

Public-sector Honesty and Corruption

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SHORT COMMUNICATION

This research examines a theoretical model of public sector honesty (public sector honesty) and its relationship to the corruption. We experimentally test this model by extending and exploiting a unique dataset of honest behaviour of public and private sector workers collected in a field experiment conducted by Cohn (N=17,303) across 40 nations. According to the Becker-Stigler model, public sector honesty is governed by country-level social culture and public sector culture; public sector honesty predicts corruption levels independent of the effect of incentive structures. We find no evidence for a global mean difference in honest behaviour between public and private sector workers, as well as substantial cross-country heterogeneity in honest behaviour differences.

There are three key contributions in this article. In a theoretical model, we first explain the links between honest behaviour, anticorruption policies, and corruption. Second, we provide fresh evidence on the importance of public-sector honesty in cross-country variation in corruption levels, based on an improved cross-country data set incorporating behavioural measurements. Third, this research implies that disparities in honest behaviour between sectors are related to the normative role given to it locally rather than the public sector's basic nature. Finally, we examine the implications of these findings for the study of corruption, transparency, and sector disparities, as well as the current research's limits and future difficulties for the study of behavioural ethics in the public sector.

Both the public and private sectors are hampered by corruption. It fosters inequity and poverty, affecting well-being and income distribution, and hindering equal participation in social, economic, and political life. Integrity is necessary for the development of effective institutions, as it ensures citizens that the government is working in their best interests, not just the interests of a select few. Integrity is about making businesses more productive, public sectors more efficient, and society and economies more inclusive, not merely a moral concern. It's about rebuilding trust in public institutions, regulators, banks, and corporations, not just in the government.

The rule of law, proper management of public affairs and public property, integrity, transparency, and accountability are all essential concepts linked with the prevention of corruption in the public

sector, as stated in the UNCAC require States to implement specific measures to ensure adherence to these principles, such as adopting merit-based systems for civil servant recruitment and promotion, prescribing criteria for election to public office, increasing transparency in political party funding, preventing conflicts of interest, promoting public sector codes of conduct, and establishing asset declaration systems.

Including in the development of stakeholder participation and open government. These, as well as other ways to avoid corruption in the public sector are covered further down. Corruption prevention is also addressed in other modules of the E4J University Module Series on Anti-Corruption. Module 12 focuses on the UNCAC and other multilateral instruments that combat public sector corruption, including by mandating States to implement prevention measures, while Module 13 shows how corruption prevention measures are at the heart of national anti-corruption policies and activities. Module 13 of the E4J University Module Series on Integrity and Ethics goes into greater detail about how to improve public integrity and ethics.

We suggest that the recruitment of (dis) honest people into public service is a key avenue for self-sustaining disparities in corruption levels among countries. We undertake a survey with a novel method for experimentally eliciting estimates of dishonesty at the person level, focusing on Denmark, the world's least corrupt country. The Danish situation allows us to research pupils who will be part of the elite in the public or private sector in the future. In terms of honesty, the results show a clear favourable self-selection into public service. This is in stark contrast to previous findings from high-corruption environments. The findings support the theory that one mechanism via which Denmark is able to maintain its low levels of corruption is positive self-selection of honest persons into public service.

Civil servant hiring, rotation, promotion, profess Signalization, and training norms and procedures all play a part in the fight against corruption in the public sector. Staff rotation in positions that are prone to corruption, for example, is intended to help prevent corrupt ties from emerging and disrupt existing corrupt relationships. Rotation may also lessen the incentives for private sector actors to participate in corruption, as there is no guarantee that the corrupt partner will remain in the same position in the future. Another example of a human resources management system is merit-based hiring.

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