adopt anti-corruption strategies, Western actors have tied the interests, values, and problems of potential allies to those of the West. This process involves delegitimizing existing institutional arrangements and undermining alternative proposals.

Showcase captivating facets of a new paradigm

Transparency International (TI) highlights the importance of leadership and political will in combating corruption in education, advocating for a top-down approach where honest leaders play a crucial role (Transparency International, 2013). This approach emphasizes the Western model of governmentality and frames human rights within Western neoliberal ideals (Transparency International, 2013). Western actors promote Western education management as a successful model due to its reputation for excellence, often attributing this success to the absence of corruption. This portrayal reinforces the dominance of Western values and institutions in global governance (Hansen, 2012). The Western model of governmentality, endorsed by the international community, advocates for a top-down approach and implies that global governance should align with Western values (Transparency International, 2013). Human rights and education are framed to serve economic institutions like the World Bank (Transparency International, 2013).

The anti-corruption discourse argues that corruption impedes economic development, advocating for the adoption of Western government models by developing countries. The rule of law is presented as essential for a neoliberal capitalist economy, with policy recommendations aimed at reducing opportunities for corruption (Huther and Shah, 2000). The World Bank emphasizes the importance of addressing corruption through market-friendly policies such as streamlining bureaucracy, economic liberalization, and improving service standards (Huther and Shah, 2000). It suggests that when corruption is profoundly institutionalized and systemic, lending should be halted (World Bank IEG, 2010).

TI's "Global Corruption Report: Education" highlights poor education management in developing countries due to corruption, advocating a top-down approach that emphasizes the teacher as a role model (Transparency International, 2013). This approach suggests that education serves as a tool to indoctrinate young minds with Western ideals (Transparency International, 2013). Similarly, the UNDP report on "Fighting Corruption in the Education Sector" identifies corruption risks at various administrative levels in developing countries' education systems, emphasizing the need for inspections and sanctions (Wood and Antonowicz, 2011). TI's

“Corruption in the Education Sector” report exposes corruption within ministries, districts, and schools, particularly in teacher management (Transparency International, 2009a). It highlights the influence of the overall atmosphere on teacher conduct and emphasizes the importance of inspections and sanctions (Transparency International, 2009a).

Overall, these documents reveal a focus on corruption in the public sector while masking opportunities for corruption in the private sector resulting from economic reforms favoring the free market (Brown and Cloke, 2004). Western elites within international organizations shape this dominant anti-corruption discourse (Brown and Cloke, 2004).

Indoctrinate actors with the norms and practices of the model

Following the standard definition of corruption as prescribed by the international community, The impact of anti-corruption legislation on education outcomes is often considered a reflection of a government’s willingness to combat corruption, influencing public discourse (Wood and Antonowicz for UNDP, 2011, p. 24). Western actors attribute the success of Western educational governance to its absence of corrupt practices, incentivizing various stakeholders, including communities, educators, government bodies, and businesses, to adopt these norms and practices (Hansen, 2012).

Western education systems serve as models emulated worldwide, enabling Western institutional entrepreneurs to propagate neoliberal ideology in various sectors (Hansen, 2012). Norm diffusion relies heavily on laws and regulations, with an emphasis on public oversight to enhance compliance. Decentralized management of the education sector is believed to reduce corruption, provided local oversight and accountability systems are effective (UNDP, 2011). Codes of conduct for education personnel can be effective when developed with the involvement of teachers and community members, widely accessible information, and enforcement mechanisms (UNDP, 2011; Transparency International, 2009a).

Efforts to improve transparency and accountability assume that educated citizens are more likely to demand quality education and press for accountability in service delivery (Transparency International, 2009a). The World Bank Group advocates for public accounts, audit committees, disclosure of government documents, and sanctions to hold governments accountable. It also recommends ethics codes, lobbying regulations, conflict of interest prohibitions, and income and asset disclosure for government bureaucracies (World Bank, 2000).

The international anti-corruption discourse often disregards local norms that may be practical solutions to problems in impoverished countries. Corruption at lower levels usually stems from employees’ attempts to meet basic needs, blurring the line between need and greed (Gebel, 2012). Moral relativism recognizes that people in poor countries may resort to desperate measures for survival, and standardized anti-corruption approaches overlook the complex political, economic, and social factors of specific local contexts (Gebel, 2012). The dominant anti-corruption discourse equates ethics with rules and integrity with conformity, highlighting the need for informed involvement from developing nations (Gebel, 2012).

In conclusion, the international anti-corruption discourse emphasizes the adoption of Western norms and practices, promoting standardization but sometimes overlooking the nuances of local contexts and the challenges faced by those in impoverished nations.

4.2.3. Generate commitment and loyalty

Western institutional entrepreneurs involved in anti-corruption efforts foster cooperation by forming alliances and establishing guidelines for economic transactions. They also emphasize the importance of public oversight as an informal control mechanism. To garner support, they portray themselves and job-creating businesses as heroes while depicting government representatives who engage in corrupt practices as villains. These institutional entrepreneurs gather resources to create mechanisms for confession and implement policies for documentation. Additionally, they utilize the media as a tool to promote their vision. They advocate for the idea that adhering to Western ethical and moral norms equates to integrity, often labeling societies with differing practices as morally inferior. Such non-conforming societies may face isolation from the international community or pressure to conform to Western standards.

Coalition building and codes of conduct

Western institutional efforts to combat corruption emphasize the significance of coalition building as a means to promote standardized governance practices. This strategy involves forging partnerships across diverse sectors and replicating power dynamics on more minor scales. One example of this approach is the ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia and the Pacific (1999), in which member states of the Asian Development Bank and the OECD commit to mutual assistance in their anti-corruption efforts. They collaborate on various initiatives, including steering group meetings, thematic reviews, capacity-building seminars, and conferences. Additionally, they establish close partnerships and alliances with other influential international actors to combat corruption in the region collectively.

The impact of Western norm diffusion is further underscored by the codification of anti-corruption discourse in various international conventions. For instance, the COE Criminal Law Convention on Corruption (1999) stipulates that legislative measures should be adopted to enable authorities to seize bank, financial, and commercial files for investigative purposes. Moreover, the UNCAC places a strong emphasis on cooperation among member states and obliges them to foster channels of communication between relevant authorities and agencies. These provisions aim to facilitate collaboration in the fight against corruption.

International organizations also promote codes of conduct in micro-settings. For instance, Transparency International's report, "Corruption in the Education Sector" (2009a), underscores the value of codes of conduct in reshaping entrenched habits and encouraging ethical behavior. These codes are seen as a collective recognition of professional responsibilities and ethical standards, often developed by professional associations. The report also acknowledges the role of societal pressure and the potential effectiveness of exclusionary tactics in ensuring compliance with these codes.

Monitoring mechanisms

Efforts to combat corruption on a global scale increasingly stress the importance of monitoring mechanisms and the active participation of civil society and non-governmental organizations. This approach is enshrined in international agreements and advocated by various organizations.

The United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC, 2003) explicitly calls for states to take measures to promote the active involvement of individuals and groups outside the public sector, including civil society and non-governmental organizations, in the prevention of corruption. This emphasis on participatory governance is seen as a fundamental principle in the fight against corruption.

Similarly, the World Bank Group (WBG) advocates for the involvement of civil society organizations (CSOs) in governance and anti-corruption efforts. The WBG's Country-Level Engagement on Governance and Anti-corruption (World Bank IEG, 2010) emphasizes the importance of consulting and engaging civil society in various aspects of corruption policy development, implementation, and monitoring. However, it acknowledges that constraints exist due to the significant economic stakes involved in development projects, which may limit the WBG's political flexibility.

Transparency International (TI) also promotes the active participation of CSOs in monitoring and addressing corruption. TI's reports highlight the role of CSOs as independent monitors of procurement and contract implementation processes, as well as evaluators of program effectiveness. These organizations emphasize the importance of fostering an environment where CSOs can operate freely without constraints on their rights to freedom of expression, information, association, and assembly.

The UNCAC, as a universally binding treaty, underscores the need for concrete measures to promote CSO participation in governance. It emphasizes preventive measures, law enforcement, and international cooperation, making it a powerful tool in the global anti-corruption discourse.

Across different sectors, including humanitarian operations and education, the involvement of CSOs is considered essential in holding public administrations accountable, advocating for transparency, and campaigning against corruption. CSOs are seen as having the skills and networks necessary for these tasks, particularly in regions where parents may lack the capacity to engage effectively in monitoring and management processes. By advocating for ethical standards aligned with their mission, CSOs have the potential to influence and improve global systems and governance. They can play a critical role in infusing moral integrity into various sectors, such as education, and contribute to a more transparent and accountable world.

Overall, monitoring mechanisms and civil society's active participation are increasingly recognized as vital components of anti-corruption efforts, as evidenced by international agreements and the advocacy of organizations like TI and the World Bank Group.

Confessional mechanisms

The dominant anti-corruption discourse employs confessional mechanisms with a focus on economic incentives and sanctions. Evidence of these mechanisms can be found in various policies and programs, particularly within the World Bank Group (WBG).

One notable example is the Voluntary Disclosure Program (VDP) introduced by the WBG. The VDP is designed as a proactive anti-corruption investigative tool aimed at uncovering corrupt and fraudulent activities in Bank-financed projects. Managed by the Bank's Department of Institutional Integrity (INT), this program encourages participating firms and individuals to disclose any past wrongdoing related to fraud and corruption voluntarily. In return for their disclosure and compliance with standardized, non-negotiable terms and conditions, entities involved in corrupt practices can avoid administrative sanctions. The lessons learned from this program are intended to inform risk mitigation efforts in future operations (World Bank, 2006).

The core principle underlying these confessional mechanisms is the promotion of economic incentives. The belief is that individuals and firms will be deterred from engaging in corruption if the potential costs outweigh the benefits. Debarment, for instance, is used as a means to blacklist fraudulent companies involved in WBG-financed projects. The WBG's Anti-corruption Guidelines and Sanctions Reform (2008) describe debarment as the immediate exclusion of the sanctioned party from participating in Bank projects, either indefinitely or for a specified period. Conditional non-debarment, on the other hand, allows the sanctioned party to avoid debarment by complying with certain conditions. To prevent future fraud and corruption, measures such as the establishment of ethics programs and restitution may be required (World Bank, 2008).

The Voluntary Disclosure Program (VDP) is a crucial aspect of these confessional mechanisms. It provides incentives to firms and potential partners involved in WBG-financed projects to voluntarily disclose information about previous misconduct and fraudulent activities. By adopting best practices in compliance programs based on international anti-corruption standards, participating companies can avoid being blacklisted (World Bank, 2006).

However, the confidentiality of the VDP and the use of debarment as a form of public blacklisting serve as normalization strategies that aim to influence developing nations to adopt a Western vision of self-governance (Hansen, 2012). Western shareholders hold significant control over WBG resources, with the United States Treasury holding de facto veto power. The lack of democratic elections for WBG leadership further underscores the influence of Western interests in shaping anti-corruption strategies and investment decisions (Hickel, 2017).

This proliferation of neoliberal ideology extends beyond the WBG, as other international financial institutions, including the Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, European Investment Bank, and European Bank of Reconstruction and Development, have harmonized their conceptualizations of corruption. They recommend strategies that reduce the role of government through privatization, market liberalization, and deregulation, reflecting the influence of Western majority shareholders (Hansen, 2012; Brown and Cloke, 2004; Bracking, 2007).

In summary, confessional mechanisms, such as the Voluntary Disclosure Program and debarment, are prominent features of anti-corruption strategies driven by economic incentives and sanctions. These mechanisms reflect the broader influence of Western interests and neoliberal ideology in shaping international anti-corruption efforts.

Documentation

The use of documentation is a crucial strategy within the anti-corruption discourse, emphasizing the importance of transparency and accountability. This tactic is supported by various sources and recommendations, providing evidence of its widespread adoption.

Transparency International (TI) advocates for unrestricted access to documents and individuals by auditors as a fundamental aspect of anti-corruption efforts. Auditors should have access to the necessary documents and interact with knowledgeable individuals to effectively address corruption risks. Non-cooperation with auditors should be treated as a disciplinary offense (Transparency International, 2014a, p. 117). In highly volatile environments where corruption risks are elevated, TI's *Preventing Corruption in Humanitarian Operations* (2014a) underscores the significance of comprehensive documentation. It suggests maintaining an up-to-date register of financial transactions, conducting spot checks of cash funds, implementing strict supply chain management systems with thorough inventories, and electronic tagging where possible. Standardized bidding documents, corporate paperwork, and rating systems are recommended. Information sharing through inter-agency coordination is also encouraged, covering policies, budgets, resource allocation criteria, implementation expenditures, targeting criteria, needs assessment information, program locations, beneficiary lists, and entitlements. Managers should enforce accountability through random spot checks of receipts and records, along with clear sanctions for staff who mislead or fail to disclose information to auditors (Transparency International, 2014a).

TI's *Transparency in Corporate Reporting* (2014b) presents comprehensive studies on the disclosure practices of the world's largest companies. The findings reveal that European companies perform better in transparency compared to their Asian counterparts. A significant number of multinational companies do not ban facilitation payments, do not disclose political donations, and fail to provide information about tax payments in foreign countries. The report recommends that companies mitigate transparency-related risks by shedding more light on their corporate structures and disclosing basic financial information on a country-by-country basis (Transparency International, 2014b). In the field of education, TI's *Corruption in the Education Sector* (2009a) emphasizes the deterrent effect of public information and exposure in combating corruption. The report highlights the need for reliable records to track the flow of resources and expose corrupt practices in developing countries. Unauthorized fees in public schools and universities, as well as corrupt practices related to scholarships and exam records, are identified as specific areas of concern (Transparency International, 2009a).

Additionally, TI has developed tools such as the Bribe Payers Index and the Global Corruption Barometer to measure and assess corporate behavior and public exposure to corruption practices. These statistics serve to document and compare the behavior of Western transnational companies and the prevalence of corruption in different countries, further reinforcing the importance of transparency and accountability (Hardoon and Heinrich, 2011; Transparency International, 2020b).

In summary, the emphasis on documentation as an anti-corruption tactic is supported by evidence from various sources and fields, highlighting its role in promoting transparency and accountability in both corporate and public sectors.

Public Pressure

The utilization of public pressure as an anti-corruption tactic is substantiated by evidence from various sources, which highlight the role of public perception and awareness in combating corruption. Transparency International's (TI) Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) provides a concrete example of how public pressure is leveraged to address corruption. The CPI assesses levels of corruption in the public sector across 180 countries and territories. It uses a scale ranging from 0 (very corrupt) to 100 (very clean) to measure corruption perception. The index reveals that most countries struggle to combat corruption, and it highlights the correlation between corruption and a weakening of democratic institutions and norms. In addition, the CPI emphasizes the rise of political candidates with populist platforms who exploit corruption scandals and public disillusionment to gain power. It underscores the importance of strong independent institutions, freedom of the press, and engaged citizens as the most sustainable means to combat corruption. The CPI's dissemination by public and commercial organizations worldwide, along with empirical studies, adds credibility to its message (Transparency International, 2018a).

The dominant anti-corruption discourse, driven by Western elites, uses visual and written forms of communication to shape societal understanding of corruption and appropriate governance. Over time, this discourse has become deeply ingrained in society's collective assumptions about ethical governance. The proliferation of this discourse is facilitated by aesthetically appealing publications, dynamic audiovisual content, and online platforms, making it accessible to a broader audience (Hansen, 2012). The Internet and various media outlets play a pivotal role in intensifying the anti-corruption strategy by enabling rapid information dissemination. The technical language of the discourse is often replaced with colloquial terms to enhance accessibility, and interactive interfaces, colorful graphics, tables, and indices maintain the audience's engagement (Hansen, 2012).

The appeal and impact of indices like the CPI are further evidenced by their widespread use by public and commercial organizations globally. These indices draw on surveys conducted by business institutions, reinforcing a business bias within the anti-corruption discourse. Transparency International's focus on protecting private sector interests is discernible through its selection of sources. These indices, constructed with a business-centric perspective, are essential tools for risk management in companies and international organizations. They also guide credit rating agencies and aid donors who rely on the perceived objectivity of numerical data (Hansen, 2012).

Western institutional entrepreneurs in the anti-corruption field foster commitment and loyalty by encouraging the public and businesses to treat the indices produced by leading international organizations as indisputable truths. These indices, backed by scientific metrics, allow experts to assess, diagnose, categorize, and monitor various societal aspects. Media outlets then package the anti-corruption discourse in accessible terms, making it appealing to mass audiences. Corruption indices,

accompanied by sensational narratives, become part of the larger community's discourse once adopted by multiple stakeholders. The construction and dissemination of corruption indices, such as the CPI, perpetuate the idea that corruption is endemic to developing countries, reinforcing stereotypes about corruption being inherent to the Global South (Transparency International, 2018a).

In conclusion, public pressure as an anti-corruption tactic is substantiated by the evidence that demonstrates how public perception, awareness, and the dissemination of information through indices and media play a crucial role in shaping anti-corruption efforts.

Coercive Pressure

The utilization of coercive pressure as an anti-corruption tactic is supported by evidence from the operations and history of prominent international organizations such as the World Bank Group (WBG) and Transparency International (TI). The WBG, founded in 1944 as a multilateral development bank headquartered in Washington, D.C., initially focused on providing long-term loans for infrastructure development projects. Over the years, its mission evolved to prioritize investments in human capital assets like education, training, and healthcare. This shift was influenced by a desire to address rising concerns about globalization and promote economic growth through education and skill development. The WBG's substantial resources are used to establish policy networks and epistemic communities that shape global educational agendas. Good governance, as defined by the WBG, emphasizes predictable, open, and enlightened policymaking, transparent processes, the rule of law, and robust civil society participation. However, corruption often becomes obscured within the broader context of good governance, leading to aid resources intended for education being diverted from the world's poor (von Glahn and Taulbee, 2013; Mundy and Verger, 2015).

Transparency International (TI), established in 1993, emerged from the efforts of ten former dissatisfied employees of the WBG. These individuals left the organization to seek more effective ways of addressing widespread corruption issues. They were alarmed by the routine granting of significant contracts to suppliers offering substantial bribes to government officials. Their mission was to expose the harsh reality that funds meant to benefit the world's poor were being siphoned away due to corruption. Corruption, in their view, not only allowed elites to exploit the system but also eroded public institutions and hindered economic progress. TI's founding leader, Peter Eigen, who had spent 24 years working at the WBG, brought valuable expertise in global governance, economic development, and international business to the organization. The lack of diversity among TI's founding members may have limited the formation of fresh ideas, as the organization's approach to anti-corruption remained influenced by the techno-economic approach of the WBG. Additionally, Eigen's professional work at the WBG had received funding from the Ford Foundation, an influential organization known for promoting human rights initiatives. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Ford Foundation invested \$30 million to support human rights causes in Latin America, collaborating with groups such as America's Watch and Amnesty International. This influence is reflected in TI's legalistic conception of human rights, aligning with the vision advocated by prominent human rights organizations

emphasizing the importance of the rule of law, transparency, and good governance (Transparency International, 2011; Klein, 2007).

In summary, coercive pressure as an anti-corruption tactic is supported by evidence demonstrating how international organizations like the WBG and TI, with their significant resources and influence, promote anti-corruption efforts that align with their respective missions and values. This alignment, in turn, exerts coercive pressure on nations and institutions to conform to their anti-corruption agendas.

Set-up Internalisation of compliance

The utilization of the “Set-up Internalisation of Compliance” tactic within the international anti-corruption regime is supported by concrete evidence derived from the operations and mechanisms of international organizations, particularly the United Nations and the United Nations Global Compact. In 2004, the United Nations introduced its tenth principle against corruption within the UN Global Compact, urging participant entities not only to abstain from bribery, extortion, and other corrupt practices but also to actively develop internal policies and concrete programs to combat corruption within their organizations and supply chains. This commitment further calls for collaborative efforts with civil society, the United Nations, and governments to foster a more transparent global economy (United Nations, 2004).

The trend observed in international anti-corruption discourse post-Cold War has primarily centered around self-regulation due to the inherent challenge of enforcing global governance. For instance, the OECD Convention and related documents regarding foreign bribery include provisions specifying appropriate sanctions, jurisdiction, accounting standards, mutual legal assistance, and extradition. However, these instruments lack concrete enforcement mechanisms, with Article 3 merely stipulating that sanctions should be “effective, proportionate, and dissuasive.” Despite grandiose rhetoric, a report by Transparency International notes that many developing countries still maintain significant deficiencies in their legal frameworks concerning the OECD Convention (Transparency International, 2018b).

Similarly, the United Nations Declaration against Corruption and Bribery in International Commercial Transactions, while comprehensive in its scope, does not possess legally binding force. Member states are encouraged to cooperate in criminal investigations, share information on corrupt practices, and develop accounting standards and business codes, among other measures. Yet, this declaration, like most other UN General Assembly resolutions, lacks binding authority (United Nations, 1997).

The UN Global Compact, with its non-binding nature, plays a vital role in encouraging businesses to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies. Given the United Nations’ global significance, this document holds considerable social importance. Additionally, the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 16, seek to promote inclusive societies, access to justice, and accountable institutions. Although SDG 16 does not explicitly address corruption, it invites institutional entrepreneurs to align the promotion of peace, justice, and strong institutions with international anti-corruption norms (United Nations, 2015).

When considered individually, conventions lacking enforcement mechanisms may seem ineffective. However, they hold substantial symbolic and discursive power

when viewed within the context of the international anti-corruption discourse. Conventions, in conjunction with reports from international organizations advocating the implementation of harmonized anti-corruption strategies, serve as tools of power for distant surveillance and control. Social practices, such as naming and shaming, are heavily employed to exert pressure on governments to align with Western ideals. Indices like the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) pose reputational risks for countries and can deter foreign investments. The fear of being labeled a high-risk environment can incentivize individual actors to promote the political and economic agenda of the West (Hansen, 2012; Warren and Laufer, 2009).

In conclusion, international conventions, technical reports, and performance indices create an environment where an extensive normalization program can discipline developing nations into adopting Westernized governance models. Self-discipline is internalized, and nations find themselves confined within the parameters of the dominant discourse. However, the absence of a superior international authority to enforce conventions necessitates the reliance on social practices to exclude non-compliant actors from economic activities. Western institutional entrepreneurs significantly influence the international anti-corruption discourse, often disconnected from local contexts. To foster equitable global governance, anti-corruption programs should recognize the diversity of cultures and appeal to the interests and values of various actors while addressing the unique situational aspects of developing countries (Feder, 2014; Foucault, 1975).

5. Discussion

5.1. Theoretical contribution

This study makes a substantial theoretical contribution by providing a detailed examination of how institutional logics building mechanisms manifest in the context of the global anti-corruption regime. It demonstrates how this discourse is strategically applied to promote neoliberal policies across various domains of global governance. The study's investigation into these mechanisms is particularly valuable for critics of the current global anti-corruption regime, who argue that the discourse promoted by the international community lacks democratic construction.

Our research reveals that institutional entrepreneurs adeptly leverage these mechanisms to proliferate their ideologies. By identifying specific mechanisms for implementing divergent change within the global anti-corruption regime, we support the argument that even seemingly monolithic institutions can be influenced and transformed by emphasizing the roles of actors and agencies in institutional analyses. Once the decision to change existing institutional arrangements is made, significant efforts are devoted to creating dissatisfaction within the international community. This is achieved by framing the parameters of a specific problem through discourse and highlighting issues that evoke strong reactions. Existing disorders stemming from the previous institutional arrangements are exposed, and fears are exacerbated by linking the problem to undesirable conditions. Institutional entrepreneurs seize this opportunity to introduce a new paradigm, presenting an institutional model with inspiring outcomes and instilling actors with the norms and practices associated with this new model. Commitment and loyalty are subsequently generated through

coalition-building and the establishment of codes of conduct for appropriate behavior. Monitoring mechanisms, confessional mechanisms, and documentation practices reinforce the adoption of the new paradigm. Public pressure and support from authoritative organizations aid in internalizing compliance. These findings contribute to existing work on divergent change implementation by illustrating how followers and allies are aligned with a new ideology through the dynamic use of institutional logics building mechanisms across time and space.

Importantly, our study does not make judgments on whether the Western ideology or the current anti-corruption regime is inherently good or bad. We observe that these actors have effectively persuaded the global community to accept their definitions and adopt their strategies for combating corruption. Our research indicates that although international financial institutions and Western governments often impose specific requirements as conditions for financial and technological support, the institutional logic they advocate does not universally apply. We recognize that corruption manifests under a variety of situations, highlighting that a one-size-fits-all approach to combating corruption is inherently flawed. Instead, our study underscores the complexities and nuances involved in the global dissemination of anti-corruption norms and practices, suggesting the need for strategies that are adaptable to diverse socio-economic and cultural contexts.

Expanding on the corruption literature, our study uncovers the specific mechanisms employed by institutional entrepreneurs in diffusing anti-corruption norms, shedding light on the underlying neoliberal ideology within the international anti-corruption discourse. It underscores that the sociological nuances associated with corruption are often overlooked in the international community's legalistic approach. This research demonstrates how discourse plays a pivotal role in legitimizing or delegitimizing ideologies through the problematization of a specific phenomenon. More significantly, it highlights the essential role of discourse itself in the mechanisms of ideological proliferation and how actors can manipulate it to frame our understanding of reality. Grounded in critical theory, this study emphasizes the value of emic paradigms representing the perspectives of the marginalized and oppressed alongside those of the powerful. It underscores the importance of contextual information in interpretation and the need to address ambiguities and points of contention by incorporating insights from diverse viewpoints. While focusing on the global anti-corruption regime, this study has broader relevance to other international contexts where discourse plays a role in norm diffusion. It underscores how discourse contributes to meaning-making in specific contexts and how actors shape discourse to advance their agendas. Scholars in institutional entrepreneurship can gain deeper insights by considering the role of discourse and its materiality in institutional logics building mechanisms.

5.2. Practical contribution

Our research has practical implications as well. By identifying the institutional logics that uphold the current status quo, we propose ways to shift power dynamics to foster more equitable global governance. While developing nations may not be actively engaged in shaping the anti-corruption discourse, they are still subject to its normalizing effects. This discourse tends to stifle nations' right to self-determination

and perpetuates unbalanced North-South power relations on the international stage. Therefore, our research offers tools for those seeking to challenge existing institutional logics and redirect the international anti-corruption discourse to incorporate more informed perspectives from developing nations. The mechanisms outlined in our study can be valuable to institutional entrepreneurs, policymakers, civil society organizations, private individuals, and governments aiming to rethink ideologies and propose new institutional arrangements that better consider the practical realities faced by the world's impoverished populations.

Our study focuses on the use of discourse, unveiling how anti-corruption reports and performance indices have been employed by Western institutional entrepreneurs within international organizations to exert control over both government and individual behaviors in a subtle yet oppressive manner. The confessional mechanisms embedded in the World Bank's anti-corruption strategy, for example, serve to expand the institution's knowledge base while leaving borrowers at the mercy of elites who can impose burdensome repayment conditions. Neoliberal ideals, in this context, do not liberate but rather restrict and confine, as sovereign states are coerced into adopting the dominant anti-corruption discourse. This perpetuates unbalanced power relations on the global stage, as Western actors involved in fraudulent activities and complicity in corruption are overlooked.

A close examination of the corpus of the text reveals that the international anti-corruption discourse primarily revolves around economic motives. It employs an extensive normalization program aimed at compelling governments and individuals to internalize a complex set of norms. However, our study highlights that international organizations can wield substantial influence in shaping a nation's identity and global position. They can also extend their reach into the private lives of individuals by dictating how people should govern themselves to be efficient members of society. Despite the allure of anti-corruption reports and performance indices, the propositions put forth by leading international organizations can be misleading. For instance, the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) solely assesses corruption perception levels in the public sector but is frequently used to make comparisons regarding actual corruption levels. This not only perpetuates power imbalances between industrialized and developing countries but also legitimizes neocolonial relations by justifying the North's intervention in the politics of the South. Therefore, caution must be exercised when employing the CPI as a reference point for setting standards and actions, given its methodological limitations. Corruption should be reconceptualized, and new measures encompassing pluralistic understandings of morality should be developed to find viable solutions. Corruption is not a fixed feature of impoverished nations but a dynamic phenomenon resulting from interactions between industrialized and developing nations. This dynamic can be recalibrated to benefit the poor, and discourse is a vital starting point.

Our study provides counter-intuitive insights into human rights as advocated by Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) like the World Bank and international organizations such as Transparency International (TI). TI's anti-corruption strategy mirrors that of the World Bank, both emphasizing cases of abuse over the economic drivers behind them. This approach originates from the Ford Foundation, which funded World Bank projects. Historical evidence reveals that the Ford Foundation

collaborated closely with US foreign policy to propagate neoliberal economics globally, funding programs that trained influential economists in developing countries. These economists played pivotal roles in crafting economic policies enforced by authoritarian regimes, resulting in widespread human rights abuses. When the Ford Foundation began funding international human rights organizations in the 1970s and 1980s, it treated human rights abuses as arbitrary incidents to be protested by people of conscience rather than as systemic consequences of imposing neoliberal ideology in developing nations. Given that this vision of human rights permeates the global anti-corruption regime, it is crucial to underscore the economic fundamentalism behind many human rights abuses spanning decades in the developing world. Human rights cannot be divorced from economics and politics. Fighting corruption can indeed enhance human rights, but it necessitates a critical examination of the institutions that enable it.

Overall, this study contributes both theoretically and practically, offering insights into institutional entrepreneurship, the dynamics of the global anti-corruption regime, and the broader discourse's impact on power relations and human rights. It urges a reconsideration of existing norms and proposes alternative pathways toward equitable global governance.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Major takeaways

Scholarly attention has predominantly focused on the impact of corruption on individuals, organizations, and society, with limited exploration of the development of global anti-corruption institutions. Additionally, scant consideration has been given to the mechanisms employed by actors within the current anti-corruption regime to establish its institutional logics. In response to these gaps in the literature, our study aimed to address key research questions: "How did the international anti-corruption regime evolve to its present state? What characterizes its institutional logics? How were these logics developed, and by what means?"

At the macro level, the application of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to understand the phenomenon of corruption and the strategies employed to combat it has been infrequent. At the same time, diversity in our investigation of the international anti-corruption discourse, we utilized CDA to uncover and deconstruct meanings conveyed in influential anti-corruption texts. This methodological approach offered a unique perspective on the construction of the international anti-corruption regime through discursive practices. By underscoring the role of language in shaping subjectivities and power dynamics, CDA enabled us to critically examine established concepts of corruption and conduct a comprehensive analysis.

Our findings revealed that Western institutional entrepreneurs played a significant role in shaping the prevailing understanding of corruption as the abuse of public power for private gain, with a predominant focus on bribery. This shaping process involves cultivating discontent within the international community, linking corruption to poor governance and poverty, and promoting Western governance models as superior. These insights contribute to the theoretical understanding of corruption by illustrating the socio-political and ideological dimensions that influence

anti-corruption policies globally. Our study underscores the importance of discourse in legitimizing certain perceptions of corruption over others. It challenges the traditional view that corruption is primarily a series of individual moral failures rather than a systemic issue facilitated by specific institutional logics.

Neoliberal ideology served as a guiding framework for identifying culprits, identifying opportunities for corrupt practices, and establishing norms of acceptable behavior in society. Consequently, Western governance models were positioned as superior for global governance, and Western ethics were upheld as the standard social norms to aspire to. These institutional logics were built on the premise that the Western model of non-interventionist government benefits the free market. To persuade the rest of the world to adopt anti-corruption strategies, Western actors defined the interests, values, and issues of potential allies as aligned with those of the West. These mechanisms were vital for discrediting existing institutional arrangements and undermining alternative proposals put forth by opponents.

Lastly, Western institutional entrepreneurs fostered cooperation by forming coalitions and codifying the conduct of economic transactions. Public oversight was promoted as an informal control mechanism. Allies were mobilized by portraying themselves as regular citizens and portraying businesses as job creators, while government representatives interfering in daily activities were depicted as villains. These institutional entrepreneurs harnessed resources to create confessional mechanisms and documentation policies. Media was used as a tool to market their vision. By promoting the idea that conformity equates to integrity, societies with practices diverging from Western ethical and moral norms were labeled as degenerate. Those deviating from the norm faced potential ostracization by the international community or were pressured to internalize compliance.

By exposing how Western models of governance are portrayed as the path to liberation from corruption, our research offers practical insights into the crafting of more effective anti-corruption strategies that consider local contexts and resist simplistic solutions. This awareness can aid policymakers and international bodies in developing anti-corruption measures that are culturally sensitive and tailored to specific political environments, thereby enhancing the quality of prevention and counteraction to corruption. Additionally, understanding the role of discourse in shaping corruption policies can help in designing more inclusive and representative anti-corruption dialogues that accommodate diverse viewpoints, especially from developing nations often sidelined in global discussions.

Our data show that the process of combating corruption is dynamic, involving multiple actors who may employ different tactics at different times to maintain their influence. Recognizing this multiplicity and the underlying motives can help in anticipating and mitigating the maneuvers of those who might use anti-corruption rhetoric to advance their power rather than genuinely addressing the roots of corruption.

In conclusion, while our study focused on the international anti-corruption discourse as an example of neoliberal ideology proliferation, the mechanisms discussed are broadly applicable to the construction and promotion of ideologies through institutions. Our process model provides a theoretical framework for understanding how institutional entrepreneurs propagate ideologies, a process often

underexplored in existing literature. This model not only complements existing theoretical models but also invites creativity in establishing new institutions, thereby offering pathways for both theoretical exploration and practical implementation in the fight against corruption.

6.2. Limitations and directions for future research

While this study effectively employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the discursive construction of corruption, it is essential to acknowledge certain limitations in our approach. Specifically, CDA does not fully capture the cognitive aspects of how individuals comprehend and internalize discourses. The construction of corruption as an object of knowledge predominantly occurs within the consciousness of individuals, and our text-focused analysis may not fully reflect this complexity. This limitation is noteworthy as it suggests that an over-reliance on text analysis alone might compromise the depth and applicability of our conclusions.

To address this limitation, we encourage future researchers to employ triangulation methods to refine our findings. Firsthand investigations of authorial intentions through ethnographic observations, focus groups, and narrative interviews could provide deeper insights into how corruption is perceived and contested. These methods would help validate our results and reveal potential contestations and contradictions in the formulation of conventions and the practical operations of international organizations.

Furthermore, our study's focus was primarily on documents that explicitly address corruption, which inevitably led to the exclusion of essential lines of scholarship that link corruption to broader systemic issues. These include climate change, sustainability of the biosphere, geopolitics of oil and gas, global financial volatility affecting wealth distribution, and prevailing narratives around terrorism and democracy. Lived experiences often reshape these interconnected issues and offer a rich field for further investigation. Future research could explore these dimensions to understand how corruption interacts with and influences these critical areas.

Additionally, future studies could challenge the prevailing neoliberal framework and Western dominance in global governance. Exploring alternatives that promote a multi-civilizational world order might offer new insights into securing more balanced power relations within the international community. Initiatives such as democratizing global institutions and reevaluating criteria for international voting deserve further exploration. Investigating how developing nations can leverage critical theory to establish institutions that empower them to shape their futures and counteract the economic and political violence fostered by neoliberal policies is another promising direction. Such research could pave the way for a governance model that embraces oppositional discourses and counternarratives, challenging the oppressive consequences of dominant ideologies.

By addressing these limitations and suggesting avenues for further research, we aim to inspire comprehensive studies that not only build on our findings but also broaden the scope of inquiry into the pervasive influence of corruption in various spheres of global affairs.

Author contributions: Conceptualization, IAB and MTTT; methodology, IAB; software, IAB; validation, MTTT and IAB; formal analysis, IAB; investigation, IAB and MTTT; resources, IAB and MTTT; data curation, IAB and MTTT; writing—original draft preparation, IAB; writing—review and editing, MTTT; visualization, IAB and MTTT; supervision, MTTT; project administration, IAB and MTTT. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- Adam, I. (2024). Transparency, accountability, and integrity of public procurement systems. Available online: <https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/helpdesk/transparency-accountability-and-integrity-of-public-procurement-systems> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- ADB/OECD. (1999). The ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia and the Pacific. Available online: <http://www.oecd.org/site/adboecdanti-corruptioninitiative/ADB-OECD-Initiative-Information-Sheet.pdf> (accessed on 1 January 2024)
- Ansell, C. K. (1997). Symbolic Networks: The Realignment of the French Working Class, 1887–1894. *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(2), 359–390. <https://doi.org/10.1086/231211>
- Antonio, R. J. (2007). The Cultural Construction of Neoliberal Globalization. *The Blackwell Companion to Globalization*, 67–83. Portico. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470691939.ch3>
- AU Convention (2003). African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption. Available online: <https://au.int/en/treaties/african-union-convention-preventing-and-combating-corruption> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Bardhan, P. (1997). Corruption and development: a review of issues. *Journal of economic literature*, 35(3), 1320–1346.
- Barrett, S. (2003). *Environment and statecraft: The strategy of environmental treaty-making*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Battilana, J., Leca, B., & Boxenbaum, E. (2009). How Actors Change Institutions: Towards a Theory of Institutional Entrepreneurship. *Academy of Management Annals*, 3(1), 65–107. <https://doi.org/10.5465/19416520903053598>
- Baumol, W. J. (2010). The Microtheory of Innovative Entrepreneurship. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400835225>
- Benford, R. D., & Snow, D. A. (2000). Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26(1), 611–639. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.26.1.611>
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). Outline of a Theory of Practice (R. Nice, Trans.). <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511812507>
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Harvard university press.
- Bowles, S., & Gintis, H. (1976). *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Bracking, S. (2007). *Corruption and Development*. Palgrave Macmillan UK. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230590625>
- Bratsis, P. (2003). The construction of corruption, or rules of separation and illusions of purity in bourgeois societies. *Social Text*, 21(4), 9–33. https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-21-4_77-9
- Brown, E., & Cloke, J. (2004). Neoliberal Reform, Governance and Corruption in the South: Assessing the International Anti-Corruption Crusade. *Antipode*, 36(2), 272–294. Portico. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2004.00406.x>
- Brown, E., & Cloke, J. (2006). The critical business of corruption. *Critical Perspectives on International Business*, 2(4), 275–298. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17422040610706622>
- Caiden, Gerald. E., Dwivedi, O. P., & Jabbra, J. G. (2001). Where Corruption Lives. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781565495975>
- Carr, I. (2007). Corruption, legal solutions and limits of law. *International Journal of Law in Context*, 3(3), 227–255. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1744552307003035>
- Chan, K. (2001). Uncertainty, acculturation, and corruption in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 24(9), 909–928. <https://doi.org/10.1081/pad-100104779>
- Colomy, P. (1998). Neofunctionalism and Neoinstitutionalism: Human Agency and Interest in Institutional Change. *Sociological Forum*, 13(2), 265–300. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/684885>
- Creed, W. E. D., Scully, M. A., & Austin, J. R. (2002). Clothes Make the Person? The Tailoring of Legitimizing Accounts and the Social Construction of Identity. *Organization Science*, 13(5), 475–496. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.13.5.475.7814>

- De Maria, W. (2008). Measurements and markets: deconstructing the corruption perception index. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 21(7), 777–797. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09513550810904569>
- Déjean, F., Gond, J.-P., & Leca, B. (2004). Measuring the Unmeasured: An Institutional Entrepreneur Strategy in an Emerging Industry. *Human Relations*, 57(6), 741–764. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726704044954>
- Della Porta, D., & Vannucci, A. (1999). *Corrupt exchanges: Actors, resources, and mechanisms of political corruption*. Transaction Publishers.
- Demil, B., & bensédrine, J. (2005). Processes of Legitimization and Pressure Toward Regulation: Corporate Conformity and Strategic Behavior. *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 35(2), 56–77. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00208825.2005.11043728>
- DiMaggio, P. (1988). Interest and agency in institutional theory. *Institutional patterns and organizations culture and environment*, 3-21.
- Eisenstadt, S. N. (1964). Institutionalization and Change. *American Sociological Review*, 29(2), 235. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2092126>
- Eisenstadt, S. N. (1980). Cultural Orientations, Institutional Entrepreneurs, and Social Change: Comparative Analysis of Traditional Civilizations. *American Journal of Sociology*, 85(4), 840–869. <https://doi.org/10.1086/227091>
- Everett, J., Neu, D., & Rahaman, A. S. (2006). The Global Fight against Corruption: A Foucaultian, Virtues-Ethics Framing. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 65(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-005-8715-8>
- Feder, E. K. (2014). Power/knowledge. In Michel Foucault-Key Concepts. London: Routledge. pp. 63-76.
- Fielding, N. G., Clarke, A., & Witt, R. (2000). *The Economic Dimensions of Crime*. Palgrave Macmillan UK. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-62853-7>
- Fisman, R. (2001). Estimating the Value of Political Connections. *American Economic Review*, 91(4), 1095–1102. <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.91.4.1095>
- Fligstein, N. (1997). Social Skill and Institutional Theory. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 40(4), 397–405. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764297040004003>
- Foucault, M. (1975). *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Fukuyama, F. (1989). The end of history? The national interest, (16), 3-18.
- Fukuyama, F. (1992). Capitalism & Democracy: The Missing Link. *Journal of Democracy*, 3(3), 100–110. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1992.0045>
- G20 India (2023). New Delhi G20 Summit. Available online: <https://www.g20.in/en/g20-india-2023/new-delhi-summit/new-delhi-summit.html>. (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Galtung, F. (2006). Measuring the immeasurable: boundaries and functions of (macro) corruption indices. In: Galtung, F., & Sampford, C. (editors). *Measuring corruption*. UK: Ashgate.
- Gebel, A. C. (2012). Human nature and morality in the anti-corruption discourse of transparency international. *Public Administration and Development*, 32(1), 109–128. Portico. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pad.1604>
- Gephart, M. (2009). Contextualizing Conceptions of Corruption: Challenges for the International Anti-Corruption Campaign. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1534589>
- Graaf, G. d., Wagenaar, P., & Hoenderboom, M. (2010). Constructing corruption. In: *The good cause: theoretical perspectives on corruption*. Opladen: B. Budrich. pp. 98-114.
- Greenwood, R., Hinings, C. R., & Suddaby, R. (2002). Theorizing change: the role of professional associations in the transformation of institutionalized fields. *Academy of Management Journal*, 45(1), 58–80. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3069285>
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. *Handbook of qualitative research*, 2(163-194), 105.
- Gumperz, J. J. (1982). *Discourse Strategies*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511611834>
- Gumperz, J. J., & Hymes, D. H. (1964). *The ethnography of communication*. American Anthropological Association.
- Hamir, M. A. (1999). Keynote Address. In: K. Frimpong & G. Jacques (editors). *Corruption, Democracy, and Good Governance in Africa: Essays on Accountability and Ethical Behaviour*. Lentswe La Lesedi, Gaborone, Botswana: Lightbooks. 1-8.
- Hansen, H. K. (2011). Managing corruption risks. *Review of International Political Economy*, 18(2), 251–275. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09692291003791448>
- Hansen, H. K. (2011). The power of performance indices in the global politics of anti-corruption. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 15(4), 506–531. <https://doi.org/10.1057/jird.2011.18>

- Hardoon, D., & Heinrich, F. (2011). Bribe Payers Index. Available online: <https://www.transparency.org/en/publications/bribe-payers-index-2011> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Haveman, H. A., & Rao, H. (1997). Structuring a Theory of Moral Sentiments: Institutional and Organizational Coevolution in the Early Thrift Industry. *American Journal of Sociology*, 102(6), 1606–1651. <https://doi.org/10.1086/231128>
- Hickel, J. (2017). *The divide: a brief guide to global inequality and its solutions*. London: William Heinemann.
- Hindess, B. (2012). International anti-corruption as a programme of normalization. In: L. De Sousa, B. Hindess, & P. Larmour (editors), *Governments, NGOs and Anti-Corruption: the new integrity warriors*. London & New York: Routledge. pp. 45-58.
- Holm, P. (1995). The Dynamics of Institutionalization: Transformation Processes in Norwegian Fisheries. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40(3), 398. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2393791>
- Hsu, C. L. (2006). Market Ventures, Moral Logics, and Ambiguity: Crafting a New Organizational Form in Post-Socialist China. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 47(1), 69–92. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1533-8525.2006.00038.x>
- Huntington, S. P. (2006). *Political order in changing societies*. Yale University Press.
- Huther, J., & Shah, A. (2000). *Anti-Corruption Policies and Programs*. Available online: https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/19753/multi_page.pdf (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Hymes, D. H. (1972). Models of the interaction of language and social life. In: D. H. Hymes & J. J. Gumperz (editors). *Directions in Sociolinguistics*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Ikenberry, G. J. (2007). Globalization as American hegemony. *Globalization theory: Approaches and controversies*, 4, 41.
- Izkovich, Y., & Heilbrunn, S. (2016). The Role of Co-Workers' Solidarity as an Antecedent of Incivility and Deviant Behavior in Organizations. *Deviant Behavior*, 37(8), 861–876. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2016.1152865>
- Ives, P. (2004). *Gramsci's Politics of Language*. University of Toronto Press. <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442675490>
- Jaiyeola, A. R. (2023). Deploying Emerging Technology to Fight Corruption. Available online: <https://www.ifac.org/knowledge-gateway/building-trust-ethics/discussion/deploying-emerging-technology-fight-corruption> (accessed on 1 January 2024). IFAC International Federation of Accountants.
- Jesson, J. K., Matheson, L., & Lacey, F. M. (2011). *Doing Your Literature Review: Traditional and Systematic Techniques*. SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Johnston, M. (1999). Corruption and democratic consolidation. Available online: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228560248_Corruption_and_Democratic_Consolidation (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Johnston, M. (2005). Keeping the answers, changing the questions: Corruption definitions revisited. In: Alemann, Ulrich v. (editor). *Dimensionen politischer Korruption. Beiträge zum Stand der internationalen Forschung*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften. pp. 61-76.
- Kajsiu, B. (2018). Un análisis discursivo post-estructuralista de la corrupción. *Analecta Política*, 8(14), 131–156. <https://doi.org/10.18566/apolit.v8n14.a08>
- Kaufmann, D. (2008). Daniel Kaufmann's farewell lecture: Governance, crisis, and the longer view: Unorthodox reflections on the new reality. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A., & Mastruzzi, M. (2008). Governance Matters VII: Aggregate and Individual Governance Indicators, 1996-2007. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1148386>
- Kincheloe, J. L., & McLaren, P. (2003). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In: N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (editors). *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage. pp. 433-488.
- Klein, N. (2007). *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. London: Penguin.
- Klitgaard, R. (1988). *Controlling Corruption*. <https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520911185>
- Kukutschka, R. M. B. (2024). CPI 2023: Corruption and (In)Justice. Available online: <https://www.transparency.org/en/news/cpi-2023-corruption-and-injustice> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Le Billon, P. (2005). Corruption, Reconstruction and Oil Governance in Iraq. *Third World Quarterly*, 26(4–5), 685–703. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436590500127966>
- Ledeneva, A. (2018). Future Challenges of Corruption Studies. *Südosteuropa*, 66(3), 418–425. <https://doi.org/10.1515/soeu-2018-0031>
- Mauro, P. (1998). Corruption and the composition of government expenditure. *Journal of Public Economics*, 69(2), 263-279. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0047-2727\(98\)00025-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0047-2727(98)00025-5)

- Mundy, K., & Verger, A. (2015). The World Bank and the global governance of education in a changing world order. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 40, 9–18. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2014.11.021>
- North, D. C. (1990). Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511808678>
- Nye, J. S. (1967). Corruption and Political Development: A Cost-Benefit Analysis. *American Political Science Review*, 61(2), 417–427. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1953254>
- Oakes, J. (1986). *Keeping track: How schools structure inequality*. Connecticut: Yale University Press.
- OECD Convention (1997). *OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions and Related Documents*. Available online: https://search.oecd.org/daf/anti-bribery/ConvCombatBribery_ENG.pdf (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Peterson, M. F., & Smith, P. B. (1997). Does national culture or ambient temperature explain cross-national differences in role stress? No sweat! *Academy of Management Journal*, 40(4), 930–946. <https://doi.org/10.2307/256953>
- Phillips, N., Lawrence, T. B., & Hardy, C. (2000). Inter-organizational Collaboration and the Dynamics of Institutional Fields. *Journal of Management Studies*, 37(1). Portico. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6486.00171>
- Pillay, S., & Dorasamy, N. (2010). Linking cultural dimensions with the nature of corruption: An institutional theory perspective. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 10(3), 363–378. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470595810389793>
- Pillay, S., & Kluvers, R. (2014). An Institutional Theory Perspective on Corruption: The Case of a Developing Democracy. *Financial Accountability & Management*, 30(1), 95–119. Portico. <https://doi.org/10.1111/faam.12029>
- POGGE, T. (2005). Recognized and Violated by International Law: The Human Rights of the Global Poor. *Leiden Journal of International Law*, 18(4), 717–745. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0922156505002980>
- Polzer, T. (2001). Corruption: deconstructing the World Bank discourse. Development Studies Institute (DESTIN) Working Paper, 1, 18.
- Rao, H. (1998). Caveat Emptor: The Construction of Nonprofit Consumer Watchdog Organizations. *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(4), 912–961. <https://doi.org/10.1086/231293>
- Rao, H., Morrill, C., & Zald, M. N. (2000). Power plays: How social movements and collective action create new organizational forms. *Research in organizational behavior*, 22, 237–281. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-3085\(00\)22007-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-3085(00)22007-8)
- Raycraft, R. D. and A. Lannquist (2020). Blockchain alone can't prevent crime, but these 5 use cases can help tackle government corruption. Available online: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/07/5-ways-blockchain-could-help-tackle-government-corruption/> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Reinsberg, B., Kentikelenis, A., & Stubbs, T. (2019). Creating crony capitalism: neoliberal globalization and the fueling of corruption. *Socio-Economic Review*, 19(2), 607–634. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwz039>
- Rhee, S.-M., et al. (2023). Global Anti-Corruption Insights: Winter 2023: Update on Recent Enforcement, Litigation, and Compliance Developments. Available online: <https://www.arnoldporter.com/en/perspectives/publications/2023/01/global-anticorruption-insights-winter-2023> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Riley, S. P. (1998). The Political Economy of Anti-Corruption Strategies in Africa. *The European Journal of Development Research*, 10(1), 129–159. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09578819808426705>
- Rodriguez, P., Uhlenbruck, K., & Eden, L. (2005). Government Corruption and the Entry Strategies of Multinationals. *Academy of Management Review*, 30(2), 383–396. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2005.16387894>
- Rogers, R., Malancharuvil-Berkes, E., Mosley, M., et al. (2005). Critical Discourse Analysis in Education: A Review of the Literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 75(3), 365–416. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543075003365>
- Rose-Ackerman, S. (1999). Corruption and Government. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781139175098>
- Rostami, A., Melde, C., & Holgersson, S. (2014). The myth of success: the emergence and maintenance of a specialized gang unit in Stockholm, Sweden. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*, 39(3), 199–217. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01924036.2014.973054>
- Scholte, J. A. (2017). *Globalization: A critical introduction*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Scully, M. A., & Creed, W. E. D. (2005). Subverting our stories of subversion. *Social Movements and Organization Theory*, 310–332. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511791000.016>
- Seo, M.-G., & Creed, W. E. D. (2002). Institutional Contradictions, Praxis, and Institutional Change: A Dialectical Perspective. *The Academy of Management Review*, 27(2), 222. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4134353>
- Silverstein, M., & Urban, G. (1996). *Natural histories of discourse*. University of Chicago Press.

- Sinclair, J. M., & Coulthard, M. (1975). *Towards an analysis of discourse: The English used by teachers and pupils*. London: Oxford Univ Pr.
- Snow, D. A., & Benford, R. D. (1992). Master frames and cycles of protest. *Frontiers in social movement theory*, 133, 155.
- Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications.
- Su, J., Zhai, Q., & Karlsson, T. (2017). Beyond Red Tape and Fools: Institutional Theory in Entrepreneurship Research, 1992–2014. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 41(4), 505–531. <https://doi.org/10.1111/etp.12218>
- Suddaby, R., & Greenwood, R. (2005). Rhetorical Strategies of Legitimacy. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 50(1), 35–67. <https://doi.org/10.2189/asqu.2005.50.1.35>
- Timilsina, A. (2021). How innovations in anti-corruption can build sustainable development. Available online: <https://www.undp.org/blog/how-innovations-anti-corruption-can-build-sustainable-development> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Transparency International. (2013). *Technology against Corruption*. Available online: <https://www.transparency.org/en/news/technology-against-corruption> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Transparency International. (2009a). *Corruption in the Education Sector*. Transparency International. Available online: https://issuu.com/transparencyinternational/docs/working_paper_042009_education_en (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Transparency International. (2009b). *Global Corruption Report 2009: Corruption and the Private Sector*. Available online: <https://www.transparency.org/en/publications/global-corruption-report-2009> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Transparency International. (2011). *Short Bio of Peter Eigen*. Available online: https://www.transparency.org/files/content/ourorganisation/ShortBio_PeterEigen_EN.pdf (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Transparency International. (2013). *Global Corruption Report: Education (0203109813)*. Available online: <https://www.transparency.org/en/publications/global-corruption-report-education> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Transparency International. (2014a). *Preventing Corruption in Humanitarian Operations*. Available online: https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publication/preventing_corruption_in_humanitarian_operations (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Transparency International. (2014b). *Transparency in Corporate Reporting*. Available online: https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publication/transparency_in_corporate_reporting_assessing_worlds_largest_companies_2014 (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Transparency International. (2015). *Civil society participation, public accountability and the UNCAC*. Available online: <https://www.transparency.org/en/publications/civil-society-participation-public-accountability-and-the-uncac> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Transparency International. (2018a). *Corruption Perceptions Index*. Available online: <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Transparency International. (2018b). *Exporting Corruption: Assessing Enforcement of the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention*. Available online: https://www.transparency.org/files/content/publication/Download_a_short_version_of_the_report.pdf (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Transparency International. (2018c). *FAQs on Transparency International*. Available online: https://web.archive.org/web/20200418114431/https://www.transparency.org/whoweare/organisation/faqs_on_transparency_international/9 (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Transparency International. (2020a). *Corruptionary*. Available online: <https://www.transparency.org/en/corruptionary> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Transparency International. (2020b). *Global Corruption Barometer*. Available online: <https://www.transparency.org/en/gcb> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Transparency International. (2020c). *What is Corruption?* Available online: <https://www.transparency.org/en/what-is-corruption> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- Treisman, D. (2000). The causes of corruption: a cross-national study. *Journal of Public Economics*, 76(3), 399-457. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0047-2727\(99\)00092-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0047-2727(99)00092-4)
- UNCAC (2003) *United Nations Convention Against Corruption*, Available online: https://www.unodc.org/documents/brussels/UN_Convention_Against_Corruption.pdf. (accessed on 1 January 2024).

- UN General Assembly (1996). United Nations Declaration against Corruption and Bribery in International Commercial Transactions: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, A/C.2/51/L.37, 22 November 1996. Available online: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/228657?v=pdf> (accessed on 3 August 2024)
- UN General Assembly (2013). United Nations Declaration against Corruption and Bribery in International Commercial Transactions: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, A/RES/51/191, 23 November 2013. Available online: <https://www.refworld.org/legal/resolution/unga/2013/en/95718> (accessed on 3 August 2024).
- United Nations. (2004). United Nations Global Compact. Available online: <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- van Dijk, T. A. (1993). Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis. *Discourse & Society*, 4(2), 249–283. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926593004002006>
- von Glahn, G., & Taulbee, J. L. (2013). *Law Among Nations: An Introduction to Public International Law*, 10th ed. New York: Pearson.
- Warren, D. E., & Laufer, W. S. (2009). Are Corruption Indices a Self-Fulfilling Prophecy? A Social Labeling Perspective of Corruption. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 88(S4), 841–849. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-009-0316-5>
- Wells, J. T. (2017). *Corporate Fraud Handbook*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119351962>
- Wijen, F., & Ansari, S. (2007). Overcoming Inaction through Collective Institutional Entrepreneurship: Insights from Regime Theory. *Organization Studies*, 28(7), 1079–1100. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840607078115>
- Willis, P. E. (1977). *Learning to labor: how working class kids get working class jobs*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2009). Critical discourse analysis: history, agenda, theory, and methodology. In: R. Wodak & M. Meyer (editors). *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*: Sage. pp. 1-33.
- Wood, J., & Antonowicz, L. (2011). *Fighting Corruption in the Education Sector: Methods, Tools and Good Practices*. Available online: https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/anti-corruption/fighting_corruptionintheeducationsector.html (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- World Bank IEG. (2010). *The World Bank Country-Level Engagement on Governance and Anticorruption*. Available online: http://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/sites/default/files/Data/reports/gac_eval.pdf (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- World Bank. (1992). *Governance and Development (10650)*. Retrieved from Washington, DC: Available online: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/604951468739447676/pdf/multi-page.pdf> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- World Bank. (1997). *Helping countries combat corruption: The role of the World Bank*. Washington, DC: World Bank. 1-69.
- World Bank. (2000). *Anticorruption in Transition: A Contribution to the Policy Debate*. Available online: <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/825161468029662026/pdf/multi-page.pdf> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- World Bank. (2001). *Multi-pronged Strategies for Combating Corruption*. Available online: <https://web.archive.org/web/20020621191516/http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/anticorrupt/strategies.htm> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- World Bank. (2006). *World Bank Launches Voluntary Disclosure Program* [Press release]. Available online: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2006/08/01/world-bank-launches-voluntary-disclosure-program> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- World Bank. (2008). *The World Bank's Anti-Corruption Guidelines and Sanctions Reform (45558)*. Available online: <https://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/documents/sanctions/other-documents/osd/User%20Friendly%20Version%20of%20the%20Anti-Corruption%20Guidelines.pdf> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- World Bank. (2010). *Corruption Hunters Rally for Action Against Fraud*. Available online: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2010/12/06/corruption-hunters-rally-for-action-against-fraud> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- World Bank. (2013). *World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim Speech on Anti-Corruption at the Center for Strategic and International Studies*. Available online: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/speech/2013/01/30/world-bank-group-president-jim-yong-kim-speech-anti-corruption-center-for-strategic-and-international-studies> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- World Bank. (2018). *Combating Corruption*. Available online: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/governance/brief/anti-corruption> (accessed on 1 January 2024).
- World Bank. (2019). *World Development Indicators*. Available online: <http://wdi.worldbank.org/table/WV.1> (accessed on 1 January 2024).

World Bank. (2020). Worldwide Governance Indicators. Available online: <https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/#home> (accessed on 1 January 2024).

Zyglidopoulos, S., Dieleman, M., & Hirsch, P. (2019). Playing the Game: Unpacking the Rationale for Organizational Corruption in MNCs. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 29(3), 338–349. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1056492618817827>