

Rampant Corruption

Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)¹ 1995-2015

From Bad to Worse

The world we currently live in, stricken with metastatic corruption², is an ailing body going from bad to worse, in spite of the noisily heralded intense care and aggressive recovery medicines expected to bring it back to a state of healthy probity. The illness became pandemic, striking the more corrupt nations (minimum CPI data points and trend line), as well as the less corrupt ones (maximum CPI data points dots and trend line), and the so-so ones (median CPI data points and trend line). To put it simply, corruption leaves nobody exempt, and nowhere probity seems capable of winning the contest. Year-on-year³, the negative trend pursues its downward path and plunges into further depths. The regression coefficients worsened from -0.08 (median), -0.04 (maximum), and -0.03 (minimum) in 2014, to respectively -0.74, -0.4, and -0.3 in 2015, exposing the overall slump of the indexes from higher (less corruption) to lower (more corruption) values.

A Lost Battle

The ballyhooed war on corruption engaged by both national administrations and international organizations such as the World Bank or the United Nations could only fool the obstinate

naive. It is a futile endeavor, lacking the necessary power to achieve its purported goal. Its impotence is the result of three analytical failures.

Wrong Diagnosis

First, it rests upon an improper diagnosis, identifying corruption as a discrete list of individual misbehaviors, such as graft, embezzlement, influence peddling, or bribing, whereas it is rather an underlying problem-solving method that percolates

throughout the entire society, from top to bottom, from right to left. Powerful people look at corruption as a convenient and fast shortcut to access the benefits they avidly covet. The commoners find there the only, if expensive, way of circumventing the obstacles raised by a rule of law that allows bureaucrats and profiteers to abuse the rights of the citizen.

Symptoms are not the Disease

Then, it focuses on the symptoms, the improper demeanors that may emerge at the end of the corruption chain, while ignoring the root cause thereof, the deepening inequality cleavage that transfers to the hands of the powerful the means to sway processes for their advantage, at the same time that the weak are left entirely alone, forsaken by the very jurisdictions that in theory exist for their protection.

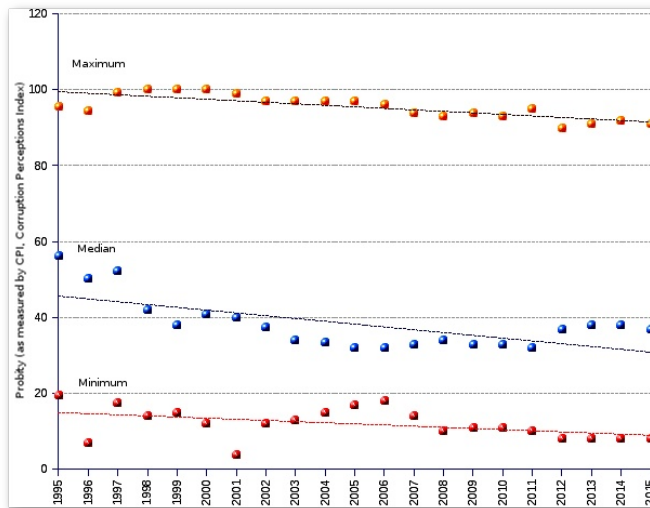


Fig.1: CPI parameters, 1995-2015.

Narrow Scope

Finally, it restricts its scope to the deployment of legislative and judicial instruments ingeniously designed to exclusively catch the careless offender, but utterly inconsequential to counter or prosecute any wrongdoer careful enough to conform to the letter, without regard to how gravely he may be injuring the spirit of the law.

What is Corruption?

The late 2016 debate among US academics and activists about what the term 'corruption' means is emblematic. The 2010 Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission ruling by the supreme court of the U.S. established that 'corruption' means a 'quid pro quo' trade, that is to say an equal exchange, a tit for tat of benefits, gifts, services or favors. Bribes, kickbacks, preferential treatment or influence peddling are clearly forms of quid pro quo, and fall therefore into the category of corruption. However, this is a highly stunted perspective. Quid pro quo is certainly corruption, but it is only one form of corruption. There are certainly others.

Take the former US president Bill and Hillary Clinton. The couple's rapaciousness is notorious. Their life is a nonstop story of million-sized flows of cash passing from patrons seeking top-drawer endorsements or government's favors to either Bill and Hillary Clinton accounts or the Clinton Foundation.

Even if a specific quid pro quo deal is not made, there is no denying that the weight of such bulky contributions by the wealthiest segment of the population is a bargaining chip in the hands of private interests to influence public policy. Such unbridled influence has a ubiquitous corrupting effect. The proliferation of corrupt behaviors such as the Clinton's and of corrupt non-governmental organizations such as the Clinton Foundation are congruous with the perceived disintegration of probity as indicated in the chart. This is tantamount to proclaiming the need to turn the fight against corruption inside out, and hit corruption hard at its root cause. Current approaches are nothing but delusive window dressing. ◻

Probity Scoring by Nation 1995 - 2015 (Measured by CPI - Corruption Perceptions Index) ¹ Median, Maximum & Minimum Parameters					
Year ²	Median	Maximum		Minimum	
1995	56.2	95.5	New Zealand	19.4	Indonesia
1996	50.15	94.3	New Zealand	6.9	Nigeria
1997	52.25	99.4	Denmark	17.6	Nigeria
1998	42	100	Denmark	14	Cameroon
1999	38	100	Denmark	15	Cameroon
2000	41	100	Finland	12	Nigeria
2001	40	99	Finland	4	Bangladesh
2002	37.5	97	Finland	12	Bangladesh
2003	34	97	Finland	13	Bangladesh
2004	33.5	97	Finland	15	Bangladesh
2005	32	97	Iceland	17	Bangladesh
2006	32	96	Finland	18	Haiti
2007	33	94	Denmark	14	Myanmar
2008	34	93	Denmark	10	Somalia
2009	33	94	New Zealand	11	Somalia
2010	33	93	Denmark, New Zealand, Singapore	11	Somalia
2011	32	95	New Zealand	10	Korea D.P.R., Somalia
2012	37	90	Denmark, Finland, New Zealand	8	Afghanistan, Korea D.P.R., Somalia
2013	38	91	Denmark, New Zealand	8	Afghanistan, Korea D.P.R., Somalia
2014	38	92	Denmark	8	Korea D.P.R., Somalia
2015	37	91	Denmark	8	Korea D.P.R., Somalia
Average annual change rate	-2.07%	-0.24%		-4.33%	
Slope of the regression line	-0.74	-0.4		-0.3	
¹ The Corruption Perceptions Index ranks countries in terms of the degree to which corruption is perceived to exist among public officials and politicians. The country with the lowest score is the one where corruption is perceived to be greatest (least probity). Browse the complete Corruption Perceptions Index lists from 1995.					
² The scale 0 to 10 became 0 to 100 in 2012. For charting and computation purposes, data points until 2012 have been adjusted by multiplying by 10.					

References :

1 Corruption Perceptions Index, by Transparency International [<http://www.transparency.org/>].

2 What does corruption mean: http://stats.areppim.com/glossaire/corruption_def.htm

3 CPI complete lists 1995-2015: http://stats.areppim.com/listes/list_corruption.htm

Source :

http://stats.areppim.com/stats/stats_cpixparam_rev15.htm