



University of Sussex

Sussex Centre for the Study of Corruption

RESEARCH METHODS IN CORRUPTION ANALYSIS

959M9 / 2014-15

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MODULE OBJECTIVES

The objective of this core module on the MA in Corruption and Governance course is to introduce students to some of the methodological issues and challenges inherent in analysing corruption. The course is not a “traditional” methods course as such. The idea is not for you to learn the details of quantitative or qualitative methodology; rather, the aim is to make you understand why scholars may approach cases of corruption in very different ways, using different methods of enquiry.

The module is designed to introduce students to some of the fundamental methodological issues faced by scholars as they try to analyse corruption around the world. The module illustrates the importance of knowing why scholars approach corruption and governance problems and issues in particular ways, and how this can (and does) have a fundamental effect on what they think should be done about it.

The module introduces some of the challenges inherent in quantifying and qualifying corruption. Students will be taught that understanding these different methodological approaches can help them gain a much more nuanced understanding of where corruption flourishes and why there is significant disagreement surrounding what to do about it.

The classes discuss some of the ways that we can build knowledge and accrue evidence by testing ideas using data. Students will be introduced to quantitative methods that many of the large NGOs adopt in measuring corruption. Such methods have both their (strong) proponents and their (equally strong) critics, and we discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using surveys, questionnaires and statistical packages to analyse real world corruption. Students will be required to assess and analyse various types of data as well as the logic and method that a researcher has used in generating them.

Students will also be introduced to modes of enquiry based on interpretivist understandings of corruption. We discuss some of the strengths and weaknesses of using these methods, analysing why they are chosen in the first place and how they link with more quantitative approaches.

By the end of the module, students should have an enhanced understanding of how scholars conduct corruption research. Students should also be able to critically interpret many of the claims and counter-claims – often based on statistical indicators – that are a feature of contemporary analyses of corruption.

Armed with the analytical and methodological tools aimed at unpacking the complex phenomenon of corruption, we will examine specific examples of corruption across the developed and developing world. When looking at each of the cases, you will be asked to think about three specific questions

- What is the nature of the corruption “problem”?
- How has this “problem” come about?
- What can and/or should be done about it?

The different methodological traditions will look to answer these questions in different ways. It is your job to work out “where they are coming from” and why they analyse corruption in the ways that they do.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The course will be taught in a weekly two-hour session. You are expected to attend all sessions – attendance will be taken. Students are not required to do presentations, but the sessions will be student led. In particular, this entails doing preparatory reading for each class. I recommend you pick at least two pieces from the reading list each week (*highly recommended reading* is marked with an asterisk). I may also suggest more reading – in the form of case studies or exemplary pieces of research – closer to each weekly session.

| Session | Date | Topic |
|---|--------|--|
| 1 | 22 Sep | Introduction (Dr Olli Hellmann, Department of Politics) |
| Block I: SOCIAL SCIENCE METHODOLOGY | | |
| 2 | 29 Sep | Ontology and epistemology (Hellmann) |
| 3 | 6 Oct | Research methods and designs (Hellmann) |
| Block II: SOCIAL SCIENCE APPROACHES TO CORRUPTION | | |
| 4 | 13 Oct | Positivism I: rational choice (Hellmann) |
| 5 | 20 Oct | Positivism II: culture and history (Hellmann) |
| 6 | 27 Oct | Interpretivism: ideas and ideology (Hellmann) |
| Block III: STUDYING CORRUPTION | | |
| 7 | 3 Nov | Quantitative methods I: surveys (Dr Liz David-Barrett, Department of Politics) |
| 8 | 10 Nov | Quantitative methods II: experiments (Hellmann) |
| 9 | 17 Nov | Quantitative methods III: open data and freedom of information as tools for researching corruption (David-Barrett) |
| 10 | 24 Nov | Qualitative methods (David-Barrett) |
| 11 | 1 Dec | Law and corruption (Dr John Child, Department of Law) |
| 12 | 8 Dec | Conclusion (Hellmann) |

ASSESSMENT

The module will be assessed through a 4,000-word essay. This will be submitted by Monday 8th December, 4pm.

Essay titles must be agreed with the module convenor in advance. Such essay questions (and that is all they are – suggested!) might include:

- What has rational choice contributed to the analysis of corruption?
- “Attempts to measure corruption in anything like a meaningful way have failed”. Have they?
- To what extent do philosophical issues inform the analysis of corruption?

NOTE ON PLAGIARISM

Essays must be entirely your own work, though of course they will be based upon what you have read, heard and discussed.

It is very important that you avoid plagiarism, the presentation of another person's thoughts or words as if they were your own.

According to Sussex University:

“... plagiarism is the use, without acknowledgement, of the intellectual work of other people and the act of representing the ideas or discoveries of another as one's own in written work submitted for assessment. To copy sentences, phrases or even striking expressions without acknowledgement of the source (either by inadequate citation or failure to indicate verbatim quotations) is plagiarism; to paraphrase without acknowledgement is likewise plagiarism. Where such copying or paraphrase has occurred the mere mention of the source in the bibliography shall not be deemed sufficient acknowledgement; each such instance must be referred specifically to its source. Verbatim quotations must be either in inverted commas, or indented, and directly acknowledged.”

Plagiarism is a serious examination offence. To avoid plagiarism, intentional or unintentional, be careful to record who said or wrote what in your notes, and make sure you provide accurate references in your essays.

For more information see: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/academicoffice/resources/misconduct>

READING LIST

Block I: SOCIAL SCIENCE METHODOLOGY

2. Ontology and epistemology

Benton (2010) *Philosophy of Social Science: The Philosophical Foundations of Social Thought*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Crotty (1998) *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*. SAGE.

Marsh and Stoker (eds.) (2010) *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. 3rd ed. Palgrave Macmillan [chs. 1-4; 9]

*Grix (2010) *The Foundations of Research*. 2nd ed. Palgrave Macmillan. [chs. 4 and 5]

Lowndes and Roberts (2013) *Why Institutions Matter: The New Institutionalism in Political Science*. Palgrave Macmillan.

**highly recommended reading*

Questions to think about:

- What are the different philosophical approaches to social science?
- How do these approaches differ in how they see the social world?
- Why should social scientists have at least a basic understanding of these philosophical debates?

3. Research methods and designs

Burnham et al. (2008) *Research Methods in Politics*. 2nd ed. Palgrave Macmillan.

Bryman (2012) *Social Research Methods*. 4th ed. Oxford University Press.

*Grix (2010) *The Foundations of Research*. 2nd ed. Palgrave Macmillan [ch. 7].

Halperin and Heath (2012) *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills*. Oxford University Press.

Pennings et al. (eds) (2006) *Doing Research in Political Science: An Introduction to Comparative Methods and Statistics*, 2nd ed., SAGE.

Wheelan (2013) *Naked Statistics: Stripping the Dread from the Data*. W.W. Norton.

**highly recommended reading*

Questions to think about:

- What basic types of research design can we distinguish in the social sciences?
- How useful is quantitative-qualitative distinction?
- How do one's philosophical assumptions about the social world determine one's choice of research design?

Block II: SOCIAL SCIENCE APPROACHES TO CORRUPTION

4. Positivism I: rational choice

Jain (2001) "Corruption: A review." *Journal of Economic Surveys* 15(1).

Kunicová (2006) "Democratic institutions and corruption: Incentives and constraints." In: Rose-Ackerman (ed.) *International Handbook on the Economics of Corruption*. Edward Elgar.

Mungiu-Pippidi (2013) "Controlling corruption through collective action." *Journal of Democracy* 24(1).

*Persson et al. (2013) "Why anticorruption reforms fail: Systemic corruption as a collective action problem." *Governance* 26(3).

*Rose-Ackerman (2010) "The institutional economics of corruption." In: de Graaf et al. (eds.) *The Good Cause: Theoretical Perspectives on Corruption*. Barbara Budrich Publishers.

**highly recommended reading*

Questions to think about:

- What are the main propositions of rational choice theory?
- What type of factors do rational choice theorists emphasise as explanations for the existence of corruption?
- And, based on their findings, what do they argue needs to be done to fight corruption?
- Why, according to critics, have anti-corruption measures based on rational choice theory had very little impact in the "real world"?

5. Positivism II: culture and history

*Della Porta and Vannucci (2012) *The Hidden Order of Corruption: An Institutional Approach*. Ashgate. [ch. 9]

Lipset and Lenz (2000) "Corruption, culture, and markets". In: Harrison and Huntington (eds.) *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*. Basic Books.

Rothstein and Eek (2009) "Political corruption and social trust: An experimental approach." *Rationality and Society* 21(1).

Sandholtz and Taagepera (2005) "Corruption, culture, and communism." *International Review of Sociology* 15(1).

Treisman (2000) "The causes of corruption: A cross-national study." *Journal of Public Economics* 76(3).

*Uslaner (2004) "Trust and corruption". In: Graf Lambsdorff et al. (eds.) *The New Institutional Economics of Corruption*. Routledge.

**highly recommended reading*

Questions to think about:

- How do some scholars make the link between culture and corruption?
- On what grounds has the culturalist argument been criticised?
- Can corruption become institutionalised over time?

6. Interpretivism: ideas and ideologies

Brown and Cloke (2004) "Neoliberal reform, governance and corruption in the South: Assessing the international anti-corruption crusade". *Antipode* 36(2).

*de Graaf et al. (2010) "Constructing corruption." In: de Graaf et al. (eds.) *The Good Cause: Theoretical Perspectives on Corruption*. Barbara Budrich Publishers.

de Sardan, O. (1999) "A moral economy of corruption in Africa?" *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 37(1).

Haller, D. and Shore, C. (eds) (2005) *Corruption: Anthropological Perspectives*. Pluto Press.
Hasty, J. (2005) "The pleasures of corruption: Desire and discipline in Ghanaian political culture." *Cultural Anthropology* 20(2).

Sissener (2001) Anthropological perspectives on corruption. Chr. Michelsen Institute working paper WP 2001: 5 [available online at: <http://bit.ly/1wm99An>].

**highly recommended reading*

Questions to think about:

- What are the different strands of the interpretivist approach to corruption?
- How does the conceptualisation of culture differ from the positivist approach to corruption?
- What sort of critique do interpretivists deliver to the anti-corruption "industry"?

Block III: STUDYING CORRUPTION

7. Quantitative methods I: surveys

Andersson and Heywood (2009) “The politics of perception: Use and abuse of Transparency International’s approach to measuring corruption.” *Political Studies* 57(4).

Arndt and Oman (2006) *Uses and Abuses of Governance Indicators*. Development Centre of the OECD [available online at: <http://bit.ly/Ucae1i>].

*De Maria (2008) “Measurements and markets: Deconstructing the corruption perception index.” *International Journal of Public Sector Management* 21(7).

Ko and Samajdar (2010) “Evaluation of international corruption indexes: Should we believe them or not?” *The Social Science Journal* 47(3).

*Razafindrakoto and Roubaud (2010) “Are international databases on corruption reliable? A comparison of expert opinion surveys and household surveys in sub-Saharan Africa.” *World Development* 38(8).

**highly recommended reading*

Questions to think about:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of expert surveys vs. public opinion surveys for the measurement of corruption?
- How are the most widely used measures of corruption – Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index and the World Bank’s Governance Indicators – calculated?
- What do critics have against these indicators?

8. Quantitative methods II: experiments

*Abbink (2006) “Laboratory experiments on corruption.” In: Rose-Ackerman (ed.) *International Handbook on the Economics of Corruption*. Vol. I. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Druckman et al. (eds.) (2011) *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. Cambridge University Press.

Humphreys and Weinstein (2009) “Field experiments and the political economy of development”. *Annual Review of Political Science* 12.

*Peisakhin (2011) “Field experimentation and the study of corruption.” In: Rose-Ackerman and Søreide (eds) *International Handbook on the Economics of Corruption*. Vol. II. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Serra and Wantcheon (eds.) (2012) *New Advances in Experimental Research on Corruption*. Emerald Books.

**highly recommended reading*

Questions to think about:

- What are the different types of experiment in the social sciences?
- How have these been applied to the study of corruption?
- Do experimental studies provide a way around the issue of measuring corruption?

9. Quantitative methods III: open data and freedom of information as tools for researching corruption

Davies and Frank. (2013) “‘There’s no such thing as raw data’: Exploring the socio-technical life of a government dataset.” [available online at: <http://bit.ly/1qw6XFZ>].

De Renzio and Masud (2011) “Measuring and promoting budget transparency: The open budget index as a research and advocacy tool.” *Governance* 24(3).

Escher (2011) “TheyWorkForYou: Keeping tabs on the UK’s parliaments and assemblies.” [available online at: <http://bit.ly/1pAuuaX>].

Hazell and Worthy (2010) “Assessing the performance of freedom of information.” *Government Information Quarterly* 27(4).

Worthy (2010) “More open but not more trusted? The effect of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 on the United Kingdom central government.” *Governance* 23(4).

Yu and Robinson (2012) “The new ambiguity of ‘open government’.” 59 *UCLA L. Rev. Disc.* 178 [available online at: <http://bit.ly/1x1w8X9>].

Questions to think about:

- What are the comparative advantages of open data and freedom of information as tools for researching corruption?
- What conditions are necessary for open data to be useful as a research tool?
- Which types of open data are relevant for researching corruption in which areas?

10. Qualitative methods

Arksey and Knight (1999) *Interviewing for Social Scientists: An Introductory Resource with Examples*. SAGE. [chs 5 and 9]

Blundo (2007) “Hidden acts, open talks: How anthropology can ‘observe’ and describe corruption.” In: Nuijten and Anders (eds.) *Corruption and the Secret of Law: A Legal Anthropological Perspective*. Ashgate.

Blundo and Olivier de Sardan (2006) “Why should we study everyday corruption and how should we go about it?” In: Blundo and Olivier de Sardan (eds.) *Everyday Corruption and the State: Citizens and Public Officials in Africa*. Zed Books.

Burgess (1990) *In the Field: An Introduction to Field Research*. Routledge. [ch. 4]

Johnston (2008) “Japan, Korea, the Philippines, China: Four syndromes of corruption.” *Crime, Law and Social Change* 49(3).

- Kaminksi (2004) *Games Prisoners Play: The Tragicomic Worlds of Polish Prison*. Princeton University Press.
- Kelsall (2011) "Rethinking the relationship between neo-patrimonialism and economic development in Africa." *IDS Bulletin* 42(2).
- Smith (2007) *A Culture of Corruption: Everyday Deception and Popular Discontent in Nigeria*. Princeton University Press.
- Wedeman (1997) "Looters, rent-scrapers, and dividend-collectors: Corruption and growth in Zaire, South Korea, and the Philippines." *The Journal of Developing Areas* 31.
- Wolfinger (2002) "On writing fieldnotes: Collection strategies and background expectancies." *Qualitative Research* 2(1).

Questions to think about:

- How do positivists and interpretivists differ in their use of qualitative research methods?
- Why do some positivists prefer to distinguish different types of corruption, rather than measuring the level of corruption?
- What are the different types of ethnography used in the study of corruption?

11. Law and corruption (Dr John Child, Department of Law)

- Allridge (2008) "Reforming bribery: Law Commission consultation paper 185: (1) Bribery reform and the law – again." *Crim. L.R.* 671.
- Horder (2011) "Bribery as a form of criminal wrongdoing." *L.Q.R.* 37.
- Law Commission (n.d.) Reforming bribery: A summary of our main recommendations. [available online at: <http://bit.ly/1jrFa9I>].
- Law Commission (2008) Reforming bribery. *LAW COM* 313.
- Sullivan (2008) "Reforming Bribery: Law Commission Consultation Paper 185: (2) Reforming the law of bribery (LCCP No 185): bribery outside England and Wales; corporate liability; defences; consent to prosecution." *Crim. L.R.* 687.

Questions to think about:

- What is the criminal "wrong" that bribery tries to criminalise (i.e. why is it a crime)?
- Using the text of the Bribery Act 2010, make a short note identifying what a defendant must have done (and the state of mind she must have) to be liable for bribing another under section 1.
- Using the academic material suggested, identify two problem areas for the law of bribery and how the Bribery Act 2010 has sort to resolve them (e.g. facilitation payments).
- In March 2011 Ken Clark published guidance on the Bribery Act 2010. Has this clarified the future use of the law?