Corruption and Culture

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CONFLICT BETWEEN COMPETING OBLIGATIONS

- *"In our **culture** it's okay to put yourself and your family **above** your **obligations** to serve in the **public interest**."*

- **Public servants** obligation to be **impartial** and **not corrupt**

- Experience **kinship-related obligation** to **favour** family and friends

ARE SOME CULTURES MORE CORRUPT THAN OTHERS

- "**Corruption is part of our culture**"
- Without **cultural change** cannot **fight corruption**
- Corruption **natural**
- Common **practice**

CULTURE

- Shared **values, beliefs**, and **norms**
- Not **art, music**, and **literature**
- Make **life possible**
- **Social choice, economic efficiency**, and **political stability**

TWO "CULTURAL DIMENSIONS"

1. **From "tradition" to "reason"**

- ***Traditional*** *values emphasize importance of* **religion, parent-child ties**, *deference to* **authority** *and* **traditional family values**

- **Secular-rational** *values have* **opposite preferences**

- ***Less emphasis*** *on* **religion, traditional family** *values* *and* **authority**

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TWO "CULTURAL DIMENSIONS"

2. **From "survival mode" to "individual expressiveness"**

- ***Survival values*** *place emphasis on **economic** and **physical security***

- *Low levels of **trust** and **tolerance***

- ***Self-expression*** *values give high priority to environmental protection, tolerance of **foreigners, gender equality**, and rising*

SOCIETIES

- With stronger **family ties** have **more corruption** and **weaker institutions**
- When institutions **weak** or begin to **break down**
- Return to **family connections**

SOCIETIES

- Humans born with emotions that fortify **social relationships** based on **cooperation** with friends and family

- Modern state **organize themselves** and **learn to cooperate** in manner that **transcend** friends and family

- When **institutions break down** revert to **patronage** and **nepotism**

ACCUSATIONS OF CORRUPTION

- Trigger **resistance**
- *Concepts* and *measures* **culturally biased**

CORRUPTION

- **Many kinds**
- ***Who*** *initiates*
- ***External*** *or* ***internal***
- ***Resources*** *used*
- ***Levels***
- ***Nature*** *of economy*

CAN CORRUPTION BE REDUCED EVEN IN CORRUPT CULTURES?

- Corruption **crime of calculation**
- *'Will it pay?'*

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MEASURES TO CONTROL

A. Select agents for "honesty" and "capability"

1. *Screen out **dishonest** (past records, tests, predictors of honesty)*

2. *Exploit outside **"guarantees" of honesty** (networks for finding dependable agents and ensuring they stay that way)*

MEASURES TO CONTROL CORRUPTION

B. Change rewards and penalties facing agents (and clients)

1. *Salaries to reduce need for corrupt income*

2. *Reward specific actions and agents that control corruption*

3. *Use contingent contracts to reward agents as function of eventual success or failure*

4. *Nonmonetary rewards (transfers, training*

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MEASURES TO CONTROL

C. **Penalize corrupt behaviour**

1. *Raise general levels of **formal penalties***

2. *Increase principal's **authority to punish***

3. ***Calibrate** penalties in terms of deterrence*

4. *Use **nonformal penalties** (transfers, publicity, loss of professional standing, blackballing)*

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MEASURES TO CONTROL

D. Gather and analyze information

1. *Improve **auditing systems** and **management information systems***

2. *Provide **evidence** corruption occurred (red flags, statistical analyses, random samples, inspections)*

3. *Assess **vulnerability** to corruption*

MEASURES TO CONTROL

E. Change attitudes about corruption

1. Use **training, educational programs**, and **personal example**

2. Promulgate **code of ethics** (civil service, particular organizations)

3. Change **organizational culture**

CORRUPTION

- **Universally understood** in **similar manner** across **cultures**

- Differences lie in **variation** of what counts as **public goods** in cultures

- Not variation in whether **morally wrong** to turn **public good** into **private good**

CORRUPTION

- *Different* **culturally tuned meanings**
- "**Scorned** everywhere in the world
- **Cultural differences** matter

LESSONS LEARNED

- Don't focus on trying to **change** *national values and attitudes*

- Reframe **cultures of corruption** as **crimes of calculation**

- **Analyze** how **corrupt systems work** and how they can be **undermined**

LESSONS LEARNED

- Study **incentives** facing **individual actors**, **principals, agents** and **clients** who *give* and *receive* bribes

- **Analyze** how incentives **nudged** or **shifted**

- **Disrupt** corrupt equilibriums

LESSONS LEARNED

- **"Frying big fish"**
- Attaining **quick wins**
- Focusing on **few priorities**

LESSONS LEARNED

- Involve **private sector** and **civil society** in **design**, **implementation**, and **evaluation** of reforms
- **Success stories** identified - **copy** and **inspire**
- *Defeat* **cynicism**
- *Overcome* **ignorance**

LESSONS LEARNED

- Take **national cultures** into account without trying to **change them**
- **Anti-corruption initiatives** take advantage of **cultural contexts**
- Emphasize **religion**
- Think more **creatively** and **practically**
- Act more **humbly** and **humanely**

"Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed."

—Mahatma Gandhi