

Editor's Letter

Often thought to be pervasive, destructive, and destabilizing, corruption comes in many forms – as exploitation, fraud, and misuse. Corruption can be more broadly defined as the expropriation of public goods for private gain. Its impact can simultaneously lift a leader to immeasurable wealth and deprive the poorest of their livelihood. In the global context, corruption has the power to destabilize nations, institutions and communities, and the incentives for people to engage in corruption often outweigh the potential costs to them.

In this issue of Perspectives on Global Issues, we seek to explore the manifestation of corruption, its sources, incentives and consequences, as well as efforts of prevention and resolution. The articles examine the diversity of those affected by corruption, from public institutions to the education system; they explore the motivations for these corrupt actions and examine policy choices that fight the insidious nature of abuse of power.

The beginning of any discussion on corruption should begin with a greater understanding of the logic behind acting in this manner. In Professor Johann Lambsdorff's piece, *Corrupt Reciprocity*, he takes a scientific look at the sources and outcomes of corruption. By conducting experiments with his colleagues and students, his study demonstrates the incentives and deterrents to act in a corrupt manner.

Perhaps one of the most destructive forms of corruption is exploitation of resources. Janelle Lewis explores this issue in *The Resource Curse*, describing the role of resources in exacerbating corruption and the policy changes needed to combat their misappropriation. Stephanie Kim also looks at resources and corruption in her article about the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and oil. She makes unique policy recommendations to amend this Act.

Corruption carries a high priority on the international agenda for its role in deterring economic growth and political stability. Sofia Perrazzo takes an insightful look at the role of the private sector in these anti-corruption efforts. In *The Private Sector's Role in the Anti-Corruption Movement*, she examines the priority of response from the private sector, recognizing the importance of these efforts to maintain growth by building the case for combating corruption.

There is a controversial debate over corruption in the defense industry. The TRACE Institute's Stephen Wrage investigates this perception in *The Defense Industry and the Prevalence of Bribery*. In contrast, Dr. Stephen P. Heyneman looks into the education structure as a source of corruption. In this article, *Buying Your Way into Heaven: The Corruption of Education Systems in Global Perspective*, he notes the consequences of corruption in educational institutions can have widely-felt effects.

The final article examines the tools necessary for policy-makers to conceptualize corruption. In *Measuring, Conceptualizing, and Fighting Systemic Corruption: Evidence from Post-Soviet Countries*, Dr. Christoph H. Stefes discusses the impetus of anti-corruption measures to fight poverty and oppression. He argues that in order to create effective solutions, there must be a greater focus on strengthening both formal and informal institutions.

This issue of *Perspectives on Global Issues* addresses questions about the motivation for corrupt actions, the effect of corruption on the international system, and the unintended consequences. We hope that this issue gives readers a starting point for further discussion of the subject of corruption in the global context and we look forward to your comments.

Thank you,

Kristy Crabtree Jennifer Dunham Lindsay Wright Paul Challan