

The ideal within

A discourse and hegemony theoretical analysis of
the international anticorruption discourse

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DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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Summary

During the past two decades fighting corruption became an important objective of manifold international and transnational actors. Yet this powerful international anticorruption agenda has so far avoided detailed scholarly scrutiny of the ways in which it potentially contributes to the construction and advancement of particular societal ideals. This thesis addresses this lack of systematic engagement by conducting a detailed empirical analysis of the international anticorruption discourse expressed in the form of anticorruption practices of the World Bank, Transparency International and the United Nations Development Programme on the strategic policy level. Adopting a post-Marxist discourse and hegemony theoretical perspective based on the work of Laclau and Mouffe, Nonhoff as well as Howarth and Glynos, it interrogates the international anticorruption discourse with regards to the kinds of societal ideals it constructs, the ways in which they are advanced, and the extent of consensus surrounding these ideals.

The thesis traces the surprisingly coherent ways in which the discourse is structured by a particular conception of human nature as self-interested and rational and centres on the manipulation of individual behaviour via institutional and cultural incentive structures. Importantly, it shows how this elevates the securing of governing processes that guarantee the stable pursuit of individual economic interests to the very purpose of societies. As the thesis demonstrates, this hegemonic project is expanded through the accommodation of a wide range of positively connoted concepts, anticorruption co-operations between powerful social actors, reliance on an objectivist kind of knowledge, and the elaborate construction of corruption as the enemy of a good society. While international anticorruption discourse is found to be broadly reflective of what can be called advanced liberal ideals of governing, the thesis enables an in-depth understanding of the manifold and complex discursive moves through which these particular ideals are constructed and advanced by the discourse.

Contents

Abbreviations	vii
Figures	viii
Acknowledgements	ix
Quotes	x
Introduction	1
1 Corruption as a social construction – implications for an analysis of international anticorruption efforts	22
The fight against corruption – an intrinsically good project?	23
Positivist research on corruption – corruption as a fact	24
After positivism – corruption as a socially constructed concept	30
International anticorruption efforts as a site where corruption is constructed	40
2 A post-Marxist discourse and hegemony theoretical approach to the analysis of international anticorruption discourse	57
A theory of discourse – a theory of society	59
Hegemonic strategy, stratagems and other discursive logics	95
The IAC consensus from a post-Marxist discourse and hegemony theoretical perspective	109
Delimiting and analysing the discourse – ‘operationalisation’ and method	112
3 Creating the enemy	122
Definitions, manifestations and locations of corruption	123
Causes of corruption	136
Social, political and economic consequences of corruption	147
Subject positions	156
Metaphors	158
Conclusion	162
4 Vagueness and specificity – aims of the fight against corruption and specifications of the uncorrupted society	168
‘Representation’	169
Aims of the fight against corruption	171
‘Emergent openness of interpretation of the ‘representative’	179

Abbreviations

ACA	Anti-Corruption Agency
ACPN	Anti-Corruption Practitioners Network
ACRN	Anti-Corruption Research Network
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ATI	Accountability Transparency Integrity
AUSAID	Australian Government Overseas Aid Program (AUSAID)
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States of the former Soviet Union
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
GAC	Governance and Anticorruption
GIZ	German Society for International Cooperation
IAC	International anticorruption
IACC	International Anti-Corruption Conference
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
IO	International organisation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
PDHT	Post-Marxist discourse and hegemony theory
RAI	Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative

Specifications of the Universal: The social as a space in which interests are governed in the ‘right’ ways	180
Conclusion	197
5 Instrumental claims – how to realise the uncorrupted society	200
Societal reform in the target countries	201
Anticorruption support through global intervention	209
Subject positions – international supporters of the fight against corruption	210
Expertise – the provision of the ‘right’ knowledge	219
Advocacy, awareness raising and civil society capacity building	227
Lending	229
Technical support	232
Avoiding dislocation – articulations of IAC interventions as unpolitical, context-sensitive, and consensual	234
Conclusion	240
6 Concrete socio-politico-economic claims – the nature of the uncorrupted society	244
Sphere of the state / public sphere	246
Private sector – responsible economic actors	274
Responsible civil society	285
Benchmarking, reflexive government and cultural responsabilisation	303
Conclusion	305
Conclusion	310
Bibliography	334

SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
StAR	Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative
TI	Transparency International
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNPAN	United Nations Public Administration Programme
USAID	US Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WBG	World Bank Group
WHO	World Health Organisation

Figures

Figure 1 Rotten apple – rotten society

162

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¹ All views remain those of the author.

Quotes

“The international community simply must deal with the cancer of corruption, because it is a major barrier to sustainable and equitable development” (James Wolfensohn, World Bank president, 1997).

“...the term ‘corruption’ is not in itself problematic: it is rooted in the sense of a thing being changed from its naturally sound condition, into something unsound, impure, debased, infected, tainted, adulterated, depraved, perverted, etcetera. The problem arises in the application of this to politics. (...) there is hardly a general consensus on the ‘naturally sound condition of politics’” (Mark Philp 1997: 445).

Introduction

In 2005 I joined the international anticorruption non-governmental organisation (NGO) Transparency International (TI) for an internship. Eager to form part of a social movement that I saw as fostering in people a concern to care for and act in solidarity with their fellow humans and thus create a better world for everyone, I took on a placement at the TI chapter in Panama. However, the work experience I gained there in between two university semesters strangely frustrated my expectations; it left me thinking “so that is how corruption is combated” and sapped my interest in the topic for some time. It was only when a number of years later I returned to ‘corruption’ and was given the opportunity to address this topic within the scope of a PhD thesis that I came to understand my confusion back in 2005. So while this thesis deals with a topic of major international concern, it is also inspired by a personal experience.

When working with TI back then I was not aware that this organisation formed part of an international enterprise occupied with combating corruption the scope of which seems to have grown constantly over the past twenty years. International actors keep surpassing each other in emphasising the detrimental consequences of corruption. The Secretary-General of the OECD holds it to be “the most pervasive crime which erodes the very foundations of fair business, good government, and sustainable development”, with repercussions sweeping “across entire populations”.¹ For the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime “corruption is one of the main obstacles to peace, stability, sustainable development, democracy and human rights globally”.² This extraordinary preoccupation with corruption as “a stand-alone obstacle to development”³ is reflected in different developments at the international level. New international and transnational programmes and organisations have been founded which aim to combat corruption all over the world and to pursue transparency in political and economic life; international legislation has been created in order to deal with the internationalisation of corruption and related crimes and to harmonise international development aid respectively; and numerous countries of the Global

¹ OECD (2006)

² UNODC (a)

³ Harrison (2006: 15)

South⁴ have developed national anticorruption plans and institutions, often with funding and other kinds of support from international organisations.⁵

Among the powerful actors that advance the global fight against corruption count the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), the non-governmental organisation (NGO) TI, as well as other NGOs⁶ and the governments of many countries in their function as bilateral development donors.

Although the United Nations (UN) attempted to deal with the topic of corruption in the early 1970s, the *United Nations Declaration Against Corruption and Bribery in International Commercial Transactions* was only adopted in 1996. In subsequent Resolutions, the UN shifted the emphasis “from the corrupting influence of transnational corporations to corruption in the public sector”.⁷ Subsequently, this new focus was consolidated in the new *United Nations Convention against Corruption* (UNCAC) of 2003.⁸ Two UN institutions are active in the fight against corruption. UNODC functions as the Secretariat of the States Parties to UNCAC and the respective Implementation Review Mechanism. Together with the World Bank Group it also runs the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative (StAR) which aims at facilitating the recovery of assets stolen through acts of corruption.⁹ The UNDP claims to have been “one of the first organizations in the early 1990s to develop programmes to address and curb corruption” in the context of its engagement with good governance.¹⁰ Today it is active in the fight against corruption through its *Global Thematic Programme on Anti-Corruption for Development Effectiveness* (PACDE)¹¹ as well as a through a regional anticorruption project covering Eastern

⁴ The use of terms like Global South, Third World, developing countries, developed countries etc. does not express an endorsement of the meaning and values conventionally associated with them.

⁵ Brown/Cloke (2004: 273)

⁶ Other NGOs active in the global fight against corruption are for example Tiri, Global Witness, and the Open Society Foundation.

⁷ Bukovansky (2006: 187)

⁸ Bukovansky (2006: 187)

⁹ UNODC (b)

¹⁰ UNDP (2008a: 2)

¹¹ UNDP (2008d)

Europe and the CIS Region.¹²

The OECD established a working group on corruption as early as 1989, but it took the organisation until 1997 to adopt its *Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions*, which entered into force in 1999. At a time when bribery of foreign public officials was normal Western business practice and could even be deducted from taxes, the Convention meant a major policy change in that it established that the range of domestic penalties for bribery of a foreign public official “shall be comparable to that applicable to the bribery of the Party’s own public officials”.¹³

In 1993 TI was founded, portraying itself as “the global civil society organisation leading the fight against corruption”. Its principle purpose is to mobilise people around the world against corruption but it also provides concrete policy advice for the prevention of corruption in different areas.¹⁴ TI is probably best known for its *Corruption Perceptions Index* (CPI), which has been published annually since 1995. This Index ranks about 200 countries according to their levels of corruption as perceived by expert assessments and opinion surveys.¹⁵

Up until 1996 the World Bank (WB) considered corruption too political a topic to be included in the organisation’s portfolio. The decision of President James Wolfensohn to place the topic on the WB’s agenda was a significant boost for the international anticorruption campaign. Soon the WB came to consider corruption as “the greatest obstacle to reducing poverty” and as “among the greatest obstacles to economic and social development”.¹⁶ In 2007 the WB adopted a new strategy for *Strengthening World Bank Group Engagement on Governance and Anticorruption* (GAC)¹⁷ and between 1996 and 2009 has supported more than 600 governance initiatives or programmes with anticorruption components.¹⁸ The International Monetary Fund (IMF), which identified corruption as a hindrance to economic prosperity for the first

¹² CIS refers to the *Commonwealth of Independent States* consisting of former Soviet republics. This programme primarily aims at the creation and capacity development of anticorruption agencies.

¹³ OECD (1997) Art. 3 (1)

¹⁴ TI (z)

¹⁵ TI (B)

¹⁶ WB (k)

¹⁷ WB (r)

¹⁸ WB (k)

time in 1996¹⁹ now covers corruption in its surveillance, lending and technical assistance activities as part of “economic governance issues”. According to the organisation “roughly half of the structural conditions in IMF-supported programs focus on improving governance”.²⁰

Also many bilateral donors, for example the German GIZ²¹ and the Danish DANIDA²², have developed an interest for corruption and run different anticorruption projects. The Swedish development agency SIDA even states that “[f]ighting corruption is one of Sida’s most prioritized areas”.²³

Among these organisations mentioned above, TI is alone in that it is exclusively concerned with the fight against corruption, whereas other actors active in the international fight against corruption see their anticorruption efforts as part of their wider agenda of development co-operation.²⁴ However, TI explains that “[t]he range of anti-corruption conventions and instruments in existence today are the manifestations of an international consensus that emerged in the early 1990s identifying corruption as an important problem needing to be addressed and in particular requiring internationally agreed solutions”.²⁵ This thesis refers to the anticorruption practices of the international actors mentioned above jointly as the international anticorruption (IAC) agenda or the international fight against corruption.²⁶

The literature has given several explanations for this increase in the importance of corruption and the rise of the IAC agenda – after “decades, [when] international institutions had little if anything to say about corruption”.²⁷ The most frequently found explanation as to the sudden emergence of corruption as “the new star of the

¹⁹ Bukovansky (2006: 189)

²⁰ IMF (see bibliography)

²¹ GIZ

²² DANIDA

²³ SIDA

²⁴ However, for the sake of simplicity, these organisations as well as TI will be referred to in this thesis as international anticorruption (IAC) organisations.

²⁵ TI (C)

²⁶ However, this is not meant in an exclusive way but potentially could also include anticorruption activities of any other actor with an international scope of activity in this area. The empirical part of this thesis is based on a further operationalisation of the IAC agenda.

²⁷ Bukovansky (2006: 185)

development scene”²⁸ points to the end of the Cold War as a decisive event. According to this explanation, strategic geopolitical concerns of the Cold War were consistently prioritised by the major powers over the integrity of their allies in the developing world. However, the attenuation of these priorities and the disappearance of global hemispheric partisanship as a result of the breakdown of the Eastern bloc allowed for questions of corruption and human rights to be addressed,²⁹ and drew increased attention to the weaknesses of the ‘victorious’ system, i.e. Western liberal democracy.³⁰ Since the leaders of allied developing countries could no longer threaten to support the Soviet Union, Western countries became less reluctant to interfere in their domestic politics, putting new pressure on aid and lending contracts.³¹

While the shift in international geopolitical priorities is seen to have facilitated the rise of corruption on the political agendas of Western countries and subsequently international organisations, other reasons have been given as to why it became so prominent. Following decolonisation, it is argued, rapid modernisation was expected in the countries of the South, which was supposed to lead to stable and democratic market economies that were to be fostered through international aid. When, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, it became clear that these expectations were not being fulfilled in great parts of the Global South, donors came up with a new recipe: the good governance agenda, which “dominated the development paradigm of the 1990s”.³² Thus, democratic institutions, increased popular participation, social capital, rule of law and an independent judiciary, human rights, a free press and, importantly, anticorruption measures were given renewed or intensified importance in development.³³

Academic interpretations of the reasons for the prominence of the good governance agenda can be broadly divided in two. The first and more benign interpretation of the motivations of donor institutions assumes that, after the failure of genuinely economic approaches aimed at fostering economic development, scholars and

²⁸ Polzer (2001: 2)

²⁹ Brown/Cloke (2004: 278)

³⁰ Krastev (2004: 7)

³¹ See also de Sousa et al (2009); Johnston (2005: 5)

³² Harrison (2006: 17)

³³ See for example Bukovansky (2006: 185); Marquette (2004: 419)

policymakers undertook a “search for relevant variables that may have been overlooked in the first waves of development literature”.³⁴ By focussing more intently on institutions and other aspects of ‘governance’, the problem of corruption was then discovered.³⁵ This is in line with explanations used by the WB in framing its concern with corruption as a result of a learning process in which it came to appreciate the role of a functioning state and of democratic institutions for economic development in the target countries.³⁶ The second interpretation adopts greater scepticism regarding such explanations and suggests that development organisations, but especially the WB welcomed the topic of corruption as a “convenient explanation as to why the pro-market economic reforms of the past two decades in the South have not borne the fruit that they were supposed to”.³⁷ By making corruption in developing countries an important topic, so the argument goes, the WB could implicitly blame the failure of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs)³⁸ of the 1980s on the incompetence and corruption of the target countries during their implementation.³⁹

In addition to these ‘top-down’ explanations regarding the sudden importance of the fight against corruption for policymakers, there are also suggestions that pressure from ‘below’ may have contributed to its emergence on the agendas of international organisations. For example, scholars cite the “ever growing influence of a vociferous international civil society toward the end of the century” which was pushing for corruption to be tackled and which voiced its concerns particularly in the area of the former Soviet Union and in Africa.⁴⁰ It is argued that the difficulties which

³⁴ Bukovansky (2006: 185)

³⁵ Bukovansky (2006: 185); see also Szeftel (1998); Schmitz (1995)

³⁶ WB (2000: 1-6); see also Marquette who links this re-orientation process of the WB not only to its own learning about the role of the state during the debt crisis of the 1970s and the failure of SAPs of the 1980s Marquette (2003: 53), but also to a “changing orthodoxy on democracy and development” in academia towards the view that democratisation and economic development can enhance each other (Marquette 2003: 42).

³⁷ Brown/Cloke (2004: 273); see also Krastev (2004)

³⁸ Administered by the WB and the IMF and backed by their member countries, Structural Adjustment Programmes have emerged from earlier conditionalities and have been carried out in developing countries around the world since the 1980s. When SAPs are mentioned, what is meant are often the SAPs from the 1980s, yet current Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers can equally be regarded as SAPs as they aim to reform politico-economic structures in the target countries. SAPs are often criticised for implementing irresponsible free market policy while avoiding political debate with the target countries.

³⁹ Marquette (2003: 155); George et al (1994: 142), Krastev (2004: 20)

⁴⁰ Bracking (2007: 16), see also Krastev (2004: 9), Harrison (2006: 17)

accompanied most democratic and market transitions led many to feel excluded and to have their expectations frustrated and that consequently people resorted (and still resort) to protests against the corruption of their leaders. While such protests are “one way to take regimes to task without directly challenging their claims to rule”, they contribute to the salience of the topic of corruption and boost IAC interventions.⁴¹ The ‘new media’ that has made it easier for investigative journalists and other corruption critics to report on local and international corruption scandals is also given as a reason for the emergence of the IAC agenda.⁴² While it is likely that a combination of these different developments enabled the explosion of IAC activities, nonetheless now undoubtedly they constitute a significant international undertaking.

Against this background, this thesis is motivated by the desire to provide a detailed interpretation of what the international fight against corruption is about, specifically seeking to address this interest through focussing on the kinds of societal ideals that this agenda seeks to advance. This is necessary because, while a range of authors have endeavoured to explain how the anticorruption agenda came about, little research exists about what it means and does, how it influences the way we understand corruption, what kind of societal ideals it entails, and how it constructs and advances them. However, these concerns are of no lesser significance given the importance assigned to the global fight against corruption by powerful international organisations, the great amounts of money spent on it, the enormous numbers of publications produced by IAC actors and, most of all, the unquestioning public acceptance and support of these activities. As de Sousa et al. put it, “being against corruption is a bit like favouring sunshine over rain”;⁴³ consequently, IAC efforts are generally conceived as self-evidently positive and are hardly ever subject to political contestation.

Furthermore, they hardly ever subject to substantive academic criticism or questioning. As chapter 1 shows, in the current mainstream literature on corruption the debate centres mainly on refining the variables and measurements applied to

⁴¹ Johnston (2005: 5)

⁴² Krastev (2004: 8)

⁴³ De Sousa et al (2009: xix)

explain corruption which can then be used to improve anticorruption strategies. While the insights that can be gained through such ‘problem-solving’⁴⁴ approaches in the field of corruption research should not be dismissed altogether, more detailed inquiries into the political nature of the IAC agenda are urgently needed.⁴⁵ Mainstream positivist studies of corruption that are based on causal designs necessarily work with objectivist definitions of corruption and other variables. In treating corruption as an objectively observable fact, these neglect that it is a highly normative construct, the meaning of which is linked to wider and differing social norms, practices and societal ideals. As a consequence, such studies are unable to understand and investigate IAC efforts as a site where conceptions of corruption and potentially also of concomitant societal ideals and structures are shaped. Thus, they are unable to address questions about the potentially political nature of the IAC agenda, and the ways in which it may influence what people see as good or bad behaviour, and as good or bad ways of societal organisation.

Although IAC policies are certainly transformed and partly subverted when applied ‘on the ground’ in developing countries, the ways in which they are conceived by the key advocates of a world without corruption are likely to have important consequences for how and by whom (national but also international) societal structures and social relations are reformed. By constructing corruption and its counter-measures in particular ways, a powerful IAC agenda may run the risk of excluding or marginalising other conceptions of corruption and good forms of societal organisation. Thus, it is important to gain clearer insights into the logics and the political workings of the IAC agenda in order to assess its potential and real socio-political implications. Given the limitations of the positivist take on corruption, this can best be achieved by letting go of positivist research principles and instead adopting a view on anticorruption measures as a social construct rather than as a technical instrument dealing with an objective problem. Far from denying the existence of a material world or the suffering that can be caused by corruption (in

⁴⁴ Cox (1981: 129)

⁴⁵ While the term ‘political’ is usually used with regards to the sphere of the state or party politics, this thesis also uses it in another meaning, namely as referring to ways of changing societal organisation more generally (so including also economic and civil society organisation while being not necessarily limited to these three categories) which are at the same time understood as always potentially contested. The political nature of the IAC agenda thus refers to the ways in which the international fight against corruption changes or *aims* to change ways of societal organisation.

all its diverse conceptions), a focus on its social construction and representation suggests that “because objects and subjects are constituted as such within discourse, an understanding of the relevant discourses is a necessary part of any attempt to change prevailing conditions and relations of power”.⁴⁶ In this spirit, the present analysis seeks to contribute to an understanding of how corruption, societies free from corruption and concomitant subject positions are constituted in the international fight against corruption.

This thesis is not the first attempt to address IAC activities from such a perspective. A limited number of critical IAC studies have already opened up important analytical points concerning the IAC agenda and have drawn out some of the normative assumptions, political characteristics and operating modes of current IAC activities of some actors in the field.⁴⁷ Overall, this critical literature has portrayed the IAC agenda as comprising a neoliberal consensus among powerful international organisations who conduct technical one-size-fits-all anticorruption interventions that are designed to reform developing countries’ institutional structures to suit open markets and take the shape of a small state and that at the same time contribute to continued Western domination. Scholars have highlighted IAC actors’ rationalist conception of human nature or behaviour, their focus on institutional engineering, their neglect of morality with regards to IAC measures and their conceptualisation of corruption as mainly an economic problem. Yet, taking a closer look at the critical IAC literature, many gaps and blind spots can be identified (see chapter 1).

The first of these gaps concerns what is actually meant by ‘neoliberal anticorruption measures’ within the literature; authors do not explicate their understandings of neoliberalism which seem to vary and are not very well substantiated by the empirical material. Also, a range of concepts that appear to be important to IAC efforts seem to have gone unnoticed by the literature, such as civil society participation, democracy, inclusion, equality, integrity, and private sector corruption. Given that these concepts do not self-evidently fit within neoliberal interpretations but may indicate contestations regarding the political ideal inherent in the IAC

⁴⁶ Abrahamsen (2000: 14)

⁴⁷ Polzer (2001); Brown/Cloke (2004); Krastev (2004); Hindess (2005); Bukovansky (2006); De Maria (2008c); Murphy (2011)

agenda, their neglect within the critical literature is problematic for the argument of a neoliberal consensus. Moreover, critical scholars themselves point to contradictions within the discourse involving elements that they see as disputing neoliberal measures (such as the strengthening of institutions⁴⁸). These doubts about the coherent neoliberal nature of the IAC agenda are enhanced by the limited scope of empirical research which covers only fragments of IAC practices by some actors. IAC actors differ substantively with regards to their organisational structures and functioning, and these differences could well impact upon their anticorruption approach. While existing research on IAC measures of the WB and TI is not systematic and comprehensive enough to confirm the consensus thesis, IAC activities of actors such as the UNDP, UNODC and the OECD have as yet received little or no attention.⁴⁹ Therefore, questions of agreement and difference between the different IAC organisations have not been dealt with in any depth. Thus, it is less than clear whether the IAC agenda represents a coherent and consensual neoliberal project, or whether it entails contradictory and/or inconsistent policy measures.

Thus, much remains to be discovered with regards to the political and consensual or controversial nature of the IAC agenda. Given the ambiguities surrounding the meaning of neoliberalism with regards to the fight against corruption, I suggest that a detailed investigation of the ways in which IAC activities construct corruption and particular societal ideals is a more promising approach with which to explore the IAC agenda rather than attempting to identify features of neoliberalism within it. If there were a neoliberal consensus, it is far from clear how a neoliberal societal ideal is brought about or supported through IAC measures. While many elements of the IAC agenda remain to be uncovered, the literature remains divided and unclear about the ones that have already been identified and discussed such as the link between rationalist conceptions of human nature, the institutionalist approach to reform and neoliberal ideals in the global fight against corruption. While critical scholars note the presence of rational choice based knowledge in the IAC agenda, how exactly this kind of knowledge contributes to the construction of a neoliberal political ideal is left

⁴⁸ Brown/Cloke (2004: 287)

⁴⁹ Bukovansky covers the UN Convention Against Corruption (2006: 186-189) as well as the anticorruption efforts of the OECD (2006: 191) amongst others but does not mention the UNDP's anticorruption activities.

unexplored. There is also confusion about the role of morality in the global fight against corruption; critical scholars seem unsure whether or not morality is excluded or the moral 'core' of corruption is present in the IAC agenda but in tension with the technical approach of IAC measures. In any case, clarification of whether and how morality is at work in IAC measures and how it relates to its neoliberal nature is required. Thus, a detailed investigation of the manifold IAC measures of different actors is still absent.

This is also important in order to understand how the IAC agenda acquires its power and persuasiveness. While all critical IAC studies acknowledge that the global fight against corruption is a powerful enterprise, they mainly point to what they see as the weaknesses and problems of the fight against corruption and thus cannot account for its strength. Thus, more a detailed inquiry into its working logics is needed in order to better understand its status as hitherto unquestioned and politically uncontested.

In sum, despite the salience of IAC activities on the international level, comprehensive insights into IAC measures are not available, potential differences between different IAC actors are not appreciated, and a general and empirically persuasive overview of the political nature of the IAC agenda does not emerge from the literature. The picture that the critical literature has drawn of the IAC agenda as containing a neoliberal consensus is interesting but full of blind spots which merit further investigation.

It is the aim of this thesis to contribute a more detailed and comprehensive picture of the political nature of the IAC agenda. It aims to do so by making theoretically informed empirical contributions to the four (closely interrelated) analytical areas that have been opened up but not systematically studied by the critical literature namely: the question of the political ideals inherent in the IAC agenda; and, closely related, the ways in which they are constructed through IAC measures; the extent of consensus about them; and the ways in which the IAC agenda may work to advance them. For this purpose this thesis adopts a theoretical framework that allows these questions to be addressed together and in a theoretically coherent manner, by conducting a detailed study of (an important section of) the IAC agenda.

Theoretical approach and method

Having taken leave of the positivist approach to the study of corruption and having adopted a general social constructivist perspective on corruption and anticorruption in chapter 1, in chapter 2 I turn to post-Marxist discourse and hegemony theory (henceforth PDHT) as elaborated by Laclau and Mouffe⁵⁰ and further developed by Nonhoff⁵¹ as well as Glynos and Howarth.⁵² By drawing on this specific theoretical framework the thesis is enabled to investigate in detail the complex and contingent ways in which IAC interventions are constructed and rendered powerful and normal, while simultaneously bringing to light both the societal ideals that emerge from these constructions and revealing the extent of consensus about them. Based on the PDHT-specific integrated concept of discourse as comprising both linguistic and non-linguistic practices, the thesis analytically approaches the IAC agenda in the form of IAC discourse comprising not only policy documents and speeches/acts but also projects, funding, organisational structures and co-operations etc. The focus on articulation that PDHT entails shifts the attention to the ways in which corruption, the ideal uncorrupted society, and the measures to create it are articulated in complex discursive logics⁵³ involving manifold closely interlinked linguistic and non-linguistic practices.

Derived from the need for further research identified in the critical literature, the central research question the thesis asks is:

What are the societal ideals inherent in the international fight against corruption, how are they constructed and advanced, and to what extent is there a consensus on them?

By looking through a Laclau-Mouffian lens, the thesis pursues this central research question through the following sub-questions:

⁵⁰ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985])

⁵¹ Nonhoff (2006)

⁵² Glynos/Howarth (2007)

⁵³ Discursive logics are here understood as the ways in which different elements (signifiers) of the discourse are linked to each other.

To what extent does IAC discourse constitute a hegemonic project?

How do hegemonic stratagems and/or other discursive logics structuring IAC discourse construct and advance particular societal ideals?

Or how do they diverge and dislocate each other?

The three questions are closely interconnected and can only be answered together and simultaneously in the course of the analysis.

The first research question approaches both the questions of consensus and power (or advancing of the discourse) through the concept of the hegemonic project as developed by Nonhoff. The Nonhoffian approach entails tracing the hegemonic stratagems or the ‘general logics’ in the discourse that according to Nonhoff characterise a hegemonic project. According to PDHT, on its way to hegemony, that is, in the course of becoming more powerful, we can expect a hegemonic project to clearly divide the discursive space in two discursive chains, one of which constructs a universal good while the other constructs hindrances to this good. Viewed through the chosen theoretical frame, a clear consensus on what corruption means and how it should be combated would thus entail a clear division of the discursive space of the IAC discourse, with corruption located in one chain and its counter-measures in the other. Such a clear, i.e. consensual, division of the discursive space of IAC discourse would in turn indicate that the discourse is a hegemonic project somewhere on its way to becoming more powerful. By way of tracing this core hegemonic stratagem as well as other hegemonic stratagems, the thesis establishes a sense of whether IAC discourse can be understood as a hegemonic project and how far advanced the transformation into such a project is *within* the section of discourse accessed through my analysis; in doing so it speaks to the questions of consensus and power at the same time.

Closely connected to this is the second research question, without which the first cannot be answered.⁵⁴ It examines the societal ideals inherent to IAC discourse via

⁵⁴ Given that a hegemonic project is characterised by a clear division of the discursive space into two chains of equivalences, one of which articulates a societal ideal, the first research question cannot be answered without a detailed inquiry into the ways of construction of that potential universal and of its hindrances which is the aim of the second research question.

an analysis of how the (eventual) hegemonic stratagems, and other discursive logics more specific to IAC discourse, construct these ideals, and work to advance and establish them as desirable ways of societal organisation. In doing so it draws on the typology provided by Glynos and Howarth, according to which discursive logics (including Nonhoff's hegemonic stratagems) can be characterised as political, fantasmatic and social logics.⁵⁵ By tracing these discursive logics the thesis renders intelligible the societal ideal pursued by the fight against corruption, it draws out how it is organised and in what ways it may be neoliberal – or something else. At the same time it explains how the discourse advances the societal ideal it constructs, through both linguistic and non-linguistic articulations. The latter also entails investigating the logics through which corruption is constructed as a dangerous threat and the discursive effects this has on the expansion of IAC discourse. While speaking to the questions of construction, functioning and advancement of the societal ideal inherent in IAC discourse, this close analysis of discursive logics also speaks to the question of consensus, enabling the thesis to detect and explain eventual contestations of political ideals within the discourse.

This allows answers to the third question to emerge, which examines the possibility that the discourse may not be as consensual as is portrayed by the critical literature. Should the analysis of discursive logics reveal that no coherent universal is articulated in the IAC discourse but rather a variety of contradictory or conflicting political ideals, this would undermine the consensus thesis. In this case, the empirical chapters will also show whether the IAC discourse can be understood as a hegemonic project or whether there are different hegemonic projects within the IAC discourse, articulating different universals that contest each other. By drawing out the main lines of contestation between different logics, the thesis will be able to tell how and which societal ideals, or parts of them, are in conflict with each other within the IAC agenda and whether the discursive divides opened up by these contestations extend within, between or across organisational lines, thus speaking to the consensus question as well as to the question of societal ideals.

Thus, while PDHT has never been applied to the study of discourses on corruption or anticorruption, it offers particular advantages for the analysis of the IAC agenda.

⁵⁵ Glynos/Howarth (2007)

Apart from addressing different gaps in the critical literature, these advantages are also partly due to its particular match with the ‘negative nature’ of the IAC agenda. Given the post-Marxist conception of society as a product of antagonism, PDHT lends itself particularly to an analysis of a discourse which is all about antagonising corruption; at the same time it enables the thesis to make fruitful Philp’s⁵⁶ proposal that conceptions of corruption always entail societal ideals, an insight which so far does not seem to have been applied systematically to the study of IAC efforts. While so far PDHT (in different academic interpretations) seems to have been used exclusively to investigate positively framed political agendas,⁵⁷ the thesis demonstrates its particular qualification for the analysis of a negatively framed discourse such as the international fight against corruption.

Thus, the main contribution of the thesis is that it provides a more detailed understanding of the political nature of the international fight against corruption than currently exists. This is important because in order to determine whether to accept or support the international fight against corruption, we first need to understand how it proposes to change and arguably is changing societies. Moreover, the thesis illustrates the usefulness of post-Marxist theory for the analysis of negatively framed political agendas such as the IAC agenda.

Methodically the thesis proceeds in the following way. The section of IAC discourse that it examines comprises linguistic and non-linguistic practices of three organisations which are active in the fight against corruption: the World Bank, the NGO Transparency International and the United Nations Development Programme. While these organisations are not the only actors fighting corruption inter- and transnationally, this section of IAC discourse is particularly interesting to examine not only because of their importance in setting the IAC agenda but also because of their quite different organisational structures, which could be expected to play out in the organisations’ approach to combating corruption. While the prominent position held by the WB in the fight against corruption is due mainly to its general financial power and accumulated expertise as the world’s largest development bank, the

⁵⁶ Philp (1997)

⁵⁷ For example, Nonhoff’s investigation of social market economy as a hegemonic project (2006) or Wullweber’s analysis of nanotechnology discourse (2010).

UNDP's significance arises from it being the development branch of the UN organisation, which currently counts 193 member states. Most of these states are parties to the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), which forms the basis of the UNDP's anticorruption work. Since its foundation in 1993, interestingly not by governments but by a handful of private actors whose principal aim was to put corruption on the international political agenda, TI has become a world-renowned international NGO and the primary source of information and policy advice regarding corruption.

The empirical analysis of the discourse involving these three actors is situated at the strategic policy level. The material analysed comprises core policy documents (strategies, policy papers, working papers, policy positions, research papers, reports) and core online information such as website content provided by the headquarters of the three organisations. However, besides these texts, the thesis also uses substantial material collected during interviews carried out by the author with staff based at the headquarters of the three organisations.⁵⁸ Clearly, a single study cannot be exhaustive of the entire IAC discourse, since this would involve dealing with too great a volume of concrete project documentation as well as studying an immense number of local discourses on the implementation of anticorruption projects. However, the focus on the strategic policy level allows us to grasp a particularly important part of the IAC discourse which can be expected to have a relatively significant structuring effect for the rest of the discourse. The organisations' headquarters and their core documents can be conceived as 'nodal points' which concentrate articulations within IAC discourse. Thus, it is particularly important to understand how the discourse is structured on this general level before future studies can investigate how these structures are eventually re-structured, reinforced, subverted, resisted or antagonised in different local contexts.

⁵⁸ The interviews covered a broad range of different aspects of the organisations' anticorruption work including operational/organisational aspects such as public and private sector work, programme funding and co-ordination, co-operations with and differences to other organisations, consensus and difference among TI chapters and the TI Secretariat, and relations to governments. The interviews also covered conceptual issues such as conceptions of corruption, conceptions of human nature, political and economic ideals, the meanings of different important concepts (for example integrity, accountability, development) and their relation to corruption, questions of cultural relativity or universality with regard to corruption, as well as research methods and sources of knowledge. Both the operationalisation of the discourse and the method of analysis will be presented in more detail in chapter 2.

Following retroductive principles of explanation the analytical process was conducted so as to allow for the greatest possible openness to the discursive logics emerging from the material in the search of an explanation.⁵⁹ In this process the hypothesis that the IAC discourse constitutes a hegemonic project was rendered plausible as an explanation of how the IAC discourse operates. Importantly, this finding is accounted for in the structure of this thesis in that its four empirical chapters (3-6) are structured according to the two discursive chains that generally characterise hegemonic projects according to PDHT. While chapter 3 deals with the discursive chain containing corruption and other negatively articulated concepts, chapters 4, 5 and 6 examine the ('longer') discursive chain that articulates the aims of the fight against corruption as well as the strategies and the concrete policy measures used to combat it.

Structure of thesis and argument

Chapter 1 *Corruption as a social construction – implications for an analysis of international anticorruption efforts* delineates the research landscape regarding corruption and anticorruption. It sums up the implications of the dominant positivist research approach for studying corruption and argues that this approach is unable to address the normativity of conceptions of corruption and the resulting potential political implications of the international fight against corruption. By drawing on relevant literature on corruption from the fields of political theory, history and ethnography the case is made for an alternative perspective on corruption as a social construction and, consequently, on the IAC agenda as a site where conceptions of both corruption and uncorrupted societies are constructed. Importantly, the chapter surveys the existing critical literature on IAC activities, distinguishing four sets of findings which comprise the argument of a consensus among IAC actors about corruption and adequate counter-measures; the argument that this consensus comprises the advancement of a neoliberal societal ideal; some of the ways in which this neoliberal ideal is constructed in IAC efforts; and some of the ways in which it is advanced or rendered powerful and persuasive. While these sets of findings

⁵⁹ See Howarth (2010). This process is explained more in detail in chapter 2.

provide interesting insights into the IAC agenda, in each of these broad analytical fields substantive gaps, obscurities or blind spots are identified that give reasons to doubt the neoliberal consensus thesis and to call for much more detailed empirical investigation of the IAC agenda.

Chapter 2 *A post-Marxist discourse and hegemony theoretical approach to the analysis of international anticorruption discourse* makes the case for post-Marxism as a theoretical take on the IAC agenda. It defines the advantages of the chosen approach for an investigation of IAC discourse and specifically for answering the central research question that emerged out of the critique of the critical IAC literature. By explicating the ontological and epistemological implications of the Laclau and Mouffian framework, it introduces the reader to the discourse and hegemony theoretical take on the IAC agenda which guides and structures the empirical analysis carried out in the following four chapters. Specifically, it explains how the thesis will use the concept of the hegemonic project and the concept of logics as joint theoretical tools through which to draw out the ways in which particular societal ideals are constructed and advanced in the fight against corruption and to assess the existing consensus or contestations about them. Finally, the chapter accounts for the way in which IAC discourse is operationalised in the thesis and explains the applied retroductive method of analysis and the implications that the findings achieved through this method have for the structure of the thesis.

Each of the four empirical chapters – chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 – deals with a different part of the selected section of IAC discourse (this section will henceforth be called IAC discourse), incrementally answering the sub-questions of the central research question as specified above.

Chapter 3 *Corruption – the creation of an enemy* investigates how corruption is constructed in particular ways in IAC discourse. It reveals how the concept comes to acquire a particular meaning by drawing out the logics through which corruption is linked to other elements in the same discursive chain that are articulated as its definitions, causes and consequences but also as metaphors. Most importantly, the chapter demonstrates that the main logic which links corruption to its causes and consequences in this discursive chain centres on a particular conception of human nature as rational and inalterably selfish, that its causes are articulated primarily as

inadequate external structures, and that ultimately corruption is articulated as a serious threat to the stability and economic welfare of societies in general but especially in developing countries. It also uncovers how, through the use of metaphors and other discursive moves, corruption is constructed as an enormous threat victimising people all around the world and how this serves the persuasiveness of the fight against corruption as an enterprise worth supporting. In the process of revealing these logics, the chapter shows how articulations of corruption in IAC discourse prepare the ground for the antagonistic division of the discursive space, the main political logic of the hegemonic project.

Chapter 4 *Vagueness and specificity – aims of the fight against corruption and specifications of the uncorrupted society* is the first of three chapters which deal with the second discursive chain of the discourse (that which defines how corruption is to be fought and ultimately defines the nature of societies without corruption) and which work from a more general to the specific level. Accordingly, chapter 4 begins by looking at the aims of the fight against corruption as articulated in this chain. Having identified the ‘fight against corruption’ as the representative of this discursive chain the chapter shows the openness to interpretation of this concept which encompasses aims like a ‘world without corruption’, a ‘world without poverty’, development but also economic welfare, democracy, equality, inclusion etc. which are themselves only vaguely and incoherently defined in the discourse. While this openness to interpretation enables the discourse to be persuasive to a variety of actors, the chapter reveals that, in contrast, the specifications of the good, uncorrupted society are established very clearly. They consist of competition, clear rules, transparency, accountability and integrity and are shown to constitute a particular conception of an uncorrupted society as defined by the presence of the right incentives for self-interested actors to stick to the rules. To govern people’s self-interest properly, the chapter argues, becomes the highest principle of societal organisation in IAC discourse.

Chapter 5 *Instrumental claims – how to realise the uncorrupted society* is concerned with the strategies and instruments through which the fight against corruption is undertaken by IAC actors. The first part briefly outlines the main strategies for IAC reform, which consist of legal, institutional and civil society reform, and shows that these entail a comprehensive restructuring of societies in target countries in order to

institute the 'right' incentives for self-interested actors. The second part of the chapter then discusses in detail the instruments by which these reform measures are pursued by IAC organisations, rendering further insights into the political logic of IAC discourse. It shows how the three organisations function as important subject positions in the fight against corruption, and how they are supported in their efforts by many other important societal actors, rendering the fight against corruption a powerful undertaking. It also discusses how in diverse though consensual ways the three IAC actors advance the IAC reforms through monetary and technical support and advocacy work. Importantly, through analysing the knowledge that IAC discourse produces and draws on in the design of reform measures, the chapter demonstrates that the incentives logic that dominates the fight against corruption is heavily informed by the kind of positivist, rational-choice-inspired research on corruption that in chapter 1 has been found unable to deal with the normativity of corruption and the potential political nature of the fight against corruption.

Chapter 6 *Concrete socio-politico-economic claims: the shape of the uncorrupted society* examines in detail the concrete policy measures by which IAC discourse attempts to reform the political and economic spheres of societies as well as the sphere of civil society. Based on the findings of the incentives logic in chapter 4 and the logic of reform in chapter 5, the analysis of policy claims in this chapter is able to discern the complex governing logics of the uncorrupted society advanced in IAC discourse. The comprehensive model of society that emerges as a societal ideal from IAC discourse, it is noted, closely resembles advanced liberal societies as conceived by Dean.⁶⁰ It is a society in which a) the state is structured according to incentives, has the safeguarding of competitiveness and stability in the economy as one of its main tasks, and provides only basic services to its citizens, b) private sector actors adopt corporate integrity measures which are to be controlled and enforced mainly by active citizens, and c) civil society fulfils a key role in monitoring private and state actors and holding them accountable by acting upon their economic interests. The chapter argues that, next to institutions, culture assumes an important function in the governing of the uncorrupted society via incentive-setting, as another way to

⁶⁰ Advanced liberal rule is the contemporarily dominant form of neoliberalism as interpreted by Dean (2010).

direct individuals' self-interests; it shows how this is particularly important for the creation of an active civil society as envisioned in IAC discourse, while the realms of the economy and most of all the state are governed more via institutional logics. The chapter is also able to point to the exclusions of alternative political ideals that the advancement of this fairly distinct societal ideal entails.

The conclusion ties up the empirical findings, relating them to the research questions. By summarising the logics of construction and advancement of the societal ideal revealed in IAC discourse, the conclusion highlights the main contribution of this thesis, namely a detailed critical explanation of the political nature of IAC discourse via an analysis of its constituting logics. It concludes that within the section of IAC discourse analysed there is a fairly well established hegemony that constructs an advanced liberal ideal of society and advances it via a construction of corruption as a hindrance to this ideal. Despite what could have been expected given the organisational differences of the actors considered as well as the confusion about certain concepts in the critical literature, the thesis revealed a clear consensus in the IAC agenda regarding both the societal ideal to be pursued and the appropriate actors and strategies required to achieve it. Especially through the assessment of the roles of positivist research on corruption and different powerful actors in IAC discourse this consensus is also shown to feature tie points with wider hegemonic structures that are conducive to the societal ideals advanced in IAC discourse. In addition to pointing to the consequences of the insights of this thesis for IAC practitioners, the conclusion situates the findings within a broader context of critical literature on international development co-operation activities and PDHT inspired research. It points out that the thesis contributes not only to a better understanding of the political nature of the IAC agenda but also speaks to wider debates about the neoliberal nature of the international development agenda and the subtle and not-so-subtle ways in which it is advanced in target countries with the help of powerful international organisations and Western expertise; lastly, the thesis provides an example of the empirical application of an innovative theoretical approach, highlighting its merits and suggesting some ways of further development.

1 Corruption as a social construction – implications for an analysis of international anticorruption efforts

IAC efforts are not only carried out by a number of powerful international actors who see corruption as a “stand-alone obstacle to development”;¹ this “latest growth area in international development”² also seems to be surprisingly uncontroversial not only to the general public but also to many academic scholars. Starting from this observation, this chapter depicts the research landscape with regards to corruption and anticorruption activities. It shows that current positivist mainstream literature on corruption is not equipped to deal with the normative and potentially political nature of corruption and anticorruption activities. Consequently, it argues the case for a post-positivist approach to corruption which shifts the focus to the ways in which corruption is socially constructed in the contexts in which it appears, including in IAC activities. By way of presenting interesting findings of broadly post-positivist studies of corruption the chapter illustrates how such a perspective can yield insights into the normativity as well as historical and geographical contingency of corruption. Importantly, the post-positivist perspective on corruption also entails a move away from a conception of IAC efforts as a technical and politically neutral enterprise; rather, it allows understanding them as practices that construct and advance particular conceptions of corruption and the societal ideals tied to it. While reviewing important findings that post-positivist studies have so far contributed to an understanding of the so-called ‘international anticorruption consensus’, at the same time, the chapter identifies important gaps that remain in this literature – specifically with regards to the questions of the specific politico-economic ideals inherent in the IAC agenda, the extent of a consensus on these ideals, the exact ways in which the ideals are constructed and rendered powerful, and the potential effects of these constructions. In doing so it sets out the aim of the thesis which consists of contributing to this literature by providing answers to these questions.

¹ Harrison (2006: 15)

² Harrison (2006: 16)

The fight against corruption – an intrinsically good project?

While other policy fields, including the realm of international development cooperation, attract criticisms from different actors, IAC activities seem to go almost entirely unchallenged by parties, civil society interest groups, social movements, academics, and the media. They seem to be regarded as an intrinsically desirable set of measures that work towards the general improvement of societies. De Sousa, Larmour and Hindess note that “[i]n other policy areas, such as environmental protection or the war in Iraq, there are groups who are for or against. The case of corruption, in contrast, only attracts opponents”.³ Similarly, to Bratsis it seems...

...that there is hardly any contemporary political tendency that does not contain some form of anticorruption agenda. It is striking that so many disparate and competing political discourses all agree that corruption is a problem, oftentimes *the* problem. Regardless of the interpretive frame (right, left, populist, technocratic, religious, secular, etc.), the specter of corruption is a constant, and is both unavoidable and unquestioned.⁴

This characteristic is very likely to be, at least partly, due to the fact that corruption is generally acknowledged to be damaging and consequently that hardly anyone would dispute that it needs to be combated. Harrison points to what she sees as conceptual differences between corruption and concepts with a positive connotation:

Corruption is by definition bad, not something to aspire to, and its effects may be extremely harmful for some people. However poorly defined participation and empowerment may be, they are positive objectives. Critiquing their use in the language and practices of development generally has a subtext of getting close to the *ideal* of what they might be. This is not the case for corruption.⁵

This seems to suggest that the concept of corruption, as opposed to other concepts, does not entail an ideal on which people could disagree. This would indeed explain why IAC efforts enjoy such broad support and are hardly ever subject to political debate. All we can do is agree on its damaging nature and think of ways to combat it.

³ De Sousa et al (2009: i)

⁴ Bratsis (2003: 9)

⁵ Harrison (2006: 16)

But is it really the case that corruption is not about ideals and thus uncontroversial? Why do we judge it as damaging? Do we not do so because we see it as detrimental to something that we value highly or conceive as desirable, i.e. an ideal of something? And given that people tend to value things differently, may different people not have differing views on what corruption means? If this was so, how could we all agree on what needs to be done to combat corruption?

The following sections turn these questions to the academic literature; they explore the literature on corruption and anticorruption activities with a focus on what it makes of this potential normativity and the potentially controversial character of both corruption and anticorruption activities, whether and how it pays attention to these issues and their consequences, and what the most important findings on them have been so far.

Positivist research on corruption – corruption as a fact

The first thing one notices when turning to the literature in search for answers to these questions is that investigations of ‘ideals’ in IAC efforts are rather rare,⁶ while studies on corruption, what causes it and how it should be combated, abound. What is distinctive about the current mainstream literature on corruption is that it relies on a positivist epistemology and tends to look at corruption as something which can be objectively assessed through empirical observation.⁷ Based on the assumption that reality is driven by general laws of cause and effect which exist “independently of social and historical context”, the main aim of positivist studies is to discover the laws of corruption – what causes it, what facilitates it – through “empirical testing of hypotheses and deductive statements”.⁸ For this purpose, valid and testable hypotheses are provided regarding relations between corruption and other ‘factors’ which cause mis- or mal-development in countries and the ways in which such factors in-

⁶ The few existing studies will be discussed further on in the chapter.

⁷ The understanding of positivism that forms the basis of the present discussion is based on Wight (2006) and Fischer (2003).

⁸ Fischer (2003: 118). Positivism holds that social science does not require methods that are distinct to those in the physical or natural sciences; neutral/factual empirical observations as well as quantitative operationalisation and analysis can be applied to the social sciences, enabling the same generalisations and predictions Wight (2006: 21).

fluence each other negatively and/or positively. These hypotheses concerning the causal relations in which corruption is embedded then need to be proven via empirical observation.

This entails a focus on the appearances of corruption as perceived by the observer (in this case the corruption researcher or other researchers who have collected data on corruption and other ‘factors’).⁹ Positivist corruption studies then usually start off with an *a priori* definition of what, in the researcher’s opinion, should be treated as corruption for the purpose of the study. Despite this focus on the researcher’s perspective, nevertheless positivists explicitly dissociate themselves from objectivism by never claiming that what they distinguish, analyse and make causal statements about as corruption is in fact corruption. Rather they claim to treat theoretical terms like corruption in an instrumental way only – as referring not to real entities but ‘as if’ entities; according to positivism, what is defined as corruption is researched ‘as if’ it existed, and while it might not actually exist, it is claimed that this way of dealing with it still helps to explain it as an empirical phenomenon.¹⁰ Thus, positivist corruption studies are characterised by a disinterest in a potential ‘essence’ of corruption but also in what corruption might mean to different people in different contexts. What matters to positivist researchers is not whether what they observe as corruption is what is conceived as corruption by others who observe it or by those who commit it, but rather whether it is ‘helpful’ to explain (through causal inferences) why corruption happens, what its effects are, and to predict when and where it will happen.¹¹

The most widely used definition of corruption in positivist studies is that of the ‘abuse of public office for private gain’. It derives from Nye’s so-called public-office-centred definition of corruption as “behaviour which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private-regarding (family, close private clique), pecuniary or status gains; or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence”.¹² Far from being the only definition of corruption with universalist pretence, it is the most popular one and “has become standard in recent

⁹ Wight (2006: 21)

¹⁰ See Wight (2006: 22). Against this argument one can however raise the objection that as soon as it is argued that some observations are more correct than others in relation to the observable world, positivism veers towards objectivism.

¹¹ Wight (2006: 21)

¹² Nye (1967: 284)

cross-national empirical studies of corruption”.¹³ In addition to several similar, public-office centred definitions¹⁴ it is used by a great number of scientific studies on corruption and is generally regarded as being free from normative connotations. Another set of corruption definitions are the economic or ‘market-centred’ ones. Van Klaveren gives one such example and states that a “corrupt civil servant regards his public office as a business, the income of which he will...seek to maximize. (...) The size of his income depends...upon the market situation and his talents for finding the point of maximal gain on the public’s demand curve”.¹⁵ Other categories of definitions, which are more difficult to understand as ‘neutrally’ observable and thus much less frequently used, are public-opinion-centred definitions¹⁶ and public-interest-centred definitions.¹⁷

Importantly, the definitions and observations of corruption are expected to be made in a value-neutral way. The conviction that definitions of corruption as well as the researcher’s observing gaze can and should be free from any normative judgments about corruption and other concepts that are used in the study is due to the positivist belief in the possibility of fact-value-separations and the concomitant prioritisation of cognitive over normative statements. Thus, not only is it believed that normative and factual judgments can be separated, but also that unlike normative judgments about corruption, factual or cognitive statements about corruption can be (objectively) judged as right or wrong and therefore are useful for the explanation of causal relations involving corruption.¹⁸ Therefore, it is assumed that researchers can (and in fact should) defy everything they may have learned about corruption, put aside every normative judgment that they may hold about corruption, and instead look at, hypothesise about and analyse corruption and its related ‘factors’ from a neutral perspective, thus generating only factual statements about it.

¹³ Sandholtz/Gray (2003: 765)

¹⁴ See for example Rose-Ackerman (1999); Treisman (2000); Shleifer/Vishny (1993); Sandholtz/Gray (2003); Theobald (1990); Scott (1972); Kaufmann (1997)

¹⁵ Van Klaveren (1970: 25-26); see also Wilson (1970: 62-64)

¹⁶ See for example Rundquist and Hansen (1976) who state that an act is corrupt “when the weight of public opinion determines it so” (Barry Rundquist and Susan Hansen, "On Controlling Official Corruption: Elections vs. Laws," unpublished manuscript quoted in Peters/Welch 1978).

¹⁷ See for example Rogow and Lasswell (1963:132) who argue that a corrupt act is one that “violates responsibility towards at least one system of public and civic order and is in fact incompatible with (destructive of) any such system”, or also Friedrich (1966: 74).

¹⁸ Wight (2006: 21)

Given the need to generalise, the formulation of hypotheses is often based on theorisations of corrupt behaviour using universalist assumptions about human behaviour. The desire for quantitative analysis in turn favours simplistic and mechanistic models of human nature which are easily translated into mathematic formulae. A particularly popular way to model corrupt behaviour and to generate hypotheses about its relation with other variables is the rational choice approach. Borrowed from economics, it “constitutes one of the leading theoretical orientations in political science and sociology”¹⁹ and has considerably shaped positivist corruption research. Its basic assumption is that “human beings behave rationally in the effort to achieve their self-interested ends”.²⁰ Self-interest is regarded as the sole and unchangeable drive of human behaviour and human beings are assumed to mechanistically act and react to their environment in striving for interest-maximisation. The most famous application of rational choice theory to model corruption is Klitgaard’s 1991 formula: $C = M + D - A$ (Corruption = Monopoly + Discretion – Accountability), which is based on the assumption that rational individuals will in any decision-making situation calculate the potential gains arising from their discretion and monopoly over decision-making and balance them against the risk of loss arising from the likelihood of detection and punishment. If the former outweighs the latter, any individual will perpetrate the corrupt act. Interestingly, Fischer notes that whereas early day rationalists have generally assigned things like ideas to “such general categories as ‘unexplained variance’”, (...) various modern-day rational choice theorists try to integrate ideals and beliefs held by individuals or groups without giving up or modifying their basic contention” of human self-interested rationality.²¹

Given that internal validation and replicability of research are particularly important demands from a positivist perspective, definitions of corruption (as well as other ‘factors’) are usually operationalised through quantitative data sets or indicators as this kind of operationalisation is regarded as most ‘objective’ and best suited to replication and validation by other scholars. Since direct observation and measurement of corruption is hardly ever possible, the positivist corruption researcher usually relies on data sets on levels of corruption as perceived by others. The Corruption Per-

¹⁹ Fischer (2003: 119)

²⁰ Fischer (2003: 22)

²¹ Fischer (2003: 22)

ceptions Index (CPI) by the NGO Transparency International (TI) is the “best known ‘measure’ for ‘corruption’ in the world”²² and is used by countless positivist studies to operationalise corruption.²³ The annually published index is “a composite index, a combination of polls” which gathers information on perceptions of corruption from polls conducted by various research institutes.²⁴ It ranks countries according to their levels of corruption as perceived by international business persons, public officials, and general public opinion. While the index is frequently criticised by non-positivist scholars for being business-centred, bribe-focused or Western-centric,²⁵ positivist scholars sometimes find the index unreliable and insufficiently objective because it only measures perceptions²⁶ and because the relational ranking does not reveal if world-wide corruption is growing or not. Yet, as there is no qualitatively better alternative,²⁷ researchers seeking to carry out quantitative analysis rely on the CPI most of the time.

The final aim of positivist research is the generation of replicable and falsifiable empirical evidence about causal relations involving corruption in the sense of covering laws on the basis of which future phenomena can be explained and predicted.²⁸ Most frequently these take the form of ‘if levels of Y rise then levels of corruption decrease’ or ‘if corruption increases then X happens’. The generalisability of discovered causal relations is often tested through comparing changes in factors between countries or different time periods.

²² De Maria (2008c: 778)

²³ See e.g. Treisman (2000); Gundlach/Paldam (2009); Goldsmith (19998); Montinola/Jackman (2002); Xin/Rudel (2004); Lipset/Lenz (2000); de Jong/Bogmans (2011); Melgar et al (2010); Das/DiRienzo (2010); Baughn/Bodie (2010); Judge et al (2011); Saha et al (2009); Gokcekus (2008), to mention but a few

²⁴ TI (q); see also TI (B)

²⁵ For detailed critiques of the CPI see Andersson/Heywood (2009); Galtung (2006); Sampford, C./Shacklock, A./Connors, C./Galtung (2006); De Maria (2008c); Sik (2002)

²⁶ This practice of relying on the perceptions of non-scientific persons is regarded as being in tension with the positivist principle of value-neutrality, given that the capacity to make value-neutral statements is usually regarded as a particular quality of the scientific researcher.

²⁷ There are two other corruption indices, both of which are based solely on expert opinions and less frequently used than the CPI: the bribe-focused index of Business International (BI) and the corruption index of Political Risk Services (PRS). In 1999, TI also started to publish an annual Bribe Payers Index (BPI) based on data gathered by Gallup International. It relies on the perceptions of business leaders from 14 leading emerging market economies for the generation of a ranking of 19 leading exporting countries according to the degrees to which their corporations pay bribes abroad (see TI D).

²⁸ Fischer (2003: 118)

The explanations offered and the results obtained in such studies are rather diverse. Findings have been quite contradictory regarding the causes of corruption,²⁹ such as the state of economic development;³⁰ openness to foreign trade;³¹ level of public employment;³² federalism;³³ cartel parties/number of cleavages;³⁴ political competition;³⁵ salaries of public officials;³⁶ percentages of religious people³⁷ etc. The two most important consequences of corruption for states' development that positivist studies distinguish (and more or less agree on) concern the negative effects of corruption on the economy, embodied by variables such as GDP per capita,³⁸ levels of productivity,³⁹ persistent capital flows⁴⁰ and the quality of public investments,⁴¹ and the negative effects it has on democratisation.⁴² Other scholars have examined the impact of democratisation on levels of corruption and here again some controversial findings are revealed.⁴³ While especially during the 1960s 'functionalist' corruption scholars disputed the noxiousness of corruption and tried to show that it can have positive effects,⁴⁴ nowadays most scholars agree that corruption is problematic and aim to contribute to finding solutions to this problem.

²⁹ See Manow (2003) for an overview on the most important hypotheses concerning causes of corruption in the positivist corruption literature.

³⁰ See e.g. Treisman (2000), assuming a negative relationship; Mauro (1995), Wolfinger (1972) holding the antithesis

³¹ See e.g. Ades/Di Tella (1999), assuming a negative relationship

³² See e.g. Treisman (2000), assuming a positive relationship; Rosenthal (1998) holding the antithesis

³³ See e.g. Wilson (1970), assuming a positive relationship; Weingast (1995), holding the antithesis

³⁴ See e.g. Hine (1996); Katz/Mair (1995); Mauro (1995), assuming a positive relationship; Lijphart (1999) holding the antithesis

³⁵ See e.g. Della Porta/Vannucci (1999), assuming negative relationship; Clapham (1982), Warner (1997), holding the antithesis

³⁶ See e.g. Klitgaard/Klitgaard (1991); Besley/McLaren (1993); Montinola/Jackman (2002), assuming a negative relationship; Treisman (2000); Schiavo-Campo et al (1999); Van Rijckeghem/Weder (2001) holding the antithesis

³⁷ See e.g. Treisman (2000), assuming a negative relationship; La Porta, Rafael et al. (1998), holding the antithesis

³⁸ Different researchers find a negative correlation between a country's ranking on corruption indices and GDP per capita. See e.g. Kaufmann et al (2002); Rose-Ackerman (1999); Mauro (2002)

³⁹ Lambsdorff (2003)

⁴⁰ Lambsdorff (2003)

⁴¹ Davoodi/Tanzi (1997)

⁴² Lipset/Lenz (2000) dissent on this negative relationship (cited in Johnston 2005: 18).

⁴³ Amundsen (1999 and Treisman (2000) argue that the level of corruption becomes substantially reduced only through democratic consolidation or 'deep democracy'. According to Harris-White/White (1996), however, the process of democratisation can also lead to increased corruption. Diamond/Plattner (1993) hold that democratisation increases both the opportunities for graft and the likelihood to be discovered.

⁴⁴ Leys (1965); Bayley (1966); Huntington (1968)

While some interesting correlations between corruption and other social phenomena have been revealed, the fact that these findings are partly rather contradictory hampers the positivist aim of a coherent body of predictive generalisations on corruption. Yet what is more interesting with regards to the question of the potential normativity and contestation of corruption and anticorruption efforts is that due to positivist research principles such questions are virtually absent from positivist studies. The prioritisation of ‘facts’ over values as an analytical category prevents positivists from deeper inquiries into the potentially normative content of corruption. In fact, such enterprises would be discounted as un-scientific. The positivist focus on the researcher in judging reality does not allow for the consideration of other perspectives. The need for ‘objective’ definitions, universalist models of social relations and the endeavour to create generalisations render positivist studies unable to investigate potential differences in the meaning of corruption, how they come about, how they might differ across actors and spaces, how they are related to other social norms or ideals, and how all this might affect social relations in diverse ways. Given the adherence to positivist research principles of the majority of contemporary studies of corruption, most corruption studies are interested in IAC activities only insofar as they might be able to contribute to problem-solving⁴⁵ with regards to corruption, namely by providing better knowledge about its causes and consequences and by assessing the effects that IAC measures may have on levels of corruption. Thus, we can identify an overall lack of interest in the literature in questioning IAC activities with regards to its normative and political content.

After positivism – corruption as a socially constructed concept

Thus, it seems that we have to reject positivist principles of science if we are to address these questions. Fischer, who argues for a general move away from positivism, reasons that...

... [b]eyond seeking to explain a “given” reality, social science also must attempt to explain how social groups construct their own understandings of that reality. Not only do such constructions constitute the most basic level

⁴⁵ Cox/Sinclair (1996)

of social action; their implications are fundamental to an understanding of the processes of social change, without which we would have little need for social science.⁴⁶

Numerous other scholars have argued that a social construction of reality needs to be acknowledged in the approach to the study of social phenomena – a task positivism is unable to undertake. With regards to corruption, a departure from positivist research principles and the concomitant goal of tracing generalisable causal relations between corruption and other factors means that our focus can extend to include the ways in which people (including researchers and practitioners) come to understand corruption in the first place.⁴⁷ Instead of approaching the research process as an undertaking in which appearances of corruption can be objectively observed and evaluated in just one correct (objective and value-neutral) way, we can give up the search for ‘truth’ about corruption and instead direct our attention to another level of reality which lies behind these analytic processes and consists in our reality-defining ontological, epistemological and ideological premises and assumptions.⁴⁸ Instead of being ignored altogether, processes of social construction of corruption, related social norms or ideals but also of scientific knowledge itself can then be apprehended as an analytical category for the understanding of social relations involving corruption that is at least of equal importance to hypotheses, explanations and theoretical models concerning it.⁴⁹ Thus, the move away from positivism allows corruption to be analysed as a normative concept that can mean different things to different people in different social contexts and the meaning of which is shaped through social processes characterised by a constant interplay of material and ideational structures. Its construction through these processes is closely interrelated with that of manifold other social norms and ideals as well as social practices which are again closely linked to more general assumptions about what there is in the world, how we can understand it and how we should deal with it.

⁴⁶ Fischer (1998: 134)

⁴⁷ See Gebel (2011) for an elaboration of a post-positivist approach to research corruption and anticorruption activities (in German).

⁴⁸ Lapid (1989: 241)

⁴⁹ See Fischer (2003: 121), Lapid (1989: 239, 240, 243)

Corruption as the ‘subversion of the naturally sound constitution of society’

While this thesis is not the first attempt to adopt such a perspective with regards to corruption and anticorruption efforts, such studies are scarce. A particularly interesting perspective on the concept of corruption to be considered in regards to the question of its potential normativity (but also in regards to ‘technical’ positivist definitions) is offered by Philp.⁵⁰ He suggests that there is no value-free way of defining or conceiving corruption. Arguing that the concept of corruption is historically rooted “in the sense of a thing being changed from its naturally sound condition, into something unsound”, he notes that problems arise as soon as this concept is applied to areas where there is hardly a general consensus on their ‘naturally sound condition’ such as in the sphere of politics.⁵¹

Conceptions of political corruption, he argues, are in fact “intimately connected” to conceptions of the public interest and different types of political rule, which involve normative decisions and political ideals⁵² that are bound to be contested by social actors with different political views. As Philp explains, it is...

...difficult to avoid moving from identification of cases of rule infraction to more general questions about what such infractions mean within that political culture and, thereafter to questions about the character of politics. Small questions have a way of leading to big ones and the broader questions almost inevitably raise deeper normative and ethical issues.⁵³

In order to illustrate this, Philp points out that public-office based definitions of corruption such as the one by Nye cited above imply a notion of the public interest which cannot be conceived in purely technical terms (while this possibility is the positivist argument for employing it). When defining corruption as behaviour deviating from the formal duties of a public role, Nye “implicitly recognizes the public interest dimension by insisting that the deviation must be for private regarding gains”.⁵⁴ This is because in order to determine the nature of private gain (or interest),

⁵⁰ Philp (1997)

⁵¹ Philp (1997: 445)

⁵² Philp (1997: 441, 445)

⁵³ Philp (1997: 446)

⁵⁴ Philp (1997: 440); similarly, Philp argues that market-centred definitions might be useful to understand corrupt behaviour, but not to define it. Neither can they avoid normative questions: “To be

one must distinguish it from the public interest, since private and public sphere are the two mutually constitutive areas of the modern liberal state to which the definition refers.

This suggests that conceptions of corruption are necessarily tied to ideals; even if due to the intrinsic negativity carried by the concept these ideals may be less obvious in conceptions of corruption than in those of other concepts in the realm of international politics. The peculiarity of conceptions of corruption is that they reveal their ideal only indirectly, as that which is negated by corruption. Or put differently: If corruption is the subversion of an ideal condition of something, as Philp suggests, then what is conceived as corruption depends on what is conceived as ideal. The second point this raises is that conceptions of corruption are unlikely to be uncontroversial, given that there may be no consensus on the ideal organisation of areas of society in which corruption may be identified. Extending Philp's perspective, thinking of corruption as the 'subversion of the naturally sound constitution of society' may be helpful in making the normative, political character of the concept explicit and highlighting the need for interpretation. Thirdly, such a perspective has potentially important consequences not only for the comprehension and analysis of corruption but also for activities deployed to combat it. It implies that any attempt to examine corruption in a particular context needs to acknowledge its normative and potentially political nature, and it also means that IAC efforts cannot be understood as intrinsically good but need to be scrutinised in light of the ideals that their use of the concept of corruption may entail, which may be regarded as problematic by different social actors.

The following sections show what can be found if we shift our focus to the ways in which people come to understand concepts like corruption in the first place. Drawing on different examples from the literature, some illustrations shall be given from studies that have examined corruption as a social construct and that have analysed the historical development of conceptions of corruption across time and that have traced differences in conceptions of corruption across different cultural contexts.

able to point to those cases of interest/income maximizing which are also politically corrupt, one has to appeal to constructions of public office and the public interest which draw in norms and values which are external to the market-model" (Philp 1997: 445).

Corruption as a historically contingent concept

Conceptions of corruption have evolved over time. Different authors have traced the evolution of the meaning of corruption in the West from Ancient Greece to today. All authors differentiate between openly moral conceptions of corruption (such as unjust rule) and more technical conceptions of corruption (such as the ‘abuse of public office for private gain’) which they partly assign to different time periods.

Génaux carves out historical continuities and changes in the Western understanding of corruption. She finds that openly moral and justice-related as well as more technical conceptions of corruption are both historically rooted in “the politico-moral sphere” and closely interrelated.⁵⁵ According to her, they have the same biblical origins, expressing “man’s mortality in front of God’s eternity and incorruptio”. The task of heaven-sent leaders to create justice on earth was later extended to public officials, which is why Génaux regards even technical definitions such as ‘the abuse of public office for private gain’ as linked to a politico-moral understanding of corruption.⁵⁶ Despite its acquisition over time of a more technical character which can be seen as reminiscent of the technical conception of bribery in Ancient Greece, she holds that the modern concept of corruption is rooted in the concept of injustice up until today.⁵⁷

Bratsis disagrees with this continuity between ancient and modern understandings of corruption. He stresses how understandings of political corruption in Ancient Greece were linked to a “normative political project that posits what the good is and on this basis is able to establish what is corrupt or bad”, which is not the case for what he sees as modern technical conceptions.⁵⁸ He explains that “[i]n the traditional understanding of corruption, there was a strong imagery of decay and regression, of something becoming less and less capable, potent, or virtuous” in the sense that “the ability to seek the good and virtuous is decreased and possibly destroyed”. While he argues that this meaning of the term is still understood and used today, for example “when we claim that the minds of the young are corrupted by the entertainment in-

⁵⁵ Génaux (2004: 21)

⁵⁶ Génaux (2004: 20)

⁵⁷ Génaux (2004: 22)

⁵⁸ Bratsis (2003: 17)

dustry”,⁵⁹ he does not recognise it in the conception of political corruption that is dominant today and that centres on the public/private split and on the concept of interests.⁶⁰ According to Bratsis, this modern understanding is based on two interrelated assumptions: “that mutually exclusive public and private interests exist and that public servants must necessarily abstract themselves from the realm of the private in order to properly function”.⁶¹ Unlike the traditional conception of corruption which was about “a clear division of good and bad”,⁶² this modern conception in Bratsis’ opinion “does not function as an explicitly normative construct but rather as an articulation of categories of bourgeois political ontology”.⁶³ This means that it serves to constitute and reaffirm the public/private split dominant in today’s Western societies, namely “through its application and subsequent categorization of phenomena as corruption or uncorrupt, as pathological or normal” according to the sphere in which they happen.⁶⁴ For Bratsis, the modern conception of corruption therefore “repeats the normative-political emphasis of the traditional understanding of political corruption but does so in an essentialist and apolitical manner”⁶⁵ since it takes “the integrity of the public/private split at face value, as a quality immanent in all societies, as the normal”.⁶⁶

In his criticism of the apolitical and technical character of the modern conception of corruption, Euben draws attention to its roots in a particular political tradition, thus highlighting the political character of corruption.⁶⁷ He compares conceptions of corruption in the republican and liberal traditions of political thought and points to wide differences. Linking the republican conception of corruption back to Ancient Greece, Euben explains that Aristotle had very particular and strong views about what he conceived to be a healthy polity and that this “sense of political health and decay emanating from the *Politics* has helped define the republican tradition”, influencing writers like Machiavelli and shaping republican conceptions of corruption as the de-

⁵⁹ Bratsis (2003: 15)

⁶⁰ Bratsis (2003: 14)

⁶¹ Bratsis (2003: 11)

⁶² Bratsis (2003: 15)

⁶³ Bratsis (2003: 17)

⁶⁴ Bratsis (2003: 17)

⁶⁵ Bratsis (2003: 17)

⁶⁶ Bratsis (2003: 18)

⁶⁷ Euben (1989)

cay of virtue.⁶⁸ Later, however, the republican image of the communitarian citizen and the belief in an ideal polis was deconstructed by Hobbesian liberal thought and its particular image of human nature as genuinely driven by self-interest.⁶⁹ In what Euben calls “the liberal transvaluation of corruption”⁷⁰ Hobbes ruled out the republican viewpoint on human nature and politics and consequently eliminated the specific moral, metaphysical and epistemological foundations that the concept of corruption had rested on thus far: “Once men are seen as irremediably egoistic subjects rather than potentially activist citizens, as sharing a nature which fragments them rather than a history which unites them, as requiring an absolutely sovereign ruler rather than a sharing of power, we confront a political and conceptual universe in which republican political theory is irrelevant”.⁷¹

In his analysis of the ways in which contemporary meanings of corruption are constructed Euben goes a step further and links the liberal understanding of corruption and its concomitant conception of human nature to the positivist research approach discussed earlier. He argues that “the present effort by political scientists to develop a politically neutral, methodologically respectable, operationally viable definition of corruption (...) is built on the rejection of the republican understanding of corruption as moralistic and subjective”.⁷² What he also sees reflected in the positivist approach to understanding corruption is the liberal view of men as “self-interested animals incapable of civic virtue”, as “self-enclosed and undisclosed” individuals who “lack any internal connections”, who “share a nature, not a history”, who “replicate rather than modify each other in the course of collective action and deliberation”.⁷³ While made in 1989, this observation by Euben is indeed easily relatable to the rational choice models discussed earlier which are currently the most popular way to theorise corruption. Thus, Euben shows not only how corruption is shaped in social processes which the positivist research approach is not able to grasp, but he also argues that this approach itself contributes to the shaping of conceptions of corruption in very particular ways.

⁶⁸ Euben (1989: 227)

⁶⁹ Euben (1989: 230)

⁷⁰ Euben (1989: 230)

⁷¹ Euben (1989: 232)

⁷² Euben (1989: 243)

⁷³ Euben (1989: 232)

These accounts serve as illustrations of the ways in which meanings of corruption have been shaped historically, and how the concept is imbued with or emptied of particular values over time. However, scholars disagree on whether modern understandings of corruption are linked to moral notions of justice or whether they are rather technical or what the relations between these two characteristics of corruption may be. Furthermore, despite agreement on the centring of modern conceptions of corruption on interests, Euben and Bratsis seem to disagree on the question of political content. Both these insights and disagreements make an inquiry into the kinds of conceptions of corruption inherent in IAC efforts particularly auspicious. Are those conceptions technical, moral, liberal? All of these or none at all? How do they play out in the fight against corruption and in the construction of societal ideals that Philp argues are necessarily attached to corruption? If they were liberal, why is there hardly any criticism from other political actors?

Corruption as a culturally contingent concept

Another set of authors has investigated the social construction of corruption in different socio-cultural contexts. Several studies with an ethnographic and anthropologist approach have examined corruption as well as other social and bureaucratic norms and revealed differences in these norms and the meaning of corruption between Western and non-Western countries.

While developing nations following the end of colonialist periods often officially adopted Western laws and bureaucratic regulations, this does not mean that they have simultaneously adopted the concomitant values, practices and conceptions of public and private sphere, as Scott remarks.⁷⁴ These norms are responded to, appropriated and contested in developing countries by other social rules and traditional institutions with competing codes and values.⁷⁵ Consequently conceptions of corruption which are closely tied to these norms, values and practices will also vary. Thus

⁷⁴ Scott (1969: 319) (cited in Sissener 2001: 3)

⁷⁵ Cf. Price (1999); Ruud (2000), cited in Sissener (2001: 4); Szeftel (1998: 235)

corruption, as Harrison puts it, “matters to all sorts of people, but it matters in different ways and for different reasons”.⁷⁶

Gupta gives examples of how bureaucratic norms in a rural Indian region differ from Western ones. He describes the working routine of an Indian official responsible for the land records of several villages, which he administers at his private home that simultaneously functions as office. As Gupta explains, the process of giving bribes to this official was quite open; the transactions happened in public and seemed to be commonly accepted. Moreover, Gupta argues that in this context the practice of bribe-giving was not simply an economic transaction “but a cultural practice that required a great degree of performative competence”, in particular with regard to information about and negotiation of the adequate sum of bribes. While in most cases “the ‘rates’ were well-known and fixed”⁷⁷ some villagers were found “expressing frustration because they lacked the cultural capital required to negotiate deftly for those services”.⁷⁸ Accordingly, Gupta argues that officials like Sharmaji pose an “interesting challenge to Western notions of the boundary between ‘state’ and ‘society’” in that they collapse this distinction “not only between their roles as public servants and as private citizens at the site of their activity, but also in their styles of operation”.⁷⁹ This points to important differences in how corruption is conceived in these settings. While villagers complained about the corruption of state officials and their own resulting “exclusion from governments services because these were costly”,⁸⁰ nevertheless expectations about the correct relations between state and society and about adequate behaviour in this relationship seemed to differ substantively from those prevalent in Western countries.⁸¹ This means that if corruption is conceived as an abuse of public office for private gain, its meaning can differ greatly given that different actions count as abusive or legitimate in different contexts.

Olivier de Sardan demonstrates how, in the context of many African states, many practices that are officially illegal and widely condemned (in those very contexts),

⁷⁶ Harrison (2006: 26)

⁷⁷ Gupta (1995: 379)

⁷⁸ Gupta (1995: 381)

⁷⁹ Gupta (1995: 384). The author makes reference to this as “blurring the boundaries between ‘state’ and ‘civil society’” Gupta (1995: 384).

⁸⁰ Gupta (1995: 381)

⁸¹ Routley (2012) makes a similar argument using examples from the Nigerian NGO-context.

are often not considered as corrupt but legitimate by their perpetrators.⁸² This does not mean that any act that may be considered corrupt from a Western perspective is considered as legitimate in African contexts; what Olivier de Sardan argues is that in order to really understand such practices it is necessary to consider the wider social practices and norms in which they are embedded.⁸³ Accordingly, Olivier de Sardan shows that what he calls ‘the corruption complex’ is culturally embedded in different logics of negotiation, of gift-giving, of the solidarity network, of predatory authority and in the logic of redistributive accumulation which are all “habitual local social norms” with a positive connotation.⁸⁴ For example, the logic of redistributive accumulation, he argues, enables us to understand better how “[i]llegal enrichment and nepotism are definitely supported by positive social values, namely the necessity to seize all opportunities allowing for a manifestation of cardinal virtues, such as generosity, largesse and gratitude to all those who in the past (...) provided help, encouragement and support”. Who has the luck of acceding to a prestigious position must, “in the sight of his relatives, profit from this and spread the benefit around”, making ‘officially corrupt’ practices a legitimate means of wealth acquisition.⁸⁵ In this respect, Bracking stresses that in such contexts the question of whether something counts as corruption is highly dependent on perspectives which again depend on positions; corruption is something morally ambiguous and depends on the “class positionality of the onlooker, relative to the assets in question”.⁸⁶

It must be borne in mind that generalisations of the customs of whole continents necessarily oversee and neglect manifold differences and nuances between and within African, Asian and European societies. Nevertheless these accounts highlight how social norms regarding legitimate and illegitimate behaviour can differ across the world, preventing a universally valid understanding of corruption. Furthermore, they confirm Philp’s point regarding concomitant societal ideals in that they show how conceptions of corruption are closely tied to wider societal structures, social norms and ideals. These insights raise important questions for the analysis of IAC

⁸² De Sardan (1999: 34)

⁸³ De Sardan (1999: 35)

⁸⁴ De Sardan (1999: 35)

⁸⁵ De Sardan (1999: 43). See Bracking (2009a) for similar arguments based on an analysis of the current Zimbabwean political context.

⁸⁶ Bracking (2009a: 45)

efforts. If corruption is understood differently in different cultural contexts, how will international organisations go about combating it? How will they take into account the differing social norms and structures with which conceptions of corruption are closely interlinked in the countries that are the targets of IAC activities?

International anticorruption efforts as a site where corruption is constructed

While the previous sections have reviewed different social constructions of corruption in different periods of time (in the West) and in different cultural contexts, it is now time to come back to the starting point of this inquiry into social constructions of corruption, which is the IAC agenda. As we have already seen, by conceiving of corruption as a social construction, important openings and new foci can be constituted not only on corruption *per se* but also on related social norms and ideals. Yet simultaneously, the change in perspective also shifts the focus to the ways in which corruption and concomitant ideals are shaped and constantly re-shaped through different social processes, and how these processes come to establish particular meanings as the correct ones. From this perspective the international fight against corruption can no longer be regarded as a simple accumulation of intrinsically good measures to combat what everyone knows is corruption, or as a project the success of which can be neutrally evaluated through positivist research; rather, it turns itself into a site where corruption is constructed and, if we are to believe the studies reviewed above, a site in which interrelated values, social norms and societal structures are shaped. Given the importance attached to IAC efforts, the powerful institutional and monetary resources behind them and the unquestioning widespread support such efforts enjoy, it is of crucial importance to inquire more deeply into these issues.

It was only in the past decade that some academic scholars have ventured to do so and the overall number of such studies is still rather small. The following sections examine this literature according to its main analytical findings and while doing so identify important blind spots and contradictions within the picture painted of the IAC agenda. Four important sets of closely interrelated findings about the international fight against corruption can be distinguished in the literature: The first con-

cerns the normative and political content of IAC efforts; the second refers to a consensus on these ideals among IAC actors; the third concerns the specific ways in which corruption and its concomitant ideals are constructed by IAC activities; and the fourth regards the ways in which these constructions become persuasive or powerful. Below, I will jointly discuss the first and second set and then separately the third and the fourth set of these findings; however it must be stressed that all of them are very closely interrelated.

The political nature of IAC efforts – a neoliberal consensus?

To begin with it should be noted that most studies discussed here are analyses of strategic policy documents; only some also investigate non-linguistic practices of different IAC actors. All of them are article-length studies which mostly deal with just one IAC actor.⁸⁷ The studies that will be reviewed are almost solely concerned with documents and activities at the level of the headquarters of IAC organisations.⁸⁸

Several authors who have critically analysed IAC efforts have found a consensus with regards to conceptions of corruption, its causes, consequences and remedies. Johnston summarises that “a new consensus has emerged over corruption’s origins, consequences, and remedies” which has been “driven primarily by business, and by international aid and lending institutions”.⁸⁹ Similarly, Bukovansky identifies a “solidifying consensus” that corruption is “a primary villain for underdevelopment and a host of other ills” and that it is “a problem of international concern, requiring multi-lateral solutions”.⁹⁰ Krastev agrees and sees contemporary efforts to fight corruption as reflecting a ‘Washington Consensus on Corruption’⁹¹ among international financial institutions while Sampson, too, emphasises the “unified character of the anti-

⁸⁷ An exception is Bukovansky (2006) who includes several IAC actors. She analyses around 30 anti-corruption policy documents by the UN, the IMF, the WB, the OECD, and TI.

⁸⁸ There are hardly any studies that deal with the concrete implementation of IAC projects on the ground in target countries (see only Brown/Cloke 2005); yet as we will see on this more general level there is already much room for elaboration and further analysis.

⁸⁹ Johnston (2005: 16). While Johnston gives a review of IAC efforts in the beginning of his book, it is however not his main aim to critically analyse the IAC agenda; this is why he does not provide any further empirical detail on the agenda and will not be mentioned in the following literature critique.

⁹⁰ Bukovansky (2006: 182); see also Sampson (2010: 273)

⁹¹ Krastev (2004)

corruption industry”⁹² in its construction of corruption as a significant problem for development.⁹³

Thus, these scholars seem to agree that there is a consensus among international organisations of different kinds about what corruption is and about the ways in which it should be combated. Most critical anticorruption scholars who have analysed parts of the IAC agenda have also substantiated Philp’s argument that conceptions of corruption always come with particular societal ideals. They have pointed out that anti-corruption reforms arising from the IAC consensus advance a particular societal ideal that displays neoliberal characteristics.⁹⁴ Given that neoliberalism is a much debated concept which can have quite diverse meanings, the insights that the neoliberal label renders into the kind of political or rather politico-economic ideal implicit in the fight against corruption are limited – all the more so as hardly any of the critical scholars explicates what they mean by the term. Respective scholars seem to attribute the neoliberal labelling mostly (and for the most part only implicitly) to the emphasis by IAC actors on economic growth,⁹⁵ their advocacy of market liberalisation,⁹⁶ privatisation,⁹⁷ and deregulation.⁹⁸ With regards to the state the neoliberal characteristics detected consist of smaller government⁹⁹ or an “anti-state slant”,¹⁰⁰ an emphasis on transparency, separation of powers and government accountability¹⁰¹ and ultimately in the creation of a “lean, technically competent state that is little more than a kind of referee in the economic arena”.¹⁰² Corruption in this neoliberal consensus, so goes the argument of the critical literature, is mainly conceived as bribery;¹⁰³ it is framed as an economic problem arising mainly from the public sec-

⁹² Sampson (2010: 264)

⁹³ Sampson (2010: 273)

⁹⁴ Polzer (2001); Hindess (2005); Brown/Cloke (2004); Bukovansky (2006); Bracking (2007); Johnston (2005); Krastev (2004)

⁹⁵ Hindess (2005); Bukovansky (2006)

⁹⁶ Bukovansky (2006); Brown/Cloke (2004); Krastev (2004)

⁹⁷ Bukovansky (2006); Brown/Cloke (2004); Bracking (2007); Hindess (2005: 1390)

⁹⁸ Brown/Cloke (2004); Bracking (2007: 15)

⁹⁹ Bukovansky (2006); Brown/Cloke (2004: 276, 278); Johnston (2005: 17)

¹⁰⁰ Brown/Cloke (2004: 286); see also Bracking (2007: 15)

¹⁰¹ Bukovansky (2006: 183)

¹⁰² Johnston (2005: 17)

¹⁰³ Johnston (2005: 18)

tor,¹⁰⁴ with IAC organisations being nearly blind to the potential corruption of the private sector.

Along with these findings about a neoliberal consensus, most critical authors also agree that the fight against corruption is a Western-centric enterprise which ignores the existence of other conceptions of corruption and societal ideals in the target countries of IAC efforts (which are mainly located in the Global South and Eastern Europe¹⁰⁵) and tries to impose Western political ideals on them.¹⁰⁶

While these features may be indicative of a broadly (neo)liberal system, and while the literature is rather unified in pointing to a consensus on such a system within the IAC agenda, different opacities and blind spots in the literature create doubt with regards to the interpretation of a neoliberal IAC consensus. First, there is confusion in the literature regarding what a neoliberal system entails. Secondly, there is neglect in dealing with a number of concepts in the IAC agenda that do not immediately seem to fit the neoliberal framework. Thirdly, there are disagreements and blind spots in the critical literature with regards to the neoliberal nature of the diverse IAC actors involved in the fight against corruption.

Neoliberal?

Despite the characteristics of the neoliberal consensus detected by the critical literature, its contours remain rather vague. Unlike other critical IAC studies, Hindess' article examining TI's anticorruption efforts provides a clear account of what contemporary neoliberalism means.¹⁰⁷ His understanding seems to differ at least partly from that of other critical IAC scholars in that according to him, neoliberal systems feature not only liberal markets and privatisation but also "expand the sphere of competition and market-like interaction,¹⁰⁸ and (...) promote individual choice alongside or in place of public provision". Rather than through direct control by the state,

¹⁰⁴ Brown/Cloke (2004: 285); Bukovansky (2006: 194); Hindess (2005: 1390); Murphy (2011: 133)

¹⁰⁵ TI is the only IAC organisation that does not concentrate its efforts mainly on developing countries; it has national chapters that work on corruption all over the world.

¹⁰⁶ Hindess (2005); Bukovansky (2006); Brown/Cloke (2004); Bracking (2007); Polzer (2001); Murphy (2011); De Maria (2008c)

¹⁰⁷ See Hindess (2005: 1390)

¹⁰⁸ See also Johnston (2005: 17)

neoliberal projects are concerned with regulating the conduct of individuals, private bodies and many public agencies indirectly “through the use of market or market-like arrangements and of auditing”.¹⁰⁹ Yet, while this understanding of neoliberalism promises to reveal more about the specific kind of un-corrupt society that IAC discourse constructs, Hindess only traces it in very rudimentary ways within TI’s publications. Primarily concerned with showing that “the proposed remedy does not address the problem it describes”¹¹⁰ his analysis neglects the dynamics that may exist between constructions of corruption and constructions of societal ‘solutions’ and go beyond simply ‘not matching’, making IAC efforts persuasive rather than simply mistaken.¹¹¹ While he argues that TI’s Source Book promotes “a programme of normalisation in which other forms of political and economic organisation are to be brought in line with neoliberal norms”¹¹² the analysis of what that entails and how that actually happens through IAC efforts remains rather underdeveloped. Hindess restricts his comments to stating that TI suggests “a Western institutional structure for the state”, insists “on the role of civil society and the private sector in the overall government of society” and places international agencies in “a tutelary role” in the implementation of this neoliberal system.¹¹³ How exactly these aspects come to make up a neoliberal system as he defines it remains unclear and the empirical evidence presented is scarce. Thus, while arguing that TI pursues a neoliberal agenda, Hindess fails to trace convincingly how what he conceives as neoliberalism is inherent to TI’s anticorruption activities. Overall, it can be concluded that the understanding of neoliberalism that underlies the interpretation of the IAC consensus as neoliberal is for the most part only vaguely defined in critical IAC studies. It seems to differ among these studies and does relatively little to explain how exactly these elements are linked to each other, how this system would function and what exactly makes it neoliberal.

Second, what contributes to the doubts about the neoliberal consensus is that an investigation of IAC documents reveals the presence of a range of concepts that have so far received little if any attention by critical anticorruption scholars. One such

¹⁰⁹ Hindess (2005: 1390)

¹¹⁰ Hindess (2005: 1392)

¹¹¹ This is also the case for Brown and Cloke’s article Brown/Cloke (2004: see e.g. 287).

¹¹² Hindess (2005: 1396)

¹¹³ Hindess (2005: 1397)

concept is the participation of civil society which, despite figuring quite prominently in the fight against corruption, has been almost completely ignored by critical IAC analysts. Hindess argues that TI advocates civil society participation as part of an agenda of neoliberal reform, yet does so without explaining what this kind of civil society participation consists of and what precisely makes it neoliberal.¹¹⁴ Brown and Cloke in turn, who criticise the neoliberal nature of the fight against corruption, laud its emphasis on civil society participation, claiming that “local journalists, civil society organisations and the judiciary have suddenly found themselves with a range of international allies in their struggle to expose deep-seated corruption in their countries”.¹¹⁵ Polzer again claims that “the Bank’s understanding of how to address corruption is logically contradictory to the new orthodoxy of maximising ownership” among which she counts efforts to enhance civil society participation.¹¹⁶ Given that these arguments remain underdeveloped they hardly explain the meaning of civil society participation in the societal ideal constructed by IAC efforts while their contradiction at the same time raises doubts about the straight-forward neoliberal nature of IAC discourse. Democracy, inclusion, equality and integrity are other concepts the meaning and function of which in the IAC campaigns remains under-researched and which may have the potential to challenge the interpretation of the IAC agenda as a coherent neoliberal enterprise. For example, Bukovansky leaves us wondering what to make of the presence of the concept of equality in neoliberal IAC efforts when she notes that “in the neo-liberal anti-corruption discourse governing institutions are evaluated primarily on their ability to deliver and sustain economic prosperity conceived of as growth in GDP, although to be fair income inequality often emerges as an important secondary concern”.¹¹⁷ Not least, the fact that TI has modified its definition of corruption several years ago and now claims to deal not only with public sector corruption but also with corruption in the private sector has received hardly any attention or is simply ignored.¹¹⁸ Murphy, who briefly acknowledges that “TI has in recent years started paying more attention to corruption in the private sector”, immediately proceeds to arguing that TI’s “anti-corruption focus remains con-

¹¹⁴ Hindess (2005: 1397)

¹¹⁵ Brown/Cloke (2004: 289)

¹¹⁶ Polzer (2001: 22)

¹¹⁷ Bukovansky (2006: 195)

¹¹⁸ Murphy (2011: 133)

strained by the organization's board level partnerships with major corporate actors" without going into any detail about the nature of TI's engagement with private sector corruption.¹¹⁹ Thus, when critical scholars claim that the IAC agenda is neoliberal because it constructs the public sector as the main source of corruption in IAC efforts, one wonders what to make of TI's advocacy of the concept of private sector corruption but also of the promotion of things like corporate governance by TI and other IAC actors as a means to fight corruption.

Doubts about the neoliberal consensus are nurtured by the fact that some critical studies seem to suggest that there are aspects which do not fit the prevailing neoliberal logic. For example, Brown and Cloke seem to regard the WB's emphasis on "strengthening public institutions, the electoral and judicial systems and nurturing a civic culture to the struggle against corruption" as running contrary to the WB's neoliberal advocacy of "the dual processes of economic liberalisation and deregulation".¹²⁰ While they state that the IAC agenda "remains fundamentally antagonistic towards the state"¹²¹ they also recognise a rediscovery of the state in contemporary IAC efforts by the WB. Given that the analysis does not explore this in greater depth we are left to wonder about the ways in which different political ideals may be playing out in IAC efforts. In sum, is the neoliberal label really able to grasp the ideal set out in IAC discourse? Is the IAC agenda perhaps not that neoliberal after all? Or perhaps are different political ideals conflicting with each other within IAC discourse?

Consensus?

Thirdly, while critical IAC studies have detected a strong neoliberal consensus, doubts can be raised not only with regards to the neoliberal nature of IAC efforts but also with regards to the consensual nature of IAC across the variety of different actors that are active in the fight against corruption.

¹¹⁹ Murphy (2011: 133)

¹²⁰ Brown/Cloke (2004: 287)

¹²¹ Brown/Cloke (2004: 287)

The very different historic trajectories and organisational structures of IAC actors could be expected to have an effect not only on those organisations' approach to the fight against corruption but also on the societal ideals inherent in their work. The WB for example receives most of its funding from Western governments which also have relatively greater power over the WB's strategic and thematic decisions than other countries – a fact which has often led critics to accuse the WB of carrying out a Western neo-imperialist project through its development activities.¹²² The international NGO Transparency International in turn was created out of criticism of what the NGO's founders saw as neglect by the WB of the problem of corruption in its development efforts especially in African countries; it calls itself a global movement and emphasises its decentralised approach. The United Nations organisation UNDP is again directed by the decisions of its member states' governments but, unlike in the WB, in UN decision-making every member state has the same weight at least officially; the UNDP is also often seen as having a less economic and more reformatory or even radical stance on development issues than the WB.¹²³

The organisational differences between IAC actors and the potential implications that those may have for their IAC approach have however not received much attention by the critical literature.

Bukovansky's study is the only broad empirical study that includes the anticorruption efforts of different IAC actors (UN, IMF, WB, OECD, TI); while she portrays TI as an exception from the neoliberal rule in IAC efforts, the number of organisations in her article is unlikely to allow for the analytical depth necessary to detect nuances between conceptions of corruption and the political ideals pursued by different organisations. Other, more detailed studies of the IAC efforts of UN organisations like the UNDP and UNODC, the IMF and the OECD do not exist. This is particularly surprising with regards to the UNDP, a major international organisation which has worked on anticorruption since the 1990s.

The accounts by Brown and Cloke as well as Krastev of the IAC agenda are based on cursory overviews of anticorruption policies mainly by the WB which are in need of more empirical detail to support their claims. Only Polzer goes into more detail

¹²² See e.g. Bracking (2009), Cammack (2004)

¹²³ See e.g. Charlesworth (2011)

with the WB, reviewing 12 documents and providing convincing evidence for her analytical insights.¹²⁴ However, given that the documents cover the period from 1989 to 1999 and do not include for example, the WB's Governance and Anticorruption Strategy from 2007¹²⁵ her findings are now rather dated.

In what concerns TI, Hindess' argument is based almost exclusively on a single document, the TI Source Book, which dates from the year 2000. While this continues to be an influential strategic document for the organisation, considering other and more recent strategic documents may be necessary in order to support the author's wide-reaching conclusions. Murphy briefly examines four TI documents to conclude that the organisation has nothing to say about private sector regulation; while in doing so he ignores the documents that are concerned with the private sector, he then explains TI's "uncritical approach to the functioning of international capitalism"¹²⁶ almost solely by tracing the NGO's links to development and business elites and abstains from any further investigation into its policy and advocacy work. De Maria concentrates his analysis on the CPI, TI's annually published country-ranking; while he provides a powerful critique of how the CPI reinforces Western conceptions of corruption as a problem mainly of developing countries, the quantitative index does not reveal much about the organisation's other anticorruption activities. Apart from this rather small empirical base there also seems to be disagreement within the critical literature with regards to TI's role. While Hindess, Murphy and De Maria conceive it as a neoliberal actor pushing the Western capitalist agenda, Brown and Cloke seem to welcome "the role of organisations such as TI in challenging apathy and complacency and raising the international profile of the issue".¹²⁷ Similarly, Bukovansky sees TI as a social movement on its way to becoming a global "moral entrepreneur" against corruption¹²⁸ and assumes that its grass-roots constitution may be in tension with the Western-centric and technical approach of anticorruption efforts of other IAC actors.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ Polzer (2001)

¹²⁵ WB (2007)

¹²⁶ Murphy (2011: 125)

¹²⁷ Brown/Cloke (2004: 278)

¹²⁸ Bukovansky (2006: 193); the concept of 'global entrepreneurs' is derived from Nadelmann (1990).

¹²⁹ See also Roden (2010)

Overall, we can conclude that the empirical basis on which the consensus argument is built is not particularly strong. There is no detailed and comprehensive study of the IAC efforts of various actors; there is only one dated study of the WB's anticorruption activities that is detailed enough to convincingly trace their economic and Western-centric nature; while there are several studies of parts of TI's anticorruption agenda, the findings are partly contradictory and open questions remain with regards to its role in the alleged neoliberal IAC enterprise. Doubts about the consensus are validated further as not every aspect of IAC activities is publicly available. In order to judge whether the neoliberal IAC agenda is as consensual as is suggested, or whether there are openings for contestation, dissenting voices and alternative viewpoints, a closer look into the respective organisations would certainly be helpful. So far, however, only very few interviews with staff from IAC organisations have found their way into critical anticorruption research.¹³⁰

May the critical literature have oversimplified the consensus due to the lack of empirical scope and detail? Might there be openings for other political ideals? Or are there even opposing political ideals struggling with each other in the IAC agenda? Do political ideals differ according to organisational differences? Perhaps, there are contestations within the IAC organisations? If there is indeed a consensus among IAC actors on the kind of societal ideals promoted, how does it come about as a way to fight corruption and what exactly does it mean in terms of societal structures? What are the roles of concepts like equality, inclusion and integrity in this consensus? What is the link between the organisations, and why are they so consensual about IAC efforts despite their different constitutions? What are the functions of the different organisations in the construction of the alleged neoliberal ideal? How do organisational differences and neoliberal consensus play out in their actual approaches to fight corruption?

Given that there are many open questions regarding the existence of an IAC consensus, and given that the neoliberal label has so far been rather unhelpful in revealing the kind of society that is being advanced, it seems that more detailed research into

¹³⁰ There are some references to interviews with senior TI officials in Polzer (2001), yet given that the paper deals with anticorruption efforts by the WB, the function of these interviews in the paper remains unclear.

the ways in which particular societal ideals come to be constructed as a solution to corruption, and how these constructions make IAC efforts convincing to many people is required. We have to look in greater depth into the complex working logics of IAC efforts to see how conceptions of corruption and concomitant societal ideals are constructed. The state of affairs is not only that we know little about how IAC programmes play out when implemented on the ground in the extremely diverse country contexts; much about how the IAC consensus works internally, its aims, basic assumptions, argumentative logics and truth claims, the ways in which they are formed and the strategies used to defend them remains to be addressed.

Construction of corruption and societal ideals – how does it happen?

Critical scholars have drawn out some of the ways in which the so-called neoliberal politico-economic ideals are constructed. In particular Polzer and Hindess have traced some of the ways in which IAC organisations construct neoliberal policy measures and Western institutional frameworks as the correct remedy against corruption. Polzer shows for example how the WB frames corruption as something which it has been long concerned with, at least indirectly, and argues that the construction of this continuity allows it to stick to its established panacea, structural adjustment, in order to fight corruption and to promote ‘good governance’ in general.¹³¹ As Polzer argues the fact that this structural adjustment is based on public/private and political/administrative distinctions (conceived as a “universally applicable image of the state and of state-society relations”) means that the WB promotes a Western ideal of society-state relations against which it evaluates and towards which it tries to push ‘dysfunctional’ African states.¹³² Similarly, Hindess argues that the National Integrity System (NIS) that TI advocates as a solution to corruption is “clearly modelled on an idealised, and distinctly neoliberal, image of a Western institutional framework”.¹³³ Overall, scholars seem to agree that “[i]nstitutional reform is simply to

¹³¹ Polzer (2001: 14)

¹³² Polzer (2001: 18)

¹³³ Hindess (2005: 1396)

create the conditions for free market reforms to succeed”,¹³⁴ thus constructing a neo-liberal system.

Yet with regards to how this focus on the free market comes about and how exactly institutional reform works towards a neoliberal society, the literature is less plentiful. Bukovansky and Polzer argue that institutional reform is linked to the conception of individuals as rational and self-interested that is inherent to the IAC agenda; while the “corrupt individual is constructed as a rational maximiser responding to incentives, rather than as a moral agent”,¹³⁵ institutional reform is conceived as a means to influence these incentives.¹³⁶ As Bukovansky argues, corruption control becomes “a technical matter of effectively manipulating incentive structures” that “self-interested actors face in order to achieve positive collective outcomes or at least minimize negative ones”.¹³⁷ Brown and Cloke also note this particular conception of human nature,¹³⁸ yet do not interpret institutional reform as logically following from it, instead they hold that the two are in a contradictory relationship, arguing that the “continuing assumption that public officials are primarily motivated by self-interest (...) does not sit well with (...) the creation of new public bodies within institutional reform programmes. In other words, why are the workers within anti-corruption offices likely to be any less corrupt than other public sector workers who are allegedly so prone to rent-seeking behaviour?”¹³⁹

While the link between conceptions of human nature, institutional reform and neo-liberal societal features is left unclear by the critical literature, so too is the relation of these elements to particular forms of knowledge used in the IAC consensus.

Some scholars link the dominance of the economic rationale in the alleged IAC consensus to economic research methods used by IAC organisations. According to Bukovansky, the use of such approaches and especially the use of rational choice approaches (which have been discussed earlier on in this chapter) in the IAC agenda brings with it the view that “corruption hurts foreign investment and economic

¹³⁴ Brown/Cloke (2004: 273)

¹³⁵ Polzer (2001: 20)

¹³⁶ Bukovansky (2006: 194)

¹³⁷ Bukovansky (2006: 183)

¹³⁸ See e.g. Brown/Cloke (2004: 285)

¹³⁹ Brown/Cloke (2004: 288)

growth”.¹⁴⁰ Thus, Murphy sees these approaches as being responsible for TI’s advocacy of liberal markets and its abstinence from advocating the “curtailment of various ‘business freedoms’”.¹⁴¹ For Polzer, who also investigates the kinds of knowledge used in IAC discourse, these approaches bring with them not so much an economy-centred ideology *per se*; rather she stresses other features. According to her, the WB controls IAC discourse by only accepting ways of acquiring knowledge about corruption that are “universalising, empirical, quantitative, institutional, and based on the assumption of the calculating and rationally maximising individual”.¹⁴² Yet how exactly these ways of acquiring knowledge or rational choice approaches more generally play out in the construction of open markets and other features of neoliberal societies through particular institutional reforms, and how exactly they help to construct those as a way to fight corruption needs to be investigated in much more detail. Overall, there is ample space for clarification regarding the links between rational choice theory (or other research approaches), particular conceptions of human nature, corruption, institutional reforms, and neoliberal policy-measures in the alleged IAC consensus.

However, most confusion seems to exist with regards to the questions of morality and technicality within the IAC consensus. Several authors have pointed to the “technical”,¹⁴³ “technocratic”,¹⁴⁴ or “technical-instrumental”¹⁴⁵ approach to fighting corruption that the IAC consensus takes (in the form of economic and institutional reforms) as opposed to a more moral one. Polzer explains that by constructing the corrupt individual as “a rational maximiser responding to incentives, rather than as a moral agent” the WB simultaneously excludes moral and legal persecution of perpetrators of corruption as a way to fight corruption. It also generally excludes “a conception of the morality of the political system or ‘polis’ as a whole”¹⁴⁶ and instead advocates capitalism and liberal democracy.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁰ Bukovansky (2006: 194); see also Brown/Cloke (2004: 285)

¹⁴¹ Murphy (2011: 135)

¹⁴² Polzer (2001: 12)

¹⁴³ Brown/Cloke (2004: 289)

¹⁴⁴ Bracking (2007: 3)

¹⁴⁵ Bukovansky (2006: 181)

¹⁴⁶ Polzer (2001: 20)

¹⁴⁷ Polzer (2001: 21)

Bukovansky agrees that the discourse is technical to the extent that the dominant rationale for the fight against corruption is economic and institutional “rather than normative”,¹⁴⁸ thus opening up a distinction between normativity on the one hand and economics and institutions on the other. She argues that the IAC consensus neglects “moral and political agency” and that the ‘public good’ as conceived in the IAC consensus “lacks the positive normative appeal that would serve as a source of motivation” for individuals not to behave corruptly.¹⁴⁹ However, Bukovansky does not regard the IAC consensus as completely amoral; rather, she also detects “moral undertones”¹⁵⁰ in it and argues that “the anti-corruption discourse diverges from existing trade and monetary regimes (...) in its relatively explicit evocation of the moral underpinnings of a successful market economy”.¹⁵¹ In her eyes, this makes IAC measures with their neoliberal focus extend “beyond the realm of institutional solutions technically conceived and into the realm of ethical mores such as public-mindedness, fairness, and equality before the law”.¹⁵² Yet, these ethical elements and the “normative character of anti-corruption discourse”, she argues, are in tension with the simultaneously deployed “language and methodologies of economics and rational choice”, the “predominantly rationalist, technical and instrumental justifications for open markets” and the “neo-liberal institutionalist focus on transparency, separation of powers, and government accountability” of the IAC consensus.¹⁵³ As a consequence, Bukovansky concludes, “today’s anti-corruption discourse rings hollow in its neglect of the moral core of the corruption concept, and this reduces its effectiveness”.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁸ Bukovansky (2006: 194)

¹⁴⁹ Bukovansky (2006: 197)

¹⁵⁰ Bukovansky (2006: 183). Even Polzer concedes at some point that the WB’s anticorruption discourse is not just “technical, but also moral” (Polzer (2001: 23).

¹⁵¹ Bukovansky (2006: 182)

¹⁵² Bukovansky (2006: 183). Other authors stress the moral element in the fight against corruption even more. Sampson for example sees IAC activities as a “moral force” and as “part of a general trend toward global ethics and moral justification in human affairs” (Sampson (2005: 2)) while Roden thinks that in the past decade corruption has “evolved from an economic issue to a moral one” (Roden (2010: 15).

¹⁵³ Bukovansky (2006: 181)

¹⁵⁴ Bukovansky (2006: 182)

Thus, the relevant literature is both thin on and divided about the relation between moral and economic arguments against corruption in IAC discourse.¹⁵⁵ While Polzer sees morality excluded from IAC consensus, Bukovansky recognises it in the discourse but seemingly considers it to be suppressed by the technicality of the discourse.¹⁵⁶ That both accounts leave unclear what they mean by morality and/or normativity makes conclusions difficult and give only limited analytical value to the morality/normativity-technicality distinction. Apart from that, the interpretations so far are also found wanting because none of the authors even mentions the concept of integrity which is very prominent in the IAC agenda and which could well be interpreted as having connotations of morality. Moreover, it is notable that while most scholars seem to find the issue of (a)morality important, hardly anything is said about its function or effects in the discourse. A reconsideration of the role of morality in IAC discourse and its relation to the ‘technical’ advocacy of economic and institutional measures will have to take this into account. Are technicality and morality in conflict with each other, cancel each other out or do they go hand in hand to support each other; what does this mean for the IAC agenda; and what is the role of the concept of integrity in this relationship?

It can thus be concluded that detailed investigations of the aims, instruments and manifold policy measures of the IAC agenda as well as their interrelations are still to be conducted in order to find out how exactly a neoliberal or any other society is constructed, or how different measures may support, contradict or contest each other in the construction of a good, un-corrupt society.

¹⁵⁵ Still another interpretation is provided by Colonomos, who investigates the ‘rise of a market of virtue’, argues that concepts like transparency which are used in such discourses operate “on two levels” and are “bound up with a vision that is at once economic and moral” (Colonomos 2005: 460).

¹⁵⁶ Given that she also sees IAC discourse as explicitly evoking the moral underpinnings of a successful market economy this does however not become entirely clear and seems partly self-contradictory.

The neglected question of persuasiveness

Open questions also remain with regards to the uncontroversial nature of IAC efforts. Most critical scholars condemn the “paternalistic slant”¹⁵⁷ of the IAC consensus, its universalisation of Western norms¹⁵⁸ and its furthering of “the cultural, economic and political domination of the North”.¹⁵⁹ Yet if the fight against corruption is principally about advancing neoliberal societal ideals in developing countries, one may wonder why to date IAC efforts seem to be completely uncontroversial even in developing countries. This raises important questions about the ways in which IAC interventions are rendered powerful enough to avoid these and other criticisms and contestations. While the critical IAC literature provides some explanations in this regard, there is again considerable space for expansion.¹⁶⁰

For example, Polzer argues that the WB, relying on a very limited conception of politics, re-articulates corruption from being a ‘political’ problem to an ‘economic’ problem in order to accommodate it under its Articles of Agreement which prohibit it from interfering in the political affairs of its member states. This depoliticising effect is bolstered by the primacy of data in the design of IAC interventions which Polzer interprets as a means through which to overcome political resistance to them. Moreover, Polzer claims that the institutionalist discourse with its “amoral, i.e. rational, secular conception of corruption” not only functions as “a strategic means of initiating change at a level which is amenable to external intervention” by the WB; it also “avoids openly challenging the power status quo in terms of the individuals in power”,¹⁶¹ thus remaining uncontroversial at least among the political leaders in place.

In a similar vein, Hindess seems to suggest that the indirect and not obviously intrusive approach via a NIS enables TI to foster an “institutional environment within de-

¹⁵⁷ Brown/Cloke (2004: 280); see also Murphy (2011: 136)

¹⁵⁸ See e.g. De Maria (2008c: 777); Hindess (2005: 1389)

¹⁵⁹ Bracking (2007: 303). Also Hindess regards the indirect ways in which IAC organisations aim to make target states conform to neoliberal structures as “an updated version of the older system of capitulations, which required independent states to acknowledge the extraterritorial jurisdiction of Western states” Hindess (2005: 1397).

¹⁶⁰ This question is of course closely related to and hardly separable from the question of how IAC interventions are socially constructed. Some literature can however be sorted into this analytical field because the authors have framed their insights more or less explicitly as explanations of the power of IAC discourse.

¹⁶¹ Polzer (2001: 21)

veloping and ex-socialist countries in which international investors feel able to do business”¹⁶² without confronting major opposition. With regards to this indirect approach Hindess explains that international neoliberalism places “international agencies in a tutelary position, as there to advise and assist, while the promotion of good governance and NIS suggests that states should undertake for themselves the reforms required to satisfy international investors”.¹⁶³ According to Hindess, neoliberalism in the form of the NIS “prefers to work through the freely chosen actions of states and other agents, and it is promoted by a variety of state and non-state actors”;¹⁶⁴ this includes NGOs like TI “which operate (...) through persuasion and example, suggesting to activists, states and other agencies ways in which they might address their concerns and insisting, most particularly, on the role of civil society, the private sector, NGOs and international agencies”.¹⁶⁵

While these accounts are quite enlightening regarding the depoliticised and indirect ways in which the two IAC organisations insert IAC measures into target states, they are rather cursory, scarcely evidenced and hardly are sufficient to show how the great persuasiveness and support of the discourse comes about. Hindess does not go into any more detail about how this indirect strategy works in the concrete case of IAC activities; also, none of the critical scholars actually deals in any detail with any other linguistic or non-linguistic strategies that may contribute to render the IAC consensus powerful, or with the organisational network that backs up the IAC consensus; how do different organisations with their specific approach and structures contribute to advance a particular vision of a good, un-corrupt society?

Thus, we can conclude that while the critical accounts of the IAC agenda provided so far have yielded interesting insights into the ways in which IAC efforts ‘work’, and while an overall picture of the IAC agenda as a neoliberal project seems to arise, there are plenty of blind spots in the literature. Gaps have been identified not only with regards to the nature of the political ideals in the IAC agenda, the extent of consensus on those ideals among IAC actors, but also concerning the ways in which

¹⁶² Hindess (2005: 1397, see also 1391)

¹⁶³ Hindess (2005: 1397)

¹⁶⁴ Hindess (2005: 1397)

¹⁶⁵ Hindess (2005: 1397)

IAC efforts are constructed and rendered powerful as the neoliberal enterprise that they are alleged to be.

This thesis aims to address these shortcomings within the critical literature and to provide a more comprehensive interpretation of the alleged IAC consensus by asking

What are the societal ideals inherent in the international fight against corruption, how are they constructed and advanced, and to what extent is there a consensus on them?

In order to answer these questions, it chooses a theoretical approach which allows it to fully concentrate on drawing out the manifold and complex workings of the IAC agenda and to contribute to the four analytical areas identified in previous sections. Poststructuralist discourse and hegemony as outlined by Laclau and Mouffe has not been applied to study IAC efforts so far; yet it provides a theoretical framework that is highly suitable for tracing the ways in which IAC interventions are constructed and rendered powerful while simultaneously drawing out the political ideals that arise from them in addition to investigating the extent of coherence or consensus about those ideals. The next chapter outlines this theoretical approach, explains its implications for an analysis of IAC discourse and details the methodological decisions taken for the empirical analysis that follows.

2 A post-Marxist discourse and hegemony theoretical approach to the analysis of international anticorruption discourse

At the end of the previous chapter I highlighted the importance of more thorough research into the logics and structures of IAC efforts in order to better understand its political but at the same time uncontroversial nature and to address the question of consensus within the IAC agenda. The present chapter will outline how I aim to contribute to this kind of research. It argues for a post-Marxist discourse and hegemony theoretical (PDHT) approach for the analysis of the IAC agenda by explaining how it enables me to make such a contribution. The main part of the chapter is dedicated to introducing the reader to the theoretical premise and perspectives of this approach and illustrates what such a perspective means for the study of discourses more generally. It goes on to present the concepts of the hegemonic project and hegemonic stratagems which, together with a focus on more specific discursive logics, are used as main theoretical devices for the empirical analysis of IAC discourse. Lastly, it explains how the IAC agenda can be conceived from a PDHT perspective. The final part of the chapter delves into the practical details about the ‘how’ of my study. It outlines the concrete ‘operationalisation’ of IAC discourse in my thesis, presents the methodological implications arising from my theoretical choices and explains how exactly I have put them into practice during my empirical research.

I will seek to demonstrate here that PDHT, as conceived by Laclau and Mouffe, is particularly suited for fulfilling the aims of my thesis. A symbiosis of Marxism and post-structuralism, it theorises reality and society in a way that conceives both concepts (such as corruption) and social identities as socially constructed, historically contingent and as the product of hegemonic formations in the social space. The main advantages of PDHT for addressing the gaps identified in the literature consist of its particular conception of discourse, its focus on the logics of discursive construction within discourse, and its conception of society as an outcome of hegemonic articulation.

The concept of discourse in PDHT successfully integrates both linguistic and non-linguistic (sometimes referred to as ‘material’) practices, thus acknowledging their close interrelatedness in the social construction of reality. This allows me to investigate how corruption and potential societal ideals are constructed in the IAC agenda

(conceived as IAC discourse) in the interplay between linguistic and non-linguistic practices and to incorporate in the analysis texts and speech produced by IAC actors as well as activities carried out by them.

The theoretical devices offered by PDHT entail a specific focus on discursive logics, which allows the joint addressing of the research questions posed in this thesis. PDHT shifts the focus away from trying to grasp any ‘essence’ of corruption or drawing out any presumed intentionality of social actors.¹ Instead, it allows concentrating the analysis on the particular logics through which different discursive elements are linked up within IAC discourse and thus acquire their meaning. In so doing it enables me to trace not only the ways in which corruption and its countermeasures are socially constructed but also to explore whether in this process particular ideals of societal organisation are constructed in IAC discourse; what kinds of ideals these are; whether and how much of a consensus there is on them; and how IAC discourse eventually attempts to advance these ideals through both linguistic and non-linguistic means. This chapter will detail how the concept of hegemonic stratagems in the sense of general discursive logics of hegemonic projects combined with a focus on more specific discursive logics are used as theoretical devices to this end.

Not least, the conception of society in PDHT as an outcome of hegemonic articulation involving the construction of antagonisms seems particularly conducive to an analysis of IAC discourse. Given that the discourse is built around the aim of fighting corruption, it seems to reflect at least *prima facie* some kind of an antagonism that PDHT views as the basis of hegemonic articulation. While the existence or not of such an antagonism in IAC discourse remains to be proven in the empirical analysis, a conception of society as the outcome of antagonistic struggles entails the recognition that the advancement of a particular societal ideal necessarily results in the marginalisation of a multitude of alternative societal ideals – something which will

¹ This does not mean that intentionality does not exist; however it does not assume a privileged function in shaping or explaining the interrelations of discursive moves within a discourse. In this regard the chapter should also be prefaced by the explanation that any verb used here with regard to discursive articulations that appears to imply some kind of intentionality (such as ‘aim to’, ‘attempt to’ etc) or agency (such as ‘do’, ‘work’ etc) of social actors does not actually imply such but is rather to be understood with regard to the effects that these articulations may have, regardless of whether they are intended or not.

be particularly important to consider if IAC discourse was found to be advancing a particular societal ideal.

The suitability of PDHT for the analysis of the IAC discourse will become even clearer during the following sections which detail its main theoretical and epistemological features and explain its implications for the study of the IAC discourse. For the sake of concision and clarity of this chapter, this necessarily implies certain eclecticism and some simplifications regarding theoretical concepts which are justified by the empirical focus of this thesis. Indeed, necessarily, this chapter offers a specific interpretation of the Laclau and Mouffian theoretical lenses. It is this interpretation which will be utilised as the basis for the empirical study.

I start by explaining how we arrive at the concept of discourse in the first place, what precisely is meant by it and how the alleged IAC ‘consensus’ qualifies as a (potentially hegemonic) discourse. The concepts of hegemony and antagonism will then be introduced in the subsequent section which elaborates on the implications of PDHT for a conception of society.

A theory of discourse – a theory of society

The theory employed here is a discourse theory. While so far I have tried to avoid using the term discourse it is now time to elaborate on the meaning of this central concept of PDHT and on its implications for theorising society. In chapter 1 I demonstrated that corruption is a socially constructed concept, which is also historically contingent, normative and politically contested. In the course of this discussion, it should have become clear that according to advocates of broadly ‘social constructivist’ perspectives all social concepts used, interests pursued and views held by actors, as well as their social and political identities in general are shaped by social processes and structures. As social actors we cannot but understand our reality through social constructs. At the same time we are constitutive of these structures. According to PDHT this constant mutual constitution and shaping occurs through discursive practices.

PDHT is not the only perspective which considers discourse important. For many social analysts discourse is conceived as both produced and productive,² and discourse theoretical approaches focus on the ways in which this production happens. As soon as we recognise that reality is a social construction, “the focus shifts necessarily to the nature of situational context and to the discursive processes that shape the construction”.³ However, this does not mean that discourse-theoretical accounts simply describe reality; understanding how our reality is constructed does essential work in explaining how the world we live in operates.⁴ It explains how some and not other actors are embodied with “narrative authority”, how certain ways of living one’s life are rendered right and legitimate while others are not, how particular ways of explaining the world come to be seen as true, how certain policies by certain authorities are rendered logical and adequate and how they shape and change people’s ways of living, and how all these processes hang together.⁵ Discourse analyses can also be understood as interventions in fields of existing knowledge in the sense that they draw out and demonstrate the constructedness and specificity of ‘commonsense’ knowledge and routinised practice and thus its non-necessity and contingency.⁶ Not least discourse approaches aim to draw out the links between power and knowledge that hold existing social structures together.⁷

How then, is discourse conceived in PDHT specifically?⁸ As we have seen, post-positivism in general and Laclau-Mouffian discourse theory more specifically, “abandons the notion of a true or perfect definition together with a conception of social identities as rooted in pre-given essences”.⁹ Definitions can never be universal because meanings are permanently constructed and reconstructed in social processes. Instead of discovering the essences of things, the only way in which people can perceive reality is through interpretation. Similarly, social identities are not rooted in pre-given essences but they are constantly shaped by the same discursive processes as

² Milliken (1999: 236)

³ Fischer (1998: 135)

⁴ Cf. Barnett/Finnemore (1999: 701)

⁵ Milliken (1999: 236)

⁶ Nonhoff (2011: 104)

⁷ Nonhoff (2011: 104)

⁸ For the Laclau-Mouffian conception of discourse but also of most other theoretical concepts presented in this chapter I draw mainly on their 1985 book ‘Hegemony and Socialist Strategy’. In this book the two scholars elaborated their social theory for the first time and in the most comprehensive and consistent way.

⁹ Torfing (1999: 3)

meanings and knowledge. This renders it impossible to understand the social world through the same tools as the natural world, as is attempted by positivist research.

From the need for interpretation of reality it follows that language is not simply a tool through which we can express reality, or a reflection of reality; instead, it shapes, structures, creates, produces and transforms reality.¹⁰ Yet, and very importantly, discourse in PDHT does not consist of language alone, but it is more generally conceived as “a decentred structure in which meaning is constantly negotiated and constructed”.¹¹ This broad definition of discourse “allows for the inclusion of both physical objects and social practices as meaningful parts of discourse”;¹² language-based communication and any other social interaction beyond language are understood as forms of discourse.¹³ Spoken and written words, rules and norms, gestures, actions, institutions and procedures are all part and result of discursive processes. There is nothing outside discourse to be grasped, nothing is non-discursive, “every object is constituted as an object of discourse, insofar as no object is given outside every discursive condition of emergence”.¹⁴ In fact, the very possibility for us to perceive, think and act “depends on the structuration of a certain meaningful field which pre-exists any factual immediacy”.¹⁵ We interpret the world using our knowledge, but this knowledge and our identities are part of the meaningful or discursive field (or generally ‘discourse’) that consists of different discourses and is structured in particular ways. Thus, our perceptions of reality are always and necessarily discursively mediated; they “only become meaningful within certain pre-established discourses, which have different structurations that change over time”.¹⁶ The discursive field and the particular discourses embedded in it are not ahistorical, static, or invariable, but dynamic.¹⁷ This is why, as we saw in chapter 1, social constructions like corruption vary over time, and according to different social contexts. Some meanings and social relations may remain rather uncontested for a consider-

¹⁰ Cf. Fischer (2003: 41)

¹¹ Torfing (1999: 40)

¹² Torfing (1999: 40)

¹³ Torfing (1999: 81)

¹⁴ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 107)

¹⁵ Laclau (1993: 431), cited in Torfing (1999: 84)

¹⁶ Torfing (1999: 84)

¹⁷ Torfing (1999: 84)

able time, while others are constantly being re-negotiated. However, “as interpretation rather than hard evidence”, they always remain “open to reconsideration”.¹⁸

Metaphysical assumptions

If we believe that our perceptions will always and necessarily be mediated by a discursive field which is dynamic, the logical consequence is that there can be no objective knowledge. Fischer remarks that “[w]hat we take to be ‘fixed truths’ are only the stories that have over time come to be consensually accepted as plausible by a significant number of people”.¹⁹ Based on this assumption about the impossibility of objectivity in the perception of reality, PDHT is post-positivist, realist, anti-essentialist, non-foundationalist and materialist²⁰, while blurring traditional distinctions between ontology²¹ and epistemology^{22, 23}.

It is important to stress here that the assumption that everything is discourse or that there is nothing outside discourse does not mean that reality doesn’t exist.²⁴ PDHT is ontologically realist in that it asserts the “existence of a world external to thought”.²⁵ This world *exists* independently of thought, but it *is* to us through discourse. At the same time, whatever form of essentialism, be it regarding objects or subjects, is not compatible with Laclau and Mouffe’s post-structuralist ontology which is anti-essentialist. In terms of epistemology, their concept of discourse as mediating between object and subject is in tune with the materialist affirmation of an “irreducible distance between thought and reality”²⁶ and therefore contradicts idealist assumptions. According to hegemony theory, the meanings of objects are “not given to us in a direct and automatic fashion”, and we also “cannot produce the ‘object’ out of ourselves as an expression of our omnipotence”.²⁷ PDHT is also epistemologically non-foundationalist in that it assumes that there is no fixed foundation on which we can

¹⁸ Fischer (2003: 43)

¹⁹ Fischer (2003: 43)

²⁰ Torfing (1999: 45-48)

²¹ Ontology is the logic of what *is there* outside in the world.

²² Epistemology is the logic of how we can *get to know* what there is outside in the world.

²³ Wullweber (2010: 46)

²⁴ Laclau/Mouffe (1987: 82), cited in Torfing (1999: 94)

²⁵ Torfing (1999: 45, see also 94)

²⁶ Torfing (1999: 45)

²⁷ Torfing (1999: 47)

ground ourselves in order to judge objectively what is right or wrong, good or bad, true or false. Every notion of such a foundation should be questioned and can be deconstructed. Similarly, also ontologically there is no fundament which would provide “an ultimate ground for social life”.²⁸ Torfing explains that...

...[t]his does not mean that social meaning and action have no ground, but rather that the ground is destabilized, divided and disorganized to such an extent that it ultimately takes the form of an abyss of infinite play, which turns all attempts to ground social identity into provisional and precarious ways of trying to ‘naturalize’ or ‘objectivize’ politically constructed identities. It is this abyss of infinite play, which all signification must necessarily presuppose, that Laclau and Mouffe in a deconstructive style refer to as the structural undecidability of the social.²⁹

Since the structure does not provide for any decisions, there are neither essences to be discovered, nor an overarching principle whatsoever (like God or Reason) that would tell us what is good or bad, how to live our lives and how to organise society, or which decision to make when confronted with different options. Every decision we take, every judgment we make, and every social construct is contingent in the sense that it could also be otherwise.³⁰

In sum, PDHT “presupposes the original incompleteness of both the given world and the subject that undertakes the construction of the ‘object’”.³¹ This is reflected in the concept of discourse as “the articulated meaning-formation resulting from a construction that starts from a situation of radical incompleteness”, from an experience of something which “escapes the possibility of symbolization”.³²

²⁸ Torfing (1999: 62)

²⁹ Torfing (1999: 62)

³⁰ Contingency as a theoretical concept in hegemony theory is situated in the middle between ‘accident’ and ‘necessity’. Contingency means the always real possibility that things could be/ could have been otherwise.

³¹ Torfing (1999: 48)

³² Torfing (1999: 48). This situation is what Derrida calls the ‘structural undecidability of the social’ (Torfing 1999: 62).

Discourse

Having set out the ontological and epistemological foundations of PDHT, we can go more into detail about how discourse is theorised in PDHT. I will explain how Laclau and Mouffe understand the discursive construction of meaning and clarify different important theoretical concepts which are essential to the empirical part of this thesis.

Laclau and Mouffe give many different definitions of discourse and each highlights different aspects of the complex concept; yet, to start with, discourse can be defined as a “differential ensemble of signifying sequences in which meaning is constantly renegotiated”.³³ This differential ensemble is further described as an uncentred structure in which the process of signification extends infinitely.³⁴ This definition, which is strongly influenced by Derrida’s concept of text,³⁵ needs to be further unpacked to become intelligible.

All identities within the linguistic system of signs are, within this approach, conceived in terms of “relational and differential values”.³⁶ Relational means that the meaning of the term corruption can only be understood in relation to the concepts it is usually/currently linked to, like integrity, justice, public office, development and so on. What is referred to by differentiability is derived from one of the basic principles of linguistic analysis – the principle that “*in language there are only differences, with no positive terms* ([Saussure] 1981: 120). Language is a system of differences in which all meanings are given as purely negative relations – they are defined by what the other meanings are *not*.”³⁷ Yet, to avoid confusion by the linguistic origin of the terminology, it bears repeating here that Laclau and Mouffe apply the concept of discourse as a relational and differential “ensemble of signifying sequences”³⁸ not only to verbal but to all social practices and identities as well as physical objects.³⁹ They all function as signifiers carrying particular and often multiple meanings.

³³ Torfing (1999: 85)

³⁴ Torfing (1999: 85)

³⁵ Derrida (1976)

³⁶ Torfing (1999: 87, e.i.o.)

³⁷ Torfing (1999: 87, e.i.o.)

³⁸ Torfing (1999: 40)

³⁹ Torfing (1999: 40)

The notion of the lack of a centre of the discursive structure reflects the view that we have no reason to claim anything as the centre of the discourse by essence or definition (e.g. the economy, as in Marxism).⁴⁰ Furthermore, there can never be an organising centre that ultimately arrests and grounds the play of meaning;⁴¹ the structural context of social interaction always remains unstable and contingent.⁴²

The notion of the infinite process of signification or the infinite play of meaning arises again from the relational and differential character of all discourse, or, put differently, from the insight that the understanding or explanation of any concept will necessarily involve the understanding or explanation of another, to which it is related, and so *ad infinitum* (e.g. capitalism, liberalism, freedom, constraints, and so on). This, together with the infinite richness of reality, is the very reason why the play of meaning in the discursive field can never end, why the process of signification extends infinitely, and why this uncentred structure that is discourse cannot be closed and has no edges or ends. This also means that reality can never be exhausted or totalised by discourse,⁴³ but only ever partly fixed. The possibility of partial fixation is nevertheless very important. When Laclau states that “the very possibility of the system is the possibility of its limits”⁴⁴ he means that a fundamental condition for the stabilisation of a discourse, and as a consequence the establishment of any social relation, is the possibility of at least partial closure of the discourse. At the same time, however, a full closure can never be achieved because the field of meaning extends itself infinitely.⁴⁵

Another consequence of the infinite extension of the field of discourse and its lack of centre is the impossibility to objectively and clearly distinguish one discourse from another. Speaking of or analysing ‘one particular discourse’, in this case the international anticorruption discourse, will therefore always be a pragmatic decision; it involves picking one part of the field of discourse in an eclectic manner, under the justification that this particular part connects particular elements in a particular way

⁴⁰ See also the paragraph on nodal points which form a discourse’s temporary centres.

⁴¹ Torfing (1999: 81)

⁴² Torfing (1999: 54)

⁴³ Torfing (1999: 86)

⁴⁴ Laclau (1996b: 37), cited in Wullweber (2010: 72)

⁴⁵ According to Derrida (1978: 280), it is actually the always unfulfilled desire for a stable centre itself which leads to endless displacements and substitutions of the only temporarily fixed centre – be it the economy or God (see Torfing 1999: 40).

(e.g. with relation to corruption) which clearly differs from other discourses. As we will see later in this chapter the concept of ‘nodal points’ within discourses facilitates their recognition and distinction as one particular discourse.

Before we move on to discuss this, let us, however, first clarify the relation between discourse and society. Despite its linguistic vocabulary, PDHT is a social theory in which the field of discourse and the field of the social intersect. Social relations are established, identities are constituted and political decisions are taken through discursive articulations. Truth is negotiated and produced through discursive practices. Every social practice, be it constituted of language or acts, can be conceived as an articulatory practice; every social/material structure is a discursive structure.

PDHT thus collapses the frequently made distinction between the Discursive and the Non-Discursive; the often so-called non-discursive complexes, such as political intervention, technologies, or productive organisation, can equally be conceived as “relational systems of differential identities which are not shaped by some objective necessity (God, Nature or Reason)” and therefore are to be regarded as discursive articulations.⁴⁶ Thus, there is nothing non-discursive; everything is part of the discursive field. Nonetheless, the anchoring of discourse as a meaning-giving field in people’s minds and social relations means that “the meaning-giving relations of discourse are social as opposed to logical or natural”.⁴⁷ The following sections will explain how social relations are constituted according to PDHT.

Articulation

Given its decentred and dynamic nature, discourse can also be defined as “a decentred structure in which meaning is constantly negotiated and constructed”.⁴⁸ The way in which this constant negotiation takes place is through *articulations*. Laclau and Mouffe define articulation as “any practice establishing a relation among elements

⁴⁶ Torfing (1999: 90)

⁴⁷ Torfing (1999: 41)

⁴⁸ Laclau (1988: 254), cited in Torfing (1999: 90)

such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice”. Thus, discourse is the “structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice”.⁴⁹

In order to understand the concept of articulation, we need several other concepts for its specification that will be outlined in the following sections: signifier-signified (sign), elements, moments, nodal points, over-determination (or over-flow, or surplus of meaning) and dislocation.

Signifier-signified

The concept of the *signifier* is very important for PDHT, since signifiers are conceived as the basic units for the creation of meaning. Together with the concept of the signified, it derives from Saussurean linguistics in which both were conceived as the two constitutive parts of the sign – the sound-image or the form (signifier) and the pertaining content or the substance (signified). In PDHT, however, the notion of a closed sign is impossible; instead there is “a split, [...] an impossible suture between signified and signifier”.⁵⁰ Saussure’s assumption that each signifier corresponds to only one signified (isomorphism) overlooks the separability and asymmetrical relation between phonic substances (the actual sound-expressions) and semantic substances (the meaning-objects) which lack any objective laws for their combination. One particular signifier can have different signifieds (meanings) that depend on the discourse in which it is being articulated.⁵¹ Furthermore, the concepts of the signifier and the signified and the general principles of their analysis are applicable not only to language but to all forms of discursive articulation, since the signifying system encompasses all social relations.⁵² So the concept of the signifier extends to include any expression (oral, textual and material), while the signified remains the content which is expressed by the signifier. Articulation establishes a relationship between signifiers, generating a chain of meaning which has some but never complete stability.

⁴⁹ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 105)

⁵⁰ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 113)

⁵¹ For a much more detailed critique of Saussurean linguistics and a more precise theoretical explanation see Laclau (1993: 432), cited in Torfing (1999: 87)

⁵² Torfing (1999: 89)

Elements and moments

For analytical purposes, signifiers can be distinguished according to different levels of stability or fixation; *moments* are the “differential positions” that are articulated within a discourse, while an *element* is “any difference that is not discursively articulated”.⁵³ Thus, elements are floating signifiers, while moments are fixed signifiers. Nevertheless, it must be made clear that these are theoretical stages which can in practice exist only as a tendency.⁵⁴ A ‘floating’⁵⁵ signifier is one that is articulated differently in different discourses, and one that according to different discourses has different signifieds attached to it. However, a signifier can never be totally ‘floating’; this would imply that it is totally meaningless. A similar logic applies to moments. While a moment implies the state of being fixed in a discourse or, put differently, being attached to the same particular signified in many different discourses, this fixing can only ever be partial and temporary. Total fixing would mean total truth with no possibility of negotiation or political debate – which is not possible. As Laclau and Mouffe emphasise, “neither absolute fixity nor absolute non-fixity is possible”,⁵⁶ and “the transition from ‘elements’ to ‘moments’ can never be complete”.⁵⁷ Yet every discourse can be conceived as an attempt to fix meaning, to transform an element into a moment – an attempt which can only ever be partially but never fully successful.

⁵³ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 105)

⁵⁴ Wullweber (2010: 68)

⁵⁵ The term ‘floating’ is problematic in my mind because it suggests that there could be such a thing as a free-floating signifier. This, however, is misleading since signifiers cannot exist outside discourse, and in discourse they will always be part of a chain of meaning which attaches them to a signified. What generates even more confusion is the co-existence of the concept of the ‘floating signifier’ with another concept of hegemony theory, the ‘empty signifier’. What leads to the emptiness of the ‘empty signifier’ (see also the section on hegemony) is the ‘constant sliding of signifieds under it’ which results in it meaning ‘everything and nothing’. This apparent, but of course never complete, ‘emptiness’ seems to be nothing other than a very strong ‘floating’ – however, confusion is created because of the adjectives ‘floating’ and ‘empty’ which suggest that the two signifiers are fundamentally different in nature, while they actually denominate something very similar; however, no link is drawn in the writings of Laclau and Mouffe to explain the very similar and only partially different nature of these two stages of signifiers. I will therefore abstain from using the terms ‘floating signifier’ and ‘empty signifier’ (as well as from any images of floating and sliding) in my empirical analysis and substitute them by saying that a particular signifier is being articulated differently in different discourses. When talking about the symbolic representative of the ‘Universal’ which is the empty signifier par excellence in Laclau and Mouffe’s writings, I will stick to this term rather than using the term ‘empty signifier’.

⁵⁶ Wullweber (2010: 111)

⁵⁷ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 113)

Modification of identity through articulation

According to the aforementioned definition, articulation establishes a relation among elements such that their identity is modified. Although identity modification is crucial to discourse theory and its conception of politics, Laclau and Mouffe do not explain this mechanism very thoroughly.⁵⁸ Thus, I attempt to clarify this by, first, specifying that it is the identity of the sign, or indeed the combination between signifier and signified, which is modified rather than the identity of the signifier or element. In fact, ‘identity’ in PDHT seems to assume a role parallel to that which the ‘sign’ plays in linguistics, with the difference that identity is modifiable. The modification of identity occurs because the practice of articulation attaches a particular signified to a particular signifier, or, put differently, fills the signifier (which is pure form) with a particular content. This content depends on the other elements or moments in the discursive chain that links the signifiers together. As mentioned above, the discursive chain is a purely relational structure. The relation which becomes established between the signifiers can be seen as generating the signifieds or the content with which the signifiers are being filled, or, put differently, as producing meaning. This process becomes more intelligible when one imagines the whole of the discursive structure where, due to the relational character of all its values, “modifications of the whole and of the details reciprocally condition one another”.⁵⁹

When trying to establish the meaning (i.e. the signified) of a particular act, for example the exchange of money between two individuals, looking at the act *per se* (i.e. the signifier) is not enough, as it will tell us nothing. We have to look at the social context (i.e. the other signifiers in the chain of meaning) which will tell us whether the act is condemned by most individuals, punished and combated by particular institutions, if it is called corruption and unjust, and if it is said to damage the economy. It is only from this that can we infer the meaning (i.e. establish the signified) of the particular act. Acts, words and material structures are part of discursive chains, and they all only obtain their meaning through the relations which are being established between them and other elements through articulation.

⁵⁸ See Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 105)

⁵⁹ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 106)

This notion of discourse and identity modification also has important implications for a theory of the subject. First, it means that PDHT rejects any essentialist conceptions of social agency, such as the ones underpinning rationalist approaches, and instead regards agents, much like social systems, as “constructs that undergo constant historical and social change as a result of political practices”.⁶⁰ Second, it means that if “all identities are to be conceived in terms of formal differences, there is no scope for presupposing the existence of a substantial subject outside the discursive system”. Instead, all subjects have their “particular discursive positionality (what Althusser termed a subject position)”.⁶¹ Nevertheless, especially in the writings of Laclau, something like a “notion of a creative subjectivity” can be found.⁶² The concept of subject positions will be taken up again later in this chapter when hegemonic strategies are discussed. Given that the focus of this thesis is an analysis of constructions of corruption and societal ideals in IAC discourse, I will however abstain from going into any greater detail regarding the question of a theory of the subject in PDHT.

Nodal Points

What remains to be introduced in order to fully elaborate the concept of articulation is the concept of nodal points. Laclau and Mouffe explain that discursive articulation “consists in the construction of nodal points which partially fix meaning”.⁶³ The construction of such “privileged discursive points of this partial fixation” is an “attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a centre”;⁶⁴ but the fixation can only ever be partial.

There seems to be considerable confusion in the literature regarding the concept of nodal points and its relation to other concepts. While the Laclau-Mouffian notion of “privileged discursive points” is not quite self-explanatory, Habermann suggests that articulatory practice establishes nodal points *between* elements.⁶⁵ Wullweber comes

⁶⁰ Howarth/Stavrakakis (2000: 9)

⁶¹ Torfing (1999: 89), drawing on Laclau (1993: 433)

⁶² Torfing (1999: 89), drawing on Laclau (1993: 433)

⁶³ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 113), e.i.o.

⁶⁴ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 112)

⁶⁵ Habermann (2008: 86)

up with the image of strategically condensed and fixed chains of meaning as an approximation,⁶⁶ and Howarth and Stavrakakis call a nodal point a ‘structural position’ in/of a discourse.⁶⁷ Torfing, in turn, defines a nodal point as an “empty signifier that is capable of fixing the content of a range of floating signifiers by articulating them within a chain of equivalence”.⁶⁸ Although I do not approve of the images of floating and empty signifiers (see footnote 55), it seems to me that the concept of a nodal point makes most sense if conceived as a signifier that is privileged in the sense that a particular high amount of other signifiers are linked to it. Put differently, the meanings or contents (i.e. signifieds) of many other signifiers (including sound-images, acts or social relations) are being generated or fixed through the articulation of these signifiers as related to the nodal point. Again, this privileged position can only be partial and temporal – there can never be a signifier capable of tying all discourses together, thereby becoming the centre of the structure. Nodal points nevertheless function as an (always provisional) substitute for the absent centre of the discursive structure.

The signifier ‘corruption’ provides a good example of a nodal point in IAC discourse and in all likelihood constitutes the most privileged one. Signifiers like ‘development’ (another nodal point?) and ‘economic growth’, but also ‘poverty’ and ‘developing countries’ are articulated in relation to ‘corruption’, since corruption is alleged to have a crucial impact on each.

The field of discursivity

Several times it has now been emphasised that the fixation of discourse in moments and nodal points can only be partial, and that a discursive system will always remain unstable and change over time. The reason Laclau and Mouffe give for this is that “all discourse is subverted by a field of discursivity which overflows it”.⁶⁹ The “field

⁶⁶ Wullweber (2010: 81)

⁶⁷ Howarth et al (2000: 11)

⁶⁸ Torfing (1999: 303)

⁶⁹ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 113)

of discursivity” is also sometimes termed the “field of irreducible surplus” or “the field of overdetermination” in PDHT.⁷⁰

When Laclau states that discourse is the “structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice”,⁷¹ put very simply, he means that discourse is what is already at least partially fixed. The field of discourse can be conceived as constituting one enormous discourse; yet when parts of it are distinguished for analytical or denominative purposes, they are usually called after nodal points, like ‘the international anticorruption discourse’. The field of discursivity however, which comprises all possible signifieds, is bigger than that of discourse and constantly subverts all attempts to fix its elements in discourses.⁷² It is due to the “proliferation of signifieds” (arising from the infinite richness of reality) and the resulting polysemy that any articulated/discursive structure is constantly being disarticulated.⁷³ Not every signified can be attached to a signifier, and the differential structure of discourse (i.e. articulated elements/moments) will never be able to accommodate all the possible signifieds from the infinite field of meaning, or the field of discursivity.

In sum, the field of discursivity provides for both “the condition of possibility and impossibility of a partial fixation of meaning”,⁷⁴ thus of society.⁷⁵ As it provides “the differential trace structure that every fixation of meaning must necessarily presuppose”,⁷⁶ it functions as “a theoretical horizon for the constitution of the being of every object”.⁷⁷ Yet, at the same time it also “constantly overflows and subverts the attempt to fix a stable set of differential positions within a particular discourse”,⁷⁸ thus establishing the “overdetermined, symbolic dimension of every social identity”.⁷⁹ The transition from ‘elements’ to ‘moments’ which discourses attempt

⁷⁰ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 111)

⁷¹ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 105)

⁷² According to Torfing (1999: 300) the “partial fixing of meaning within discourse” even *produces* this “irreducible surplus of meaning”.

⁷³ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 113)

⁷⁴ Laclau/Mouffe (1987: 86), cited in Torfing (1999: 92)

⁷⁵ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 113)

⁷⁶ Torfing (1999: 92)

⁷⁷ Laclau/Mouffe (1987: 86), cited in Torfing (1999: 92)

⁷⁸ Torfing (1999: 92)

⁷⁹ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 113)

through articulation is thus to be conceived as a transition from the field of discursivity into discourse which can never be entirely completed.⁸⁰

Dislocation

Nonetheless, we must consider that despite the infiniteness of discursive structures some kind of structural determinism would still be possible – the structure could still provide the subject with some “complete and unquestionable” logic thus determining its identity,⁸¹ and eventually permanently excluding other possible signifieds. However, this is prevented by *dislocations* arising from the field of discursivity.

While the concept of the field of discursivity denominates the surplus of signifieds, the concept of dislocation refers to the sudden emergence of such a ‘surplus’ signified (which can be an act or an event) for which there is no signifier yet to accommodate it in the discourse affected by it. Dislocation is how the excess of meaning breaks into already formed discursive structures and makes their stabilisation impossible. Conceived as a permanent phenomenon, there is “always something that resists symbolization and domestication”, a “traumatic event of ‘chaos’ and ‘crisis’ that ensures the incompleteness of the structure”.⁸² While dislocation is what makes structural determination impossible, it is also “the very form of *temporality, possibility and freedom*”.⁸³ To an established discourse, dislocation is a threatening outsider since it reveals its “limit, incapacity and contingency”.⁸⁴

If discourse and the social correspond, and if the infinite play of meaning in the field of the discursive cannot be ultimately arrested due to the absence of centre and permanent dislocations, this means that the social structure can never be fully closed or sutured, thus can never form a fully stable and coherent society. However, in a fully decentred and never closed system of differences everything would be uniform and shapeless, and no orientation would be possible. Although everything would have

⁸⁰ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 110, 113)

⁸¹ Torfing (1999: 148)

⁸² Torfing (1999: 149, e.i.o.), drawing on Laclau (1990: 41-3)

⁸³ Torfing (1999: 149, e.i.o.), drawing on Laclau (1990: 41-3)

⁸⁴ Torfing (1999: 149, e.i.o.), drawing on Laclau (1990: 41-3)

meaning, nothing would be more ‘meaningful’, more important or more ‘powerful’ than anything else.⁸⁵

A fundamental condition for the possibility of a coherent differential and relational system (discourse/social structure) is the closure of the boundaries of that system. According to Laclau and Mouffe, such a closure is at least partially and temporarily possible. In order to constitute something *towards* a society, there must be something approaching a limit to the social, even if it never reaches a full suture: if not in the form of a completely coherent society, the social “exists, however, as an effort to construct that impossible object”.⁸⁶

So while there is a way to limit the social at least partly, however, this limit cannot be conceived as a frontier between two territories – “for the perception of a frontier supposes the perception of something beyond it that would have to be objective and positive – that is, a new difference”. Since a new difference would not be able to stop the play of meaning, the limit of the social must instead be “something subverting it, destroying its ambition to constitute a full presence”.⁸⁷ This something subverting the social is antagonism, and the way in which it is present in the social is between chains of equivalences.

Thus, the two logics that enable a partial closure of social structures are antagonism and equivalence, and the result of the closure is a hegemonic formation. These concepts will be explained in the following sections.

Antagonism, equivalence, hegemony

The concept of hegemony was originally advanced by Gramsci⁸⁸ and was only much later developed into its post-structuralist version by Laclau and Mouffe. By fusing Gramscian concepts like hegemony (in turn strongly influenced by Marxist thinking

⁸⁵ Nonhoff (2006: 211). Here, Wullweber (2010: 72) seems to disagree. He thinks that in a purely relational system, the infinite play of meaning would render all differences meaningless, and discourse or society would not be possible.

⁸⁶ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 112)

⁸⁷ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 126)

⁸⁸ See e.g. Gramsci (1971)

regarding class struggles) into poststructuralist ontology, Laclau and Mouffe have termed their own approach ‘Post-Marxism’.⁸⁹

Laclau and Mouffe’s concept of hegemony is consistent with the Gramscian hegemony in that it is conceived as the “achievement of a moral, intellectual and political leadership”.⁹⁰ They also agree that hegemony “involves more than a passive consensus and more than legitimate actions”, and that it is instead about the “expansion of a particular discourse of norms, values, views and perceptions through persuasive re-descriptions of the world”.⁹¹ Yet, their poststructuralist conception of the subject makes them disagree fundamentally with Gramsci’s assumption that the role of a hegemonic force corresponds to a fundamental class and its actors as unified articulating subjects.⁹² Laclau and Mouffe get rid of Marxist and Gramscian morphological categories and ontological divisions between them. Instead, they argue that social actors do not have ultimately fixed but discursively constituted identities or interests and thus cannot be identical with a hegemonic force. They concede that as the subject of any articulatory practice, the social actor must be “partially exterior to what it articulates, otherwise, there would not be any articulation at all”.⁹³ Yet, both the hegemonic force and the “hegemonized elements”, including subject positions, are constituted in the interplay between the field of discursivity and existing discursive formations, which are unstable and contingent. The exteriority of the social actor to the articulatory practice that is necessary for articulation to be possible, thus only emerges between already fixed subject positions in existing discursive structures and ‘loose’ elements in the discursive field that are still ‘up for articulation’; that is to say between the fixed signifiers which partially determine the identity of the social actor, and the unfixed surplus signifiers which are located in the field of discursivity and constantly overflow the discursive structures.⁹⁴ The significance of this for the study of IAC discourse is that the organisations and staff whose documents, speech and actions I analyse are not to be conceived as sovereign subjects intentionally following their set interests in the pursuit of a corruption-free world. Rather they occupy

⁸⁹ For critiques regarding the legitimacy or appropriateness of this term, see for example Geras (1987); Geras (1988)

⁹⁰ Torfing (1999: 302)

⁹¹ Torfing (1999: 302)

⁹² Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 134)

⁹³ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 135)

⁹⁴ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 135)

particular (different) subject positions in the currently established structure of IAC discourse (and in other discourses) that are provided and supported through hegemonic articulations but are also contingent and unstable.

Having clarified this major difference between Laclau and Mouffe and Gramsci, the main components of the concept of hegemony can be explored. First, hegemonic practices consist of more than the ‘simple’ discursive articulations dealt with in the previous section of the chapter. As mentioned above, discursive elements acquire their meaning through the logic of difference which enables them to exist as positive unities differing from all other discursive elements. Yet, the logic of difference alone explains neither the dynamics and force of social and semantic structures nor the emergence of negative discursive elements that define antagonistic relations. These can only be understood through the concepts of equivalence, antagonism and hegemony which I will elucidate in the following sections.

Chains of equivalence

The logic of equivalence which comes into play as a transformation or subversion of the logic of difference is the condition for social dynamics and antagonisms.⁹⁵ Through the permanent articulation of particular signifiers as joint moments in a particular chain of meaning in a particular discourse, the moments increasingly become not only inseparable from each other, but also acquire a common meaning. At the rate at which the specificity of the signifiers becomes dissolved and their sameness is emphasised, the chain of meaning becomes a chain of equivalence.⁹⁶ This never happens to the extent that all the moments actually carry exactly the same meaning (e.g. corruption = poverty) and thus become indistinguishable. While full equivalence between the different moments in a chain is not possible, rather every signifier increasingly conveys something identical to all the other parts of the chain.

The complicated aspect to this is that an “identical something present in the various terms of the equivalence”⁹⁷ cannot be a common external reference towards some-

⁹⁵ Nonhoff (2006: 227)

⁹⁶ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 127)

⁹⁷ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 127)

thing positive, for this would simply be another difference that would not be able to arrest the play of meaning. Thus, it must be a reference to something negative; “through the equivalence something is expressed which the [external] object is *not*”.⁹⁸ What is meant here is not the logical consequence of A being not B.⁹⁹ Rather, this negativity that chains of equivalence point to acquires a form of presence or real existence in the form of antagonism. It penetrates the social not in an objective relation of frontiers, but as a reciprocal subversion of its contents in the form of antagonism.¹⁰⁰

A paradox or an ambiguity thus penetrates every relation of equivalence. On the one hand, to be articulated in a chain of meaning, two signifiers must be differential. On the other hand, however, “the equivalence exists only through the act of subverting the differential character of those terms”.¹⁰¹ Once again, this reveals the “ultimate precariousness of all difference” and all equivalence; there will always be events that penetrate the discursively fixed structures and call for new differentiations.¹⁰² In sum, the logic of equivalence may be regarded as a “logic of the simplification of political space, while the logic of difference is a logic of its expansion and increasing complexity”.¹⁰³

Antagonism

Phenomena of equivalence and frontier effects are necessary conditions for establishing a limit to the social (and thus for society to be possible) as they create a “field criss-crossed by antagonisms” in which hegemony can emerge.¹⁰⁴ While possible reasons for the emergence of social antagonisms have been the subject of many studies from Marxism to conflict theory, Laclau and Mouffe’s take is special in its assumption that it is antagonism that makes society possible. This perspective can in turn be regarded as a continuation of the Schmittian assumption that antagonism be-

⁹⁸ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 128) e.i.o.

⁹⁹ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 128)

¹⁰⁰ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 129)

¹⁰¹ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 128)

¹⁰² Nonhoff (2006: 228)

¹⁰³ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 130)

¹⁰⁴ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 136)

longs to our ontological condition and that distinctions between friend and enemy are an unavoidable characteristic of society but especially of politics.¹⁰⁵

Antagonism “establishes itself as the limit of the social”, so that society can be, at least precariously, constituted.¹⁰⁶ It is a discursive phenomenon involving the dichotomous division of the discursive space into two confronting arrangements of discursive elements i.e. two chains of equivalence. The construction of chains of equivalence and of the separating antagonistic frontier separating them happens in the same process. On one side of the antagonistic frontier there are the elements which are articulated in a relation of *contrariety* to the lack of the Universal, an imaginary common good (this concept will be further explained in the section on the Particular and the Universal). For reasons of simplicity, the chain of equivalence comprising these elements will henceforth be called ‘hegemonic chain of equivalence’. On the other side there are the elements which are articulated as presenting a hindrance for the former elements and are therefore articulated in a chain of *equivalence to the lack of the Universal*, thus symbolically positivising this lack.¹⁰⁷ The chain of equivalence comprising these elements will henceforth be called ‘antagonistic chain of equivalence’.¹⁰⁸ The full meaning of this definition will only become clear as I discuss the concept of hegemony in the next section.

Yet at this stage, it should be clarified that not all articulations involve antagonism, and that therefore not all articulations are hegemonic articulations. The criterion which distinguishes a hegemonic articulation from other forms of articulations is that it takes place in an antagonistic environment, while the latter do not.¹⁰⁹ The link between hegemony and social antagonism is the following; every hegemonic articulation involves “some element of force and repression” of something that is already there (in a socially constructed sense).¹¹⁰ This repression takes the form of a negation of identity “in the double sense of the negation of alternative meanings and op-

¹⁰⁵ See e.g. Schmitt (2007)

¹⁰⁶ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 128)

¹⁰⁷ Nonhoff (2006: 221)

¹⁰⁸ These terms are not exactly consistent with the theoretical concepts presently elaborated given that they are both antagonistic to each other and hegemonic in the sense that they form part of a hegemonic project or formation. However their use is justified by allowing the avoidance of repeated use of lengthy terms like ‘chain of equivalence oriented toward the Universal’ or ‘chain of equivalence comprising the hindrances to the Universal’.

¹⁰⁹ Torfing (1999: 121)

¹¹⁰ Torfing (1999: 129)

tions and the negation of those people who identify themselves with these meanings and options”.¹¹¹ It is this negation of identity which gives rise to social antagonism as a relation between subject positions.¹¹²

The relation between chains of equivalence and antagonism

The link can now be drawn between the aforementioned negation of identity constituted by antagonism and the concept of the chains of equivalence. The hegemonic force “which is responsible for the negation of individual or collective identity, will tend to construct the excluded identity as one of a series of threatening obstacles to the full realization of chosen meanings and options”.¹¹³ This construction happens through the articulation of two chains of equivalence which are separated by an antagonistic frontier; one including the negated identity, the other including the identity of the negating force.

The act of exclusion can have quite diverse effects with regards to the negated identity. It can lead to an open confrontation between the negated identity and the force of negation. The conflict may also be displaced to another discursive field, where it may result in acts of aggression or violence. It can also result in self-blame and self-denial, or trauma and resignation of the respective subjects. Not least, it can also lead to the death of the subject whose position is negated.¹¹⁴

In any case the negation of identity always gives rise to social antagonism, even if the negated identity does not openly antagonise the force of negation.¹¹⁵ To clarify, it must be emphasised that antagonism can be constituted in a ‘one-sided’ process. This relates to the perspectivity (as opposed to objectivity) of antagonism as a socially constructed phenomenon, which means that antagonism does not designate two objectively confronting projects or hegemonies, but that the two chains of

¹¹¹ Torfing (1999: 120)

¹¹² Wullweber (2010: 75); The term ‘subject positions’ refers to discursively constructed identities which, due to their constitution through different antagonistic articulations, can have many different and often contradictory facets, and which are to be distinguished from the physical subjects or people.

¹¹³ Torfing (1999: 120)

¹¹⁴ Torfing (1999: 120). However, Torfing (1999: 294) is not sure whether in the case of such an elimination of the object of negation it is still possible to speak of negation or social antagonism.

¹¹⁵ Torfing (1999: 120)

equivalence divided by the antagonistic frontier are products of the same hegemonic formation.¹¹⁶ The antagonistic frontier and what lies before and beyond it is always constituted from one side of the frontier, so to say.¹¹⁷ Consequently, if one discourse or its particular subject positions are articulated into the ‘antagonistic chain of equivalence’ of another discourse, one can speak of antagonism, even if the negated identities do not construct the same antagonistic frontier from ‘their’ side.¹¹⁸ However, in many cases the articulation by the hegemonic discourse of particular elements into the ‘antagonistic chain’ (as ‘enemies’), will lead to the articulation of an counter-hegemonic project that constructs its ‘own’ chains of equivalence and that will in turn articulate parts of the elements which are located in the ‘hegemonic chain of equivalence’ of the hegemonic discourse as ‘enemies’ in its own ‘antagonistic chain’. For illustrative purposes we might imagine that a discourse that articulates countries of the Global South as uncivilised and underdeveloped (in its ‘antagonistic chain’ of equivalence) and Western countries as civilised and developed (in its ‘hegemonic chain of equivalence’) is likely (though not necessarily) to be confronted by a discourse that articulates Western countries as imperialist and oppressive (in its ‘antagonistic chain’ of equivalence) and countries of the Global South as fighting for their cultural and political autonomy and liberation from such oppression (in its ‘hegemonic chain of equivalence’). There can even be cases where antagonistic frontiers are being constituted from both sides in a way that they actually substantively overlap.¹¹⁹ However, a complete overlap, and therefore a pure, stable and transparent antagonism is never possible;¹²⁰ a hegemonically constructed chain of equivalence will always fall short of fully grasping that which resists, or the ‘Other’ which it tries to portray.¹²¹ Many discourses are antagonistic in the sense of antagonising some elements of each other’s ‘hegemonic chain’ but still sharing some elements of their respective ‘hegemonic chains’.¹²² The elements which are being articulated in both ‘hegemonic chains’ are then over-determined. So it may be possible that both a lib-

¹¹⁶ Cf. Nonhoff (2006: 226)

¹¹⁷ As Torfing (1999: 128) puts it, “social antagonism constitutes the limits of every objectivity”.

¹¹⁸ See Nonhoff (2006: 223-227)

¹¹⁹ See Nonhoff (2006: 221-226)

¹²⁰ Nonhoff (2006: 228)

¹²¹ Nonhoff (2006: 224); this is not only because subject positions are never complete and because full antagonism would mean full closure which is never possible either; since antagonism is the negation of identity, it is hardly imaginable how any subject position would articulate itself as a negation of itself.

¹²² Nonhoff (2006: 225)

eral discourse and a socialist discourse articulate integrity, participation and justice as equivalent to their vision of a good, non-corrupt society.

Another aspect in the relationship between antagonism and equivalence that needs clarification regards the creation of antagonism through equalising signifiers in two opposing chains. Here, Laclau and Mouffe have oversimplified the process of equivalence, as Nonhoff has pointed out.¹²³ When jointly articulated into a chain of equivalence, signifiers are not just equalised, but equalised in relation to something;¹²⁴ ‘x is different from y, but equal to y in relation to a’.¹²⁵ Similarly, the articulation of signifiers in antagonistic chains of equivalence is not only about articulating these elements as contrary. Rather, it is about articulating them as different and opposing in relation to something, ‘x is different from a and contrary to a in relation to y’.¹²⁶ In order to clarify this latter relation, between elements of two different chains of equivalence, Nonhoff has introduced the concept of contrariety.¹²⁷

In this respect it is also noteworthy that the antagonism between two chains of equivalences does not imply that *every* element of the ‘hegemonic chain’ would be in a relationship of direct contrariety to *every* element in the ‘antagonistic chain’ or the other way round; rather, *any* of the signifiers in the ‘hegemonic chain’ is in a relationship of contrariety to *any* of the signifiers articulated in the ‘antagonistic chain’. However, the realisation of the imaginary Universal (at least hypothetically) depends on the overcoming of every single element in the ‘antagonistic chain’ (constituting the hindrances to the Universal), as well as on the realisation of every element in the ‘hegemonic chain’ – something that is ultimately impossible.¹²⁸ This also leaves clear that the meaning of the Universal, the imaginary common good, can only be grasped through an analysis of all the claims in the ‘hegemonic chain’, which constitute it.

This specification of the relationships between signifiers involved in antagonistic divisions of the social space also helps explain the phenomenon that there can be,

¹²³ Nonhoff (2006: 88, 212, 227 fn 10)

¹²⁴ What that something is shall be further elucidated in the section on the Universal.

¹²⁵ Nonhoff (2006: 227 fn 10, 212)

¹²⁶ Cf. Nonhoff (2006: 212); I have changed some of the place holders to avoid confusion.

¹²⁷ In German ‘Kontrarität’, see e.g. Nonhoff (2006: 88)

¹²⁸ See Nonhoff (2006: 281)

and usually are, multiple antagonisms that separate the field of the social.¹²⁹ Although antagonism always involves a dichotomous division of the social, every signifier can be involved in different relationships of equivalence and contrariety with other signifiers depending on the claim made by the respective discourse. This is why in Western countries not only is there the discourse regarding the fight against corruption in order to better serve development in Third World countries, but one will also find discourses regarding the fight against Western intervention in non-Western countries in order for the latter to achieve more sovereignty and independent development, and one that supports Western industrial farming and export of livestock to developing countries in order to avoid losing out in international competition. The same subject positions (e.g. Western businesses) might be involved in all of these discourses but are linked up with different but also similar signifiers in different ways.

As a final point, it is important to re-emphasise here that, like relations of difference, relations of antagonism and equivalence can never be complete and stable. There cannot be a complete equalisation that would “strictly divide [the discursive space] into two camps”. The ensemble of the social can never be “absorbed in the intelligible and ordered framework of a society”.¹³⁰ As mentioned previously, there will always be dislocations with respect to them both, with the effect that the discourses, i.e. social formations, remain dynamic. Yet, “[i]f society is not totally possible, neither is it totally impossible”.¹³¹ In the next section we will examine in greater detail how hegemony structures the social towards ‘society’.

Hegemony

Having set out the two main concepts which form the precondition for hegemonic articulations, it is obvious that we are taken far from the Gramscian perspective on hegemony which views social antagonism as an objective relation based on a stable core of class interests as its essence.¹³² However, Laclau and Mouffe assert that

¹²⁹ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 131)

¹³⁰ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 130)

¹³¹ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 129)

¹³² Cf. Nonhoff (2006: 222)

PDHT actually recovers the basic concepts of Gramscian analysis, e.g. historical bloc, war of position, organic crisis, but in a radicalised way.¹³³

While the term ‘hegemony’ itself does not seem to be directly defined by Laclau and Mouffe, Torfing calls hegemony “[t]he achievement of a moral, intellectual and political leadership”.¹³⁴ Laclau and Mouffe work with the concept of ‘hegemonic formation’ (which in the language of Gramsci is a ‘historical bloc’). A hegemonic formation is a relatively unified social and political space¹³⁵ that is constructed through the expansion of a discourse in which diverse elements proliferate: “systems of differences which partially define relational identities”; chains of equivalences (and the resulting antagonism between them) which regularly subvert these relational identities, thus constituting a new difference; nodal points such as for example the economy, the state and civil society around which meaning is fixed and stable over a certain time.¹³⁶ Such expansion of discourse occurs through hegemonic articulation or hegemonic practice which presupposes the presence of antagonism (the negation of identity and the construction of chains of equivalence) and the instability of existing antagonistic frontiers.¹³⁷ As Laclau and Mouffe explain, “[o]nly the presence of a vast area of floating elements and the possibility of their articulation to opposite camps – which implies a constant redefinition of the latter – is what constitutes the terrain permitting us to define a practice as hegemonic”.¹³⁸

Yet, despite important continuities,¹³⁹ PDHT has moved away from Gramsci’s “postulate that [...] every social formation structures itself around a single hegemonic centre”.¹⁴⁰ Instead, it is a characteristic of “modern times” that the reproduction of the different social areas increasingly takes place in “permanently changing conditions which constantly require the construction of new systems of difference”.¹⁴¹

¹³³ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 136)

¹³⁴ Torfing (1999: 302)

¹³⁵ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 136)

¹³⁶ Cf. Wullweber (2010; Torfing (1999: 302)

¹³⁷ However, Laclau and Mouffe make sure to stress that “not every antagonism supposes hegemonic practices” – namely if there is no articulation of floating elements Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 135)

¹³⁸ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 136)

¹³⁹ For the translatability of other Gramscian terms like ‘war of position’ into PDHT see Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 136)

¹⁴⁰ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 138)

¹⁴¹ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 138). In the medieval peasant community, on the contrary, “the area open to differential articulations is minimal and, thus, there are no hegemonic forms of articulation”, as Laclau and Mouffe remark (Laclau/Mouffe 2001[1985]: 138). However, such generalising

These modern, “hegemonic forms of politics” are what Laclau and Mouffe call ‘democratic struggles’.¹⁴² Despite what one may expect, hegemony in PDHT is not a status, but a type of political relation, or a form of politics, and it can emerge anywhere within the “topography of the social”.¹⁴³ The proliferation of minor antagonisms that accompany it means that there can be no single hegemonic nodal point; rather there is a proliferation of hegemonic nodal points or centres of discourses, depending on different antagonisms and their respective chains of equivalence. Thus, these chains of equivalence are not very expanded; they are not all-encompassing as happens in dichotomously divided societies, during what Laclau and Mouffe call ‘popular struggles’,¹⁴⁴ rather they are partial, or ‘shorter’. Out of this variety of hegemonic nodal points, some may be “highly over-determined”, meaning that “they may constitute points of condensation of a number of social relations and, thus, become the focal point of a multiplicity of totalizing effects”.¹⁴⁵ Signifiers like ‘freedom’, ‘democracy’ but also ‘nation’ that are prominently articulated in many different discourses are surely good examples of such over-determined nodal points. To a certain extent, ‘corruption’ is probably another such over-determined signifier, as it is used frequently in diverse settings to denominate socially unaccepted behaviour. Furthermore, the general social spheres like the state, the economy and civil society are socially constructed nodal points.¹⁴⁶ In PDHT, none of these spheres are regarded as functioning autonomously (as is often assumed of the state), or as essentially able to determine the others (as is often believed of the economy). Rather than being some kind of structural effect, both autonomy and subordination, both between these spheres but also within any social relation, “only acquire their meaning in the

categorisations of ‘modern’ and ‘medieval’ societies seem rather dubious. Firstly, there were/are certainly quite pronounced differences within these categories; and secondly, this categorisation seems quite Eurocentric, as nothing is being said about the societal structure in other continents, which may be neither (what Laclau and Mouffe understand as) ‘medieval peasant’ nor ‘advanced capitalist’. Furthermore, it leaves open the question how the ‘modern’, hegemonic form of politics emerged in the first place without (almost) any space for differential articulation.

¹⁴² Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 137). Accordingly, Lefort (1983) has characterised democracy as the institutionalisation of conflict (cited in Nonhoff 2006: 113).

¹⁴³ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 139)

¹⁴⁴ According to Laclau and Mouffe, under particular circumstances ‘democratic struggles’ can take the form of ‘popular struggles’, which come closer to the Gramscian concept of antagonistic dichotomy. This happens where “certain discourses tendentially construct the division of a single political space in two opposed fields” (Laclau/Mouffe 2001[1985]: 137). Yet again, the examples they give, which are of many Third World countries where “the diversity of democratic struggles is more reduced” (Laclau/Mouffe 2001[1985]: 131), are rather dubious due to their sweeping categorisation.

¹⁴⁵ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 139)

¹⁴⁶ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 140)

field of articulatory practices and, insofar as these operate in political fields criss-crossed by antagonisms, of hegemonic practices”.¹⁴⁷

Another consequence of this broadening of hegemonic practices in ‘modern times’ is that “every social identity becomes the meeting point for a multiplicity of articulatory practices”.¹⁴⁸ The identity of both particular social classes and groups but also singular actors depends on “certain precise social and political conditions of existence” which have been constituted in hegemonic struggles; both the identity and interests of the articulator (or the articulating force) and the articulated are subject to constant mutual subversion and redefinition in hegemonic struggles.¹⁴⁹

Power, as all concepts in PDHT, acquires its substance only in hegemonic articulations. Instead of belonging to a particular class or a dominant sector which would constitute the centre of a hegemonic formation, “every form of power is constructed in a pragmatic way and *internally* to the social, through the opposed logics of equivalence and difference; power is never *foundational*”.¹⁵⁰ Yet Laclau and Mouffe warn against falling into the extreme opposite of conceiving power as being totally diffused within the social as this would “blind the analysis to the presence of nodal points and to the partial concentrations of power existing in every concrete social formation”.¹⁵¹ So while its status has been redefined, the concept of power still retains an important analytical function, namely in form of the analysis of discursive formations and their nodal points which tie together a multiplicity of signifiers, as well as via the hegemonic stratagems discussed later in this chapter. Nodal points are the locus of power in that they form points of over-determination “which concentrate either power, or the different forms of resistance to it”.¹⁵²

What follows from hegemony as a type of politics (rather than a topographical concept) is that it cannot be conceived, as power frequently is, as “an irradiation of effects from a privileged point”. Rather, its effects emerge “from a surplus of meaning which results from an operation of displacement”.¹⁵³ Such operations of ‘displace-

¹⁴⁷ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 140)

¹⁴⁸ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 138)

¹⁴⁹ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 139-141)

¹⁵⁰ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 142, e.i.o.)

¹⁵¹ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 142)

¹⁵² Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 142)

¹⁵³ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 141)

ment' have already been outlined as the ontological concept of 'dislocation' earlier in this chapter. A historical example from IAC discourse might aid the understanding here. When Peter Eigen, then World Bank regional director for East Africa, demanded that the World Bank start combating corruption, this attempt (articulation) to dislocate the WB's portfolio (part of WB discourse) was resisted by WB-internal opposing forces (the dislocatory attempt was not successful, i.e. no immediate successful hegemonic articulation). Here, the surplus of meaning arose from the overdetermination of the meaning of the WB's portfolio which, according to WB-internal forces, did not include anticorruption work. The antagonistic divide (for development and against underdevelopment in third world countries) was already present, but the signifier corruption and WB structures were not sufficiently 'loose' or 'floating' for anticorruption to be integrated into WB discourse. At first the opposing forces prevailed. Eigen dealt with this negation of his identity as WB corruption-fighter by leaving the WB and founding Transparency International in order to establish a new identity as an NGO corruption fighter. Three years later, however, it turned out that the WB's discourse had still been dislocated (by Eigen but presumably also other forces) to the extent that it could/did no longer integrate corruption and anticorruption measures into its discourse (hegemonic articulation). Thus, the WB discourse was reconfigured in order to accommodate them.

The example of Peter Eigen also serves to explain the effects and the success of dislocatory attempts in established discursive structures, in short, the question of articulatory power. A former WB country director (signifier and subject position), who has formed part of development discourse (chain of equivalence 'development') for a long time, is likely to be better connected to different prominent nodal points such as money/funding, development organisations and other international organisations, experts, politicians, business people, and other prominent figures, than an average inhabitant of a Nairobi slum. Thus, due to and through these manifold ties, he is likely to be in a better position (literally speaking, if imagined in the discursive structure) to influence or re-articulate (dislocate) development discourse towards the inclusion of anticorruption as an important signifier or even nodal point. Again, Laclau and Mouffe stress that we should not think of a particular social formation as constituted by empirically given social agents. Rather, the agents, who are without doubt involved in the hegemonic struggles and form part of hegemonic formations, as

shown by the example of Peter Eigen, must be “reintegrated into the various formations constituting them”.¹⁵⁴

At this point the concept of hegemony should be sufficiently clear to enable us to distinguish different hegemonic social formations from one another which is important for any political analysis. It is only through being able to be ‘cut out’ from something beyond it through its particular shape that a hegemonic formation can be distinguished as a totality. Yet, having noted previously that a hegemonic formation cannot be a system of differences alone as it would be impossible to determine any limits, it follows that “that beyond cannot consist in something positive – in a new difference”. Instead, it must consist in something negative.¹⁵⁵ This is the point at which the concept of chains of equivalences (with their negation, division and antagonism) comes in: they introduce negativity into the field of the social by constructing what is beyond them as that which they are not and by increasingly negating the existence of this ‘beyond’ as the hegemonic formation expands. So a hegemonic formation consists, and must consist, of chains of equivalence as it is only through them that the frontiers of the formation are established, allowing it to “constitute itself as a totalizing horizon”¹⁵⁶ and to be distinguished as such.

Thus, when attempting to distinguish particular hegemonic formations in the field of the social, it is necessary to seek out discourses with antagonistic chains of equivalence which constitute the political boundaries determining these social formations. However, challenges arise from the fact that formations acquire a hegemonic character only under “continuous redefinition of the social and political spaces and (...) constant processes of displacement of the limits constructing social division”.¹⁵⁷ The instability and constant redefinition of frontiers results in an infringement upon the possibility of a formation to constitute itself and to be recognised. Consequently, when undertaking an analysis of a social formation, one can only (and thus needs to!) look at the articulatory practices which are involved in the construction of the boundaries of the respective formation, bearing in mind that this is “an open process

¹⁵⁴ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 144)

¹⁵⁵ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 143)

¹⁵⁶ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 143)

¹⁵⁷ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 144)

which will depend on the multiple hegemonic articulations shaping a given space, and operating within it at the same time”.¹⁵⁸

It should now be clear that, from a Laclau and Mouffian perspective, there is nothing predetermined about the way in which societies are structured. The discourses which become temporarily dominant and consequently structure wide parts of the discursive field in their particular dichotomous ways are just some of the many possible options in an open and indeterminable terrain. In the process of their expansion, simultaneously, countless other discursive formations are dislocated and/or dissolved (or their expansion is at least rendered impossible) and identities are negated. These processes are shaped by the interplay between contingent historic and social factors, including the actions of social agents, against the background of the always real possibility that things could be/could have been otherwise¹⁵⁹ – which is why Laclau calls PDHT “a theory of the decision taken in an undecidable terrain”.¹⁶⁰

Furthermore, we can now understand why a hegemonic formation will never be a complete and stable structuring of the social sphere in the sense of a coherent and closed social system. The transition from political practices to social practices is a fluent one and will always be incomplete and thus instable. In a relatively successful hegemonic formation, political practices can pass into social practices and structures to such an extent that the political origin of these social relations is “forgotten” and they “will seem to have a life of their own”.¹⁶¹ Yet, in these sedimented practices there will always be points of rupture and dislocations that allow for resistance in the form of a “re-activation of the political ‘origin’ of the social” and for re-articulation and change of the existing discursive formations.¹⁶²

The Particular and the Universal

Now that the meaning of hegemony and how hegemonic practices work has been discussed, we may still wonder why hegemonic struggles happen in the first place.

¹⁵⁸ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 144)

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Wullweber (2010: 83)

¹⁶⁰ Laclau (1996a: 90), cited in Wullweber (2010: 90)

¹⁶¹ Torfing (1999: 70)

¹⁶² Torfing (1999: 70)

As an answer, Laclau and Mouffe point to the ever present collective desire for an imagined common good, an imaginary ‘Universal’. According to PDHT, conflicts about the filling of the empty (and ultimately unfillable) place of the Universal form the core of politics.¹⁶³ Below, I will expand on the meaning of the ‘Universal’ and its relation to the ‘particular’ as well as its significance for the concepts of chains of equivalence and antagonism.

Laclau and Mouffe are by no means the first scholars to deal with the question of universal values. The chasm between the Universal and the particular has been of scholarly interest since the era of ancient Classical philosophy.¹⁶⁴ However, the Laclau-Mouffian approach is special in that “it challenges the idea that a radical choice must be made between universalization of the particular and particularization of the universal”. Instead, they claim that “by rethinking the notions of the universal and the particular we can account for their mutual conditioning”.¹⁶⁵ The aforementioned impossibility of the social field to be fully closed accounts for a constant essential lack in society – of completeness, unity, commonality, universality, which would structure it and give it a common final aim.¹⁶⁶ Yet, even if practically impossible, “the idea of closure and fullness still functions as an (impossible) ideal” and results in the structuring of societies according to the pursuit of such impossible ideals, called ‘Universals’ by Laclau and Mouffe.¹⁶⁷ The collective need to redress the lack of the Universal is in fact what ultimately constitutes and unites society and brings about hegemonic discourses.¹⁶⁸

The Universal symbolises the “very form of fullness”,¹⁶⁹ yet as something unreachable and thus only imaginary it can have no positive content. It shows itself only “through the presence of its absence”¹⁷⁰ and can be seen as an ‘empty place’ that can never be filled.¹⁷¹ However, as every society strives to fill the void, the desire for the imaginary Universal is satisfied at least symbolically in that the Universal is repre-

¹⁶³ Nonhoff (2006: 121)

¹⁶⁴ For a short introduction to the history of the concept of the Universal in Western philosophy see Torfing (1999: 169)

¹⁶⁵ Torfing (1999: 168)

¹⁶⁶ Laclau (1990: 90), cited in Nonhoff (2006: 117, fn 16)

¹⁶⁷ Howarth et al (2000: 8)

¹⁶⁸ Nonhoff (2006: 117); also (cf. Laclau (1996b: 28), cited in Nonhoff (2006: 116))

¹⁶⁹ Torfing (1999: 307)

¹⁷⁰ Laclau (1996b: 53), cited in Howarth et al (2000: 12)

¹⁷¹ Torfing (1999: 175)

sented and approached through discursive articulation.¹⁷² It can thus only be discursively present as a ‘symbolic Universal’ and never as a ‘real Universal’.¹⁷³

Politics – the conflictive filling of the empty place of the Universal

This discursive representation of the Universal or the symbolic filling of its empty place however is a conflictive and ever incomplete process. The precise symbolic content of the Universal is fixed in and through particularistic political struggles for hegemony.¹⁷⁴

This means, in the first instance, that the collective need for the Universal produces a plurality of particular claims in relation to the imaginary Universal which concretise and therefore positivise or symbolise it in one form or another.¹⁷⁵ In the case of a discourse which for example centres around a lack of social justice, particular claims could be the call for an increase of capital transfer taxes, calls for special loans for economically disadvantaged students, but also the call for fighting economic corruption in big businesses. But particular claims which seek to concretise the collective pursuit of the diffuse Universal can also conflict with and contradict each other and often do.¹⁷⁶ Since the Universal is by definition supposed to be valid universally, not all particularities can be universalised at the same time, and conflicts regarding which particular claim should express it are legion. They comprise the core of politics and are particularly characteristic of democracies, where hegemonic struggles abound.¹⁷⁷

However, and crucially, Nonhoff introduces a differentiation with regards to the Laclau and Mouffian term ‘Universal’; he clarifies that despite its connotation the term ‘Universal’ does not necessarily refer to the order of the whole of humanity or the cosmos.¹⁷⁸ Given the diversity of political spaces in modern democracies, he argues,

¹⁷² ‘Discursive’ articulation and ‘symbolic’ articulation ultimately mean the same here since due to the impossibility of closure, discourse can only symbolise and never realise the Universal (cf. Laclau 2000: 76, cited in Nonhoff 2006: 117).

¹⁷³ Nonhoff (2006: 117, 229)

¹⁷⁴ Torfing (1999: 307)

¹⁷⁵ Nonhoff (2006: 118)

¹⁷⁶ Nonhoff (2006: 119)

¹⁷⁷ Nonhoff (2006: 121)

¹⁷⁸ Nonhoff (2006: 116)

it is usually a ‘specific’ Universal that is articulated with regard to the order of those spaces (thus, e.g. the fight about the best social policies would take place in a discursive space at least partly separated from that of the fight about the best environmental politics). It is precisely this specificity with regard to the articulation of particular aspects of the Universal that makes these spaces differ from each other in the first place.

Accordingly, the particular Universals strived for in struggles for hegemony differ with regards to the scope of their claim and its relation to the more comprehensive Universal. Nonhoff distinguishes three types of particular claims: Claims which articulate a necessary condition for the curing of the lack of the Universal (also called cumulative claims); claims that articulate a necessary condition for the curing of the lack of the Universal which is at the same time a sufficient condition for the fulfilling of other claims which aim at the curing of the lack of the (more comprehensive) Universal (also called subsumptive claims); and claims which articulate a sufficient condition for the curing of the lack of the Universal – the latter imply at the same time a fulfilling of all claims aiming at the curing of the lack of the Universal and can therefore be regarded as comprehensive claims.¹⁷⁹ While fighting corruption may appear *prima facie* as a cumulative claim in the sense that corruption needs to be combated so that a range of higher aims (such as development) can be fulfilled only the empirical analysis will allow answering the question of the type of claim that is articulated in IAC discourse. Following Nonhoff, this differentiation however means that when the ‘Universal’ is referred to in this thesis (in particular in relation to the final aim of IAC discourse), the term does not necessarily indicate a comprehensive Universal in the sense of a claim about the overall organisation of society but also includes all those more ‘particular Universals’ which refer solely to the organisation of parts of society i.e. to specific aspects of a more comprehensive Universal.

Given that there is no objective or necessary ‘candidate’ for the symbolisation of the Universal, every symbolisation of the Universal happens as a contingent and historically shaped process.¹⁸⁰ Yet, of all the symbolic representatives none will ever be

¹⁷⁹ Nonhoff (2006: 119)

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Nonhoff (2006: 124)

able to grasp the imaginary Universal in its fullness and completeness, since every such symbolically (i.e. discursively) constituted Universal in its positive form can only be the result of a precarious 'relative universalisation' which is always exposed to discursive changes.¹⁸¹ This instability and inadequacy has consequences for the political practice as it "paves the way for a democratic competition between groups, as the 'universal' is not commensurate with any of the forces that might momentarily embody it".¹⁸² Thus, the failure of all those forces to finally fill the empty place of the Universal and the subsequent continuation of political struggles can be regarded as a condition of democratic politics.

Now, we can specify the meaning of the term 'political' in PDHT as referring to the dynamic and dynamising logic which is capable of dislocating and unsettling the space of the social. In the logic of the political the particular filling of the empty place of the Universal is conflictually negotiated in the discursive space and against the background of the lack of objectivity of all particulars and the permanent dislocations brought about by the conflict among them regarding the symbolisation of the Universal. Thus, the political implies conflict but also relation to the (comprehensive or partial) Universal in that it always entails a contestation/ dislocation/ change (conflict) of norms (relation to the Universal).¹⁸³ Inquiring into the potentially political nature of IAC discourse thus means investigating whether and how the discourse attempts to re-structure social relations in ways that orient them towards the achievement of a particular Universal.

According to PDHT, conflict is bound to arise because various social groups attempt to hegemonise the empty place of the Universal by representing their particular claims (and the particular logics linking them) as universally valid (again, this does not mean that all these actors necessarily have this as a clear aim in mind).¹⁸⁴ The (temporary and precarious) filling of the empty place of the Universal is undertaken through hegemonic practice.¹⁸⁵ Given that within the framework of PDHT there is no logical or scientific path people can follow in order to arrive at the 'right' deci-

¹⁸¹ Nonhoff (2006: 120); For a more detailed explanation of the difference between the imaginary and the symbolic universal see Nonhoff (2006: 115-118)

¹⁸² Laclau (1990: 81)

¹⁸³ Nonhoff (2006: 124)

¹⁸⁴ As Laclau states, "[t]o hegemonize something is exactly to carry out this filling function" of the lack of the universal (Laclau 1996b: 44 cited in Howarth et al 2000: 13).

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Torfing (1999: 175)

sions for societal organisation,¹⁸⁶ the aim of political struggle must ultimately be the creation of a consensus on particular values and beliefs (which would enable the taking of constitutive decisions in an undecidable terrain); in turn, such a consensus has to be achieved through persuasion.¹⁸⁷ Laclau stresses that hegemony should not be understood as “a precarious agreement between different political forces that ‘strike together, but march separately’”. Moreover, it would be a mistake to understand hegemony as “an imposition upon other political groups of a pre-given organizational principle provided by a political vanguard. Rather, hegemony involves the construction of a collective will”.¹⁸⁸ This construction will only be successful if the political project in question “manages to appear to other groups as the force capable of providing the best social arrangement possible to secure and expand a universality that transcends it”.¹⁸⁹ Nonhoff clarifies that this political will is to be understood not so much as an actual shared will to institute a particular ideology, but can be conceived as being in place “whenever different individuals or groups become subjects of the same discursive formation, whenever they, in other words, adopt the structure of meaning put forward by that formation”.¹⁹⁰ Below we will see that this means taking up the subject positions offered by a hegemonic project.

The two core concepts of hegemony, antagonism and chains of equivalence, play a prominent role in contestations around the Universal. While hegemony has been termed a type of politics, antagonism can be regarded as a particular type of political conflict; more precisely, antagonistic conflicts are political conflicts that culminate in pluralist conflicts around the filling of the empty location of the Universal by providing a clear alternative. In turn, this pacifies these conflicts ‘to the inside’ and deepens them ‘to the outside’.¹⁹¹ This occurs in the following way:

Laclau and Mouffe argue that the way in which diverse social groups become persuaded and united to acquire a common will is not through being persuaded to adopt a particular comprehensive ideology; rather, this happens through “the construction of a chain of equivalence that expresses a common feeling of a lack of fullness”,

¹⁸⁶ In PDHT this post-positivist assumption is termed the ‘undecidability of the structure’ Torfing (1999: 65).

¹⁸⁷ Torfing (1999: 65)

¹⁸⁸ Laclau (1994: 175-176), cited in Torfing (1999: 175)

¹⁸⁹ Laclau (1990: 81)

¹⁹⁰ Nonhoff (2006: 16)

¹⁹¹ Nonhoff (2006: 222)

such as the shared feeling of opposition to an oppressive regime or another kind of ‘enemy’.¹⁹² The chains of equivalence which emerge on each side of the antagonistic frontier are constituted by elements that are equivalent to each other in relation to the lack of the Universal; one chain symbolises the Universal, and the other its lack.¹⁹³ In the course of successful hegemonic articulations, the chain of equivalence symbolising the Universal is extended into a horizon for the inscription of social demands and comes to include and unify many different demands, struggles and groupings.¹⁹⁴ The success of this unification presupposes the symbolic representation of the Universal by a prominent nodal point which is capable of unifying all those demands to the point where it erases its own differential meaning and becomes so dense with meaning that it turns into nothing more than a place unifying a set of equivalent demands.¹⁹⁵

It should be made clear that persuasion does not just happen through linguistic means but also through very practical and material articulations. Yet, while behavioural conformity with a particular organising principle can obviously be materially enforced, a hegemonic formation will only be relatively stable if the possibility of antagonistic struggles and opposition is minimised through the achievement of a common will in the sense that the proposed Universal is accepted and adopted as the right and normal way of societal organisation.

Here it is also important to come back to the question of articulatory power. Not all actors or groups are equally capable of hegemonising, i.e. of advancing their particular as a Universal. In the political struggles for hegemony, “particular demands are universalized and others are marginalized”. This is due to the “unevenness of the structural positions in society”.¹⁹⁶ The success of both linguistic and non-linguistic ways of persuasion is enhanced (though not determined) by close links to established nodal points i.e. power centres in the discursive structure. Articulatory power thus comes into play in the form of existing discursive-hegemonic formations which enable or disable various political forces to articulate their particular as the Universal;

¹⁹² Torfing (1999: 174)

¹⁹³ Nonhoff (2006: 221)

¹⁹⁴ Torfing (1999: 174)

¹⁹⁵ Cf. Laclau (1995: 153), cited in Torfing (1999: 174). Laclau talks here about “an empty place unifying a set of equivalential demands”, also frequently called an ‘empty signifier’.

¹⁹⁶ Torfing (1999: 175)

not in the sense that they determine once and for all which political force is able to become hegemonic, “but rather by constraining and facilitating the formulation and realization of the political strategies of those forces”.¹⁹⁷ Some identities may be subverted and their claims marginalised by current discursive formations to the extent that they are hardly able to articulate their own subject positions and claims.¹⁹⁸ Thus, they do not figure in hegemonic discourses unless they manage to dislocate some of their moments; in this case, hegemonic discourses are provoked to ‘react’ by attempting to integrate hitherto marginalised elements in one of their chains and thus re-articulate them.

Hegemonic strategy, stratagems and other discursive logics

While much has now been said about how (hegemonic) discourses function, the questions of how exactly discourses become hegemonic, and how they construct and successfully advance a particular as Universal, need to be discussed in greater depth since an understanding of these processes is crucial for the empirical analysis conducted in this thesis. According to Laclau and Mouffe, hegemonic discourses emerge through the establishment of antagonistic chains of equivalences;¹⁹⁹ yet, these are not the only elements that figure in hegemonic practices. Elaborating on this aspect of PDHT as developed by Laclau and Mouffe, Nonhoff provides a more systematic and detailed take on the processes of hegemonisation by elaborating the concept of the hegemonic project.

Originally a Gramscian concept, a hegemonic project can be defined as a “political project, including a vision of how state, economy and civil society should be organized, that aspires to become hegemonic”.²⁰⁰ The term ‘aspire’ should not be taken

¹⁹⁷ Laclau (1994: 175), cited in Torfing (1999: 175)

¹⁹⁸ In Gramsci-based terminology, such subject positions would be called ‘subaltern’ Gramsci (1971), but Laclau and Mouffe do not seem to use the term in their work. The term is used also in postcolonial theory for social actors whose claims are marginalised by their hegemonic discursive environment (e.g. Bhabha 2003; Santos/Garavito 2005); however, some postcolonial theorists reserve it for ‘those who cannot speak’ and are completely unrecognised as subject positions within their surrounding hegemonic formations Spivak (1988:271-313). However, the latter situation is impossible in PDHT, where already the act of existing is conceived as an articulation of a subject position, even if this has hardly any effects on the hegemonic discourses.

¹⁹⁹ Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985])

²⁰⁰ Torfing (1999: 302)

literally as a project can hardly aspire to something. Also the social actors involved in hegemonic articulations do not necessarily have a comprehensive political project in mind, the realisation of which they consciously strive for. Rather, the term is to be understood as referring to articulations that have the potential to aid the discourse on its way to hegemony.

Nonhoff distinguishes different hegemonic stratagems that characterise hegemonic projects.²⁰¹ These are in this thesis understood as the general logics of hegemonic projects, as opposed to the more specific logics that differ according to each hegemonic project. Once again, the term ‘strategy’ must be problematised as it is usually associated with a strong subject, a ‘strategist’, which does not exist in the Laclau-Mouffian ontology. PDHT conceives discourse and subjects as co-originary and assumes that subjects are created through discursive invocation while simultaneously they are the place of decisions, therefore neither are they simply the puppet of discourse.²⁰² Yet, even if one rejects the actor-centeredness of the term, strategies can still be conceived as serving the creation of particular discursive constellations, in this case successful hegemonic practices, by arranging discursive elements in particular ways in space and time. Thus, rather than trying to distinguish strategies that have been consciously planned by an actor, Nonhoff stresses that the discourse analyst is able to investigate the processes of constitution of an advanced hegemonic project by examining its (successful and thus discernible) hegemonic strategies.²⁰³

The concept of the hegemonic project is the key analytical device of this thesis. While Nonhoff has theorised the hegemonic stratagems of a hegemonic project as a means to trace the processes of constitution of what can already be identified as an existing hegemonic formation, the starting point of this thesis is a different one. So far no hegemonic formation with regards to the international fight against corruption has been detected in the literature (and it is unclear what such a formation would be like) and it is not the aim of this thesis to reveal such a formation if it exists.

Rather, it aims at addressing the argument made by the critical IAC literature that there is a strong consensus *within IAC discourse* on corruption and adequate counter-

²⁰¹ Nonhoff (2006: 207-240)

²⁰² Nonhoff (2006: 207)

²⁰³ Nonhoff (2006: 210)

measures as well as concomitant societal ideals. As mentioned previously, such a consensus would mean that IAC discourse is rather fully hegemonised in the sense of consisting of two antagonistic chains of equivalences containing nodal points and advancing a particular as Universal. Given the weak empirical basis on which the consensus argument is built, the thesis aims to investigate whether IAC discourse is actually structured in this way. It deploys the concept of the hegemonic project and its different hegemonic stratagems (which will be described in more detail below) in order to do so.

But this concept allows me to do much more than just confirm or reject the consensus hypothesis. Amended with a focus on more specific logics, it provides a grid through which to distinguish and highlight the ways in which these structures are created within IAC discourse; specify to what extent they are already in place within the discourse; assess whether IAC discourse provides a hegemonic project in the sense that it aspires to hegemonise a wider discursive space (the scope of which can also be determined via the analysis of hegemonic stratagems); to draw out how it attempts to do so (if at all); and make detailed statements about the political nature of IAC discourse and the potential ideal(s) advanced by the discourse.²⁰⁴ In order to clarify how hegemonic stratagems (in the sense of general logics of a hegemonic project) as well as a focus on more specific discursive logics enable these contributions, the following sections will outline these theoretical devices in greater depth.

According to Nonhoff, hegemonic strategies consist of interplay between four types of discursive relations. In order to establish something approaching a closed structure (which is necessary for ‘society’ to come to being), the relations of difference in the field of discourse (i.e. field of the social) are subverted by relations of equivalence, contrariety and super-difference.²⁰⁵ Relying on Gramsci, Nonhoff distinguishes two general types of hegemonic strategies: offensive-hegemonic and defensive-hegemonic strategies. The strategies of an emergent hegemonic formation will necessarily be offensive-hegemonic rather than defensive-hegemonic, as the hegemony

²⁰⁴ While the concept of the hegemonic project does in principle enable an assessment of how far advanced a hegemonic project is in the establishment of a wider hegemonic formation, doing so in relation to the international fight against corruption is not part of the focus of this thesis.

²⁰⁵ Nonhoff (2006: 212)

is only emerging rather than requiring defence.²⁰⁶ As the anticorruption discourse seems to have begun its expansion in the late 1980s and early 1990s and has since grown increasingly important, it appears as an emerging hegemonic project (if it can be called ‘hegemonic project’ at all) more than as a hegemonic formation which seeks to defend itself. Thus, in the following pages, I will concentrate on the characteristics of the offensive-hegemonic strategy.

Overview 1: Stratagems of the offensive-hegemonic strategy

- A. Core stratagems of the offensive-hegemonic strategy
 - I. Equivalisation of differential claims which are oriented toward the Universal
 - II. Antagonistic division of the discursive space
 - III. Representation
- B. Basic stratagem
 - IV. Basic stratagem of super-differential demarcation
- C. Complementary hegemonic stratagems
 - V. Emergent openness of interpretation of the symbolic equivalent of the Universal
 - VI. Institution/perpetuation of subject positions for socio-political forces
 - VII. Targeted and sporadic breaking of the antagonistic frontier
- D. Secondary hegemonic stratagem
 - VIII. Stratagem of the actual advocate
 - IX. Stratagem of the actual meaning

Source: Nonhoff (2006: 213), translation AG

Nonhoff distinguishes nine different stratagems (‘Strategeme’) as characteristic of the offensive-hegemonic strategy (see overview 1);²⁰⁷ the (always joint) presence of the three *core stratagems* however suffices to make discursive articulations ‘hegemonic practice’ in terms of attempting to divide the discursive space in two chains of equivalences and linking them to a nodal point.²⁰⁸ As it moves toward hegemony, a hegemonic project will attempt to articulate differential claims which are oriented toward the Universal into a chain of equivalence. If this is successful, an antagonistic division of the discursive space is created. As soon as one claim becomes the sym-

²⁰⁶ Nonhoff (2006: 212)

²⁰⁷ The term ‘stratagem’ used here derives from the German term ‘Strategem’ used by Nonhoff (2006). Laclau and Mouffe themselves mention neither ‘stratagem’ nor ‘strategy’, rather they talk about the *logics* of equivalence and difference featured in discursive practices (e.g. Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985]: 129).

²⁰⁸ Nonhoff (2006: 213ff, 233)

bolic equivalent of the particular Universal, it is no longer simply a particular claim but rather expresses the collective political will of the subject positions that are already involved in the chain. At that point a discourse turns into a hegemonic project on target for expansion.

‘Equivalisation of differential claims which are oriented toward the Universal’²⁰⁹ (I) means that other claims which are oriented toward the Universal (in the sense of contributing to its fulfilment) are articulated in a chain of equivalence with the original claim. This not only involves different claims in the sense of demands, but also distinct subject positions that are articulated as equivalents in the chain. In addition to the individuals or groups who articulated the original claim, other individuals or groups must be subjectivised in order to secure discursive presence and ‘visibility’ of the hegemonic claim.²¹⁰ It should be noted that the original claim of the chain will necessarily be subject to a transformation (in its symbolic form) in the course of the equivalisation²¹¹ (which creates commonality by subverting the differential meaning of the original claim).

The ‘antagonistic division of the discursive space’²¹² (II) results from such equivalisations. What makes the equivalisations of very diverse signifiers possible in the first place is a negation (rather than a difference): the collective lack of the Universal. In a chain of equivalence diverse claims become articulated as equivalent in relation to the aim of addressing the lack of the Universal and thus indirectly relate to each other. While the cure for the lack of the Universal can be symbolised positively, this is not possible with the lack of the Universal as it is a negativity and cannot be given a positive form. However, what can and will be positively symbolised instead are the hindrances to or resistances against addressing the lack – the signifiers that are in a relationship of contrariety to the claims for overcoming the lack. This explains why two chains of equivalence must be articulated by the hegemonic project: one encompassing the claims that aim to overcome the lack of the Universal (the ‘hegemonic chain’), and the other encompassing the claims that represent a hindrance to the former, thereby positively and symbolically embodying the lack (the ‘antagonistic

²⁰⁹ ‘Äquivalenzierung differenter, am Allgemeinwohl orientierter Forderungen’

²¹⁰ Nonhoff (2006: 214)

²¹¹ Nonhoff (2006: 215)

²¹² ‘Antagonistische Zweiteilung des diskursiven Raums’

chain’). The result is an antagonistic division of the discursive space.²¹³ Relatively speaking, a successful hegemonic project must stabilise the frontier between the two chains by articulating it as rigid and impermeable and making the discursive regions on both sides of the frontier appear as a stable structure.²¹⁴ According to Nonhoff, the main function of the ‘antagonistic chain of equivalence’ is to provide reasons for difficulties in the realisation of the Universal but also for the necessity of a common effort. He points out that while for this purpose it may be necessary to articulate subject positions into the ‘antagonistic chain’, these ‘offered’ subject positions are rather unlikely to be taken up by anyone.

Regarding the relation between the equivalents in a ‘hegemonic chain’ and the original (in the constantly transforming hegemonic process) claim of the discourse, Nonhoff detects a third stratagem, ‘representation’²¹⁵ (III). Every hegemonic strategy centres on a specific claim or demand²¹⁶ which evokes a lack of an imaginary Universal, and at the same time claims to address this lack through the attempt to realise what is being demanded.²¹⁷ The stratagem of ‘representation’ denominates the process by which one claim becomes the ‘representative’ of the chain which is oriented toward the Universal. He distinguishes two ways in which this representation can happen.²¹⁸ It may be directly claimed that the realisation of the ‘representative’ will be the realisation of the Universal. In this case, all other claims in the chain become articulated as ‘parts’ of the Universal (retaining a differential relation to it). The second and more stable possibility of ‘representation’ does not articulate a direct relationship between one discursive element and the Universal. Here, too, the ‘hegemonic claim’ or ‘representative’ is articulated in a relation of equivalence to the other claims in the chain; yet it is presented as a mediator or linking element between all these diverse claims: they are equivalent *in relation to the hegemonic claim*. This function could for example be fulfilled by an instrumental claim, stating that general welfare will be achieved if only the social market economy is realised.²¹⁹ Consequently, the hegemonic claim becomes more than just one moment in the chain; it

²¹³ Nonhoff (2006: 215)

²¹⁴ Nonhoff (2006: 226)

²¹⁵ ‘Repräsentation’

²¹⁶ Nonhoff (2006) uses the term ‘Forderung’ here.

²¹⁷ Nonhoff (2006: 214)

²¹⁸ Nonhoff (2006: 216-218)

²¹⁹ See Nonhoff (2006: 119)

becomes the star of the chain in that it is the centre for all the other surrounding claims and gives the chain its name.²²⁰ The two ways of representation have the same effect in that they both articulate the ‘representative’ as both equivalent *and* differential to the other claims in its chain. The breakpoints that this paradox necessarily entails are a ‘natural’ characteristic of discourses as never fully and finally closable structures.²²¹

The ‘basic stratagem of super-differential demarcation’²²² (IV) is called ‘basic’ because it demarcates the territories in which particular discursive struggles are carried out. The stratagem of super-differential demarcation articulates particular elements or whole ‘regions’ of discourses as super-differential from others, i.e. as unconnected with these others and thus restricts the discursive ‘territory’ claimed by hegemonic projects. According to Nonhoff, super-differential boundaries are not usually as precarious and contested as antagonistic ones, but they must still be regularly demarcated.²²³ For example, the stratagem of super-differential demarcation is at work in discourses which articulate politics and religion as separate spheres, or that claim that the state should keep out of family life; but it can also demarcate discursive territories in the geographical sense of the word and for example restrict a hegemonic project to the borders of a particular nation-state. As Nonhoff explains, this stratagem is bound to re-emerge regularly (though not necessarily particularly frequently) within a hegemonic project for purposes of clarification of the discursive territory that is ‘claimed’ by the discourse. It can also include the withdrawal of claims from particularly conflictive discursive ‘territories’ or the shielding of the discourse against such territories for purposes of stabilisation of the hegemonic project,²²⁴ and thus be a way of dealing with dislocation of the discourse. A hegemonic project can articulate many different boundaries or super-differences to various other discourses, and thus this stratagem can appear in different ways in a hegemonic project.

In addition to those three core stratagems and the basic stratagem of super-differential demarcation Nonhoff also distinguishes three complementary stratagems.

²²⁰ Nonhoff (2006: 216)

²²¹ Nonhoff (2006: 218)

²²² ‘Diskursives Grundlagenstrategem der superdifferenziellen Grenzziehung’; see Nonhoff (2006: 230ff)

²²³ Nonhoff (2006: 231)

²²⁴ Personal communication, 5 September 2012

These are neither necessary nor sufficient conditions for characterising a discursive practice as hegemonic, and they do not necessarily figure in any hegemonic project or formation; nonetheless, they may still have a significant impact on the success or failure of hegemonic projects and thus their analysis can render interesting insights into the ways in which a hegemonic project evolves and advances.

The stratagem of 'emergent openness of interpretation of the symbolic equivalent of the Universal'²²⁵ (V) means that, due to the immense scope or length that a chain of equivalence can acquire in a successful hegemonic project, the principle hegemonic claim (the representative or star of the chain, see third stratagem) often develops to be extraordinarily open to interpretation. As such, it can accommodate very diverse and diffuse expectations regarding the Universal which are united in the chain of equivalence, which renders the acquisition of new subject positions easier.²²⁶

A hegemonic project will attempt to recruit as many subjects as possible. However, its success will particularly depend on the inclusion of as many socio-political forces as possible, which, due to their prominent positions in the discursive structure, can foster the expansion and thus success of the project. This is why the 'institution/perpetuation of subject positions for socio-political forces'²²⁷ (VI) into the 'hegemonic chain of equivalence' is an important stratagem. Nonhoff defines these socio-political forces as referring to "all those subjects which are or become particularly perceptible within a given politico discursive field".²²⁸ This elevated perceptibility can be due to the sheer size of a group but also to academic or other expert competence, access to decision-making; but also monetary and technical power need to be included in this list. Such socio-political forces can comprise for example political parties, associations, international organisations etc.

The stratagem of the 'targeted and sporadic breaking of the antagonistic frontier'²²⁹ (VII) is an expression of the dynamic nature of hegemonic practices. The antagonistic frontier does not only become fixed but can also be ruptured strategically in order to relocate elements and subject positions from one side to the other. Such a rupture

²²⁵ 'Emergente Interpretationsoffenheit des symbolischen Äquivalents des Allgemeinen'

²²⁶ Nonhoff (2006: 233)

²²⁷ 'Einrichtung/ Fortschreibung von Subjektpositionen für politisch-gesellschaftliche Kräfte'

²²⁸ Nonhoff (2005: 16)

²²⁹ 'Gezieltes und vereinzelt Durchbrechen der antagonistischen Grenze'; see Nonhoff (2006: 232ff)

can be the result of dislocations and resulting structural crises of a hegemonic project but can also reflect its expansion. This makes it necessary for the discourse to defend itself by including particular socio-political forces that have formerly been articulated as parts of the ‘antagonistic chain’ into the ‘hegemonic chain’ or relocating problematic elements into the ‘antagonistic chain’.²³⁰ This stratagem is however unlikely to be discovered in this analysis of IAC discourse. It refers to re-articulations of the discourse over time and can thus only be distinguished through an analysis of the ways in which the discourse changed from its beginnings until today. The present analysis however approaches the discourse as an entity existing in a specific time and place (see later section on time frames) and, thus, can only point to some ad-hoc insights into the chronological development of discursive relocations. Given that this is a complementary stratagem only, bracketing it out does however not derogate the usefulness of a stratagems-based analysis on a whole for the purposes of this thesis.

The ‘stratagem of the actual advocate’²³¹ (VIII) and the ‘stratagem of the actual meaning’²³² (IX) become relevant only at the point where a particular hegemonic formation has expanded and stabilised rather successfully. When this is the case, reasons Nonhoff, second-order hegemonies can emerge inside this formation.²³³ The political struggle then takes place no more between the hegemonic project and its alternatives, but rather within it.²³⁴ The two stratagems therefore refer to the existence of struggles about an actual advocate and an actual meaning within an established hegemonic formation. To a certain extent they reverse the effects of the stratagems concerning the subject positions and the emergent openness of interpretation of the hegemonic claim; once the discourse has achieved a certain influence and degree of stability through massive equivalisation, the equivalences can be partly re-articulated (within the chains) as differences for the sake of concretising and thus further fixing the discursive structures.

The ‘stratagem of the actual advocate’ means that a particular socio-political force assumes the role of a ‘champion’ in the advocacy of the hegemonic claim. This im-

²³⁰ Nonhoff (2006: 234)

²³¹ ‘Strategem des eigentlichen Verfechters’

²³² ‘Strategem der eigentlichen Bedeutung’

²³³ Nonhoff (2006: 234)

²³⁴ Personal communication, 5 September 2012

plies convincing articulations that the success of the claim depends primarily on this force. Such a strategic articulation would entail that subject positions inside the chain of equivalence become clearly differentiated from each other and that something resembling a hierarchy is established, or even that some are relocated into the ‘antagonistic chain’.

The ‘stratagem of the actual meaning’ refers to how a particular interpretation of the symbolic equivalent of the Universal can establish itself as dominant throughout the chain of equivalence. For this to happen, ‘actual’ and ‘non-actual’ links between the respective element and other discursive elements in the chain have to be articulated, or at least the relations between those elements need to be concretised and thus fixed further. For Nonhoff, the analytical value of this stratagem is that the presence of political conflicts about the actual meaning and the actual advocate indicates that a hegemonic project has reached very advanced stages.²³⁵

Having discussed the process that a discourse undergoes in order to become a hegemonic formation, a final comment is required regarding the end point of this process. In short, there is none. As mentioned previously, hegemony is not a status but a dynamic process that is never complete; this means that hegemonic formations can be understood as hegemonic projects in rather advanced stages, and also that the success of hegemonic projects can only ever be relative. A successful hegemonic project is one that has almost superseded the dichotomy between particularity and universality;²³⁶ that has to a relatively large extent articulated its particular societal project as society’s general interest or collective will,²³⁷ as the ultimate way to organise society²³⁸ (be it in a particular area or more generally).

By way of the hegemonic stratagems described above, a successful hegemonic project is a discourse that has clearly and rather comprehensively divided the discursive space demarcated (IV) into two antagonistic chains of equivalences (I, II) containing subject positions for socio-political forces that have actually been taken up by those forces (VI), that features a prominent symbolic representative of the Universal (III) that is open to interpretation, accommodating a wide range of claims (V), that has

²³⁵ Personal communication, 5 September 2012

²³⁶ Wullweber (2010: 94)

²³⁷ Cf. Wullweber (2010: 83)

²³⁸ Wullweber (2010: 92)

over time defended its status through targeted and sporadic breaking of the antagonistic frontier (VII), and that may, as a result, already (but not necessarily) be experiencing conflict about the actual advocate (VIII) and the actual meaning (IX) of the Universal.

Yet, the principal analytical worth of these stratagems is not in assessing the exact degree of expansion and stabilisation of a hegemonic formation. Nonhoff conceives them instead as an analytical lens through which to look at relatively well-constituted and thus easily discernible hegemonic formations in order to examine the (successful) stratagems employed by this discourse on its way to hegemony. I employ the hegemonic stratagems in my thesis however in a somewhat different manner.

While IAC discourse has not been established in the literature as a hegemonic project or hegemonic formation, the critical literature however argues that it is characterised by a strong consensus among powerful actors that advance a neoliberal societal ideals through fighting corruption, as discussed in chapter 1. According to the discussion above, such a consensus can be understood as a hegemonic project constructing two clearly (and thus consensually) separated chains of equivalences, one containing corruption and the other outlining a comprehensive neoliberal Universal. With this ‘hypothesis’ in mind, the thesis therefore uses the concept of the hegemonic project and its stratagems as a theoretical device to inquire into the consensus claim by exploring whether the discourse presents in fact two clearly divided chains of equivalences that characterise a hegemonic project. But it also employs it to trace the ways in which IAC discourse constructs corruption and a particular societal ideal; to examine how it advances this ideal, in the sense of expanding the chains of equivalences and the division of the discursive space through linguistic and non-linguistic articulations; and to, ultimately, give a more detailed account of the nature of the societal ideal pursued through the fight against corruption than has so far been provided.

In order to be able to pursue these four analytical goals the thesis however requires an additional analytical device in addition to the hegemonic stratagems. This device consists of a focus on the more specific discursive logics that characterise IAC discourse. This is necessary because, while all discursive articulations consist of an interplay between relations of difference, equivalence, contrariety and super-

difference, it is the different constellations, or logics, of such relations that give rise to particular social orders. Chapter 1 has already suggested a focus on specific ways of construction as a way to deal with the open questions regarding the neoliberal consensus argument. In theoretical terms, this means that only an understanding of the exact ways, or specific logics, according to which IAC discourse functions will allow us to tell whether IAC discourse is a hegemonic project or not (i.e. whether it displays the more general political logics that hegemonic projects have in common, most importantly a clear division of its discursive space), and if it is not, how it functions otherwise; and, second, only a very close investigation of the specific logics structuring IAC discourse will enable us to get a clearer picture of the societal ideal potentially present within it, and of the exact ways in which it is being advanced by the discourse. While the latter can be grasped to a certain extent through the general logics of the hegemonic stratagems, they also exceed those, making a focus on more detailed logics necessary.

Although a conception of discursive logics exists in Laclau and Mouffe's writings,²³⁹ it is neither very prominent nor very highly developed. While Nonhoff does not use the term 'logics', nonetheless he conceptualises logics to a certain but ultimately insufficient extent. The hegemonic stratagems outlined above can be regarded as the general logics that hegemonic projects tend to display.²⁴⁰ Furthermore, Nonhoff identifies different types of elements which tend to be articulated in hegemonic projects: aims, specifications of the Universal, instrumental claims, concrete demands, and subject positions.²⁴¹ These different types of elements can be understood as indicating particular kinds of logics within a hegemonic project, linking together different relations of difference, equivalence, contrariety and super-difference and thus operating within chains of equivalence but also stretching across the antagonistic divide between them. As Nonhoff explains, these categories of signifiers are not intended to hierarchically organise the latter but serve the purpose of shedding light on the specific Universal that begins to show in the net of claims.²⁴²

²³⁹ For a summary on their understanding of social and political logics see Glynos/Howarth (2007: 135 ff)

²⁴⁰ However Nonhoff stresses that not all hegemonic projects need necessarily 'employ' all hegemonic stratagems in order to successfully hegemonise the discursive space, which is also expressed in the categorisation of stratagems into core and complementary stratagems.

²⁴¹ Nonhoff (2006: 274)

²⁴² Nonhoff (2006: 266)

As we shall see, this is the way in which they are used as important analytical devices in the empirical chapters 4 to 6. Yet the analytical capacity of this categorisation does not exhaust the complexity of discursive logics either in hegemonic projects or in other kinds of discourses.²⁴³ In addition to them, the general relations of equivalence, difference and contrariety in a specific discourse are structured by and render many other, complex and diverse articulations such as reasons, causes, consequences, justifications, contradictions, accusations, definitions, adjectives and metaphors etc. which are all constructed in an interplay of linguistic and more material articulations. While it seems neither necessary nor useful to categorise the discourse mainly according to these types of relations, it is more important to draw out the crucial ways or *logics* in which these discursive relations are linked up in the particular discourse under consideration, thus highlighting the ways in which these ‘relational networks’²⁴⁴ come to construct and advance very particular societal structures.

In this respect, attention should be drawn to the work of Glynos and Howarth who have set out a comprehensive post-Marxist theoretical framework that includes three different categories of discursive logics which can be used as an interpretive lens for the explanation of discourses: social, political and fantasmatic logics.²⁴⁵ According to Glynos and Howarth, social logics are the “rules [that] govern a practice or regime in a particular context”²⁴⁶ and are discernible by the analyst through their “regularity in dispersion”, for example, the logics of a market.²⁴⁷ Drawing them out allows the analyst to characterise a particular social practice or regime,²⁴⁸ taking into account the “ensemble of rules, norms, values and regularities” that define everyday life in it.²⁴⁹ Political logics illuminate “how social practices come into being”, how they are instituted, transformed and sustained.²⁵⁰ Most of the hegemonic stratagems outlined earlier seem to fall into this category of logics given that they theorise ways of insti-

²⁴³ Having elaborated his theoretical framework in relation to a positively framed agenda (the social market economy) Nonhoff neglects the complex workings of the antagonistic chain of equivalence in particular, and his theorisation of it is restricted to conceiving it as articulating hindrances to the Universal articulated in the hegemonic chain.

²⁴⁴ Glynos/Howarth (2007: 136)

²⁴⁵ Glynos/Howarth (2007)

²⁴⁶ Howarth (2008: 14)

²⁴⁷ Glynos/Howarth (2007: 139, 141) drawing on Foucault (1970)

²⁴⁸ Glynos/Howarth (2007: 137)

²⁴⁹ Torfing (1999: 70)

²⁵⁰ Howarth (2008: 16, 14)

tuting a new order.²⁵¹ Political logics are closely interrelated with social logics in that social practices can be regarded as relatively sedimented political practices. Fantasmatic logics in turn “provide the means to understand why and how subjects are gripped by practices and regimes”;²⁵² they can ‘cover over’ the contingencies of both social and political practices in that they either help normalise social practices and prevent political practices in sedimented social structures (thus stabilising these structures) or provide political practices with “direction and energy”. The latter can work through either a beatific or a horrific dimension, for example creating images of either omnipotence or victimhood.²⁵³ Nonhoff’s stratagem V, the ‘emergent openness of interpretation of the symbolic equivalent of the Universal’ can be conceived as referring to a fantasmatic logic as it enables diverse beatific perspectives on the Universal.

This categorisation of logics aids the understanding of the function of different discursive logics traced in IAC discourse, either for structuring or advancing a particular Universal, and will thus be used together with the hegemonic stratagems in the empirical chapters of the thesis.

However, in any particular discourse these logics will be jointly articulated and appear in complex, intertwined ways. This not only means that they can only be traced as such but also that this interrelation needs to be brought out by the analysis, as it will be the joint articulation of specific logics that makes a particular discourse ‘work’ as it does, which is why they are hardly separable from each other. This complexity also means that in order to be able to unfold and interpret any broader discursive logics (be it social, political or fantasmatic) in IAC discourse, the analysis must start by looking at the discourse very closely, at *what is there* in the discourse, accessing it through the manifold discursive moves in which reasons, causes, consequences, subject positions, measures etc. are constructed. Only in so doing is the thesis able to draw out the complex ways in which different logics are closely intertwined in the actual operations of IAC discourse.

²⁵¹ However, stratagem V, the ‘emergent openness of interpretation of the symbolic equivalent of the Universal’, can be better interpreted as a fantasmatic logic (see chapter 4).

²⁵² Howarth (2008: 16)

²⁵³ Glynos/Howarth (2007: 145-147)

While I will explain at the end of this chapter how exactly I have made use of the theoretical devices described here during the analysis of the empirical material, it should be left clear at this stage that my analysis and explanation of the structures of IAC discourse takes place not through an exploration of potential hegemonic strata-gems alone but instead operates from a perspective that is able to detect the complex interrelations between these and more detailed and specific logics of the discourse.

In the following sections I will explain how IAC discourse can be conceived, operationalised and analysed within the framework of PDHT.

The IAC consensus from a post-Marxist discourse and hegemony theoretical perspective

In the course of the previous sections I have already given some brief examples of how IAC discourse can be conceived in the framework of PDHT. However a short but comprehensive overview is now required about how the picture of IAC discourse that has been provided by the critical literature can be understood through the lens that PDHT provides. This brings us back to the open questions with regards to IAC discourse and allows me to clarify the way in which the central research question of this thesis will be answered through a set of sub-questions informed by the theoretical concepts outlined above.

IAC discourse can be understood as a discourse in the Laclau-Mouffian sense in that it forms part of the field of discourse and certainly consists of a range of signifiers centring on corruption and anticorruption as nodal points. This is why it can be distinguished as one discourse in the first place. These signifiers in turn can be expected to be linked to each other in different discursive logics that socially construct the meanings of corruption and anticorruption measures but also of other concepts figuring in the discourse.

The antagonistic set-up of the discourse (as being ‘anti’ corruption) suggests the presence of an antagonistic division of the discursive space. The argument by the critical literature about a neoliberal consensus suggests the presence of two opposing and clearly delimited chains of equivalences within the discourse, one of which co-

herently and consensually constructs corruption as mainly an economic problem while the other constructs a neoliberal societal ideal, or at least neoliberal measures, to address this problem. If there are such chains of equivalences, then the construction of these chains can be understood as occurring from the perspective of subject positions promoting the fight against corruption such as the IAC organisations introduced at the beginning of this thesis.

Yet given the blind spots in the literature we still do not know whether the discourse is actually that consensual and have reasons to suspect that these two chains of equivalences may not be that clearly delimited after all, that contestations within them (about the meaning of corruption and anticorruption) will blur their boundaries and the antagonistic divide established in the discursive space. Are there perhaps conflicting hegemonic projects in IAC discourse, struggling to divide the discursive field, and competing to establish their particular as Universal?

Apart from claiming that corruption is constructed as mainly an economic problem, the critical literature also hardly provides any insights into how exactly corruption is constructed as such through equivalisation with different signifiers (including subject positions) according to particular logics in the assumed 'antagonistic chain' of IAC discourse, as well as through contrarities articulated with elements in the 'hegemonic chain' (apart from economic welfare).

We also have only vague insights about the kind of societal ideal constructed by the alleged 'hegemonic chain'. This is again because insights into the signifiers figuring in that chain and, importantly, the discursive logics connecting them, are scarce. While critical scholars have identified in the discourse a conception of social actors as rational and self-interested and found anticorruption measures to consist mainly of institutional reform, it remains rather unclear how these elements are articulated in logics constituting a neoliberal ideal. Similarly, the function of morality in the 'hegemonic chain of equivalence' remains unexplained. Also, we do not know whether IAC discourse articulates a comprehensive or partial Universal, if at all, and what the scope of that Universal is. Overall it remains unclear which logics this ideal follows and through which discursive moves it is constructed. Given that IAC discourse does not seem to openly advocate 'neoliberalism' as *the* solution to corruption, what is the representative of the Universal pursued? And how does it come to

be constructed as something that is politically uncontroversial? And what is the role of the prominent nodal point corruption in the discourse?

Moreover, we know hardly anything about how IAC discourse renders the fight against corruption persuasive or at least works towards doing so. Given that in order for a hegemonic project to advance and to further expand the antagonistic division of the discursive space, it must offer subject positions in its 'hegemonic chain' and persuade subjects to take them up, many open questions remain with regards to IAC discourse. Through which linguistic and non-linguistic (or 'material') articulations does it work towards restructuring social relations according to its nodal points, offering and incorporating subject positions (of what kind?) into its 'hegemonic chain', and advancing the division of the discursive space? Can we maybe distinguish conflicts about the actual meaning of its Universal and about the actual advocate of this Universal? And finally, what identities and alternative political projects are negated by this hegemonic project (if it is one)?

These open questions, summarised by chapter 1 in the general research question

What are the societal ideals inherent in the international fight against corruption, how are they constructed and advanced, and to what extent is there a consensus on them?

can now be addressed through the following sub-questions that are informed by the PDHT framework set out in this chapter:

To what extent does IAC discourse constitute one coherent hegemonic project?

How do hegemonic stratagems and/or other discursive logics structuring IAC discourse construct and advance particular societal ideals?

Or how do they diverge and dislocate each other?

Now that the analytical value of PDHT for an analysis of IAC discourse has been demonstrated, I will, in the following sections, explain how I operationalise IAC discourse for the purpose of answering these research questions and how I go about in doing so methodologically.

Delimiting and analysing the discourse – ‘operationalisation’ and method

Given the relational identity of all signifiers and the infinite play of meaning which is only precariously arrested by equivalisations, it is difficult to determine the boundaries of a discourse for analytical purposes. However, even if it were possible to detect the exact boundaries of IAC discourse, including the fight against corruption, analysing the whole discourse would entail investigating such a vast body of data to render a study of its totality impractical.

The thesis deals with this practical restriction by focussing on analysing a section of IAC discourse comprising text as well as interview material relevant to the fight against corruption from the three organisations that can be regarded as the most influential within IAC discourse: the World Bank, the international NGO Transparency International, and the United Nations Development Programme. This choice is based on the following reasons.

First, it seems advisable to examine the anticorruption discourses of these three organisations²⁵⁴ due to their prominent structural positions as internationally well-known, widely respected and heavily supported (if of course not universally so) organisations. These positions as nodal points of media and academic attention, expertise, financial resources and decision-making of powerful actors endow them with greater articulatory powers regarding the international fight against corruption and the eventual Universal to be pursued than smaller and less popular actors in the international fight against corruption, such as the anticorruption NGO Tiri. But these organisations also occupy prominent positions within IAC discourse due to the fact that they are particularly active in the fight against corruption and have made it a particularly important topic within their portfolio (or even *the* topic, in the case of TI) – more than for example the IMF or the OECD.

TI has played an important role in putting the topic of corruption on the agenda of bilateral and international donors as well as other NGOs. It is unchallenged as the largest and most important INGO in the area of anticorruption, and its documents and best practice suggestions are read, used and distributed by both civil society or-

²⁵⁴ Please read this with all the theoretical caveats regarding the possibility of social actors ‘uttering’ discourses as sovereign subjects.

ganisations and government institutions worldwide. It has more than 100 national chapters²⁵⁵ which are often asked for statements regarding national corruption cases, for help with national anticorruption strategies, and which maintain a huge network with business people, governments, development institutions, and other NGOs.

The World Bank is the world's largest donor in the area of international development co-operation which has made anticorruption an important issue in its governance and development agenda since 1996. It calls its governance portfolio "very significant"²⁵⁶ and between 1996 and 2009 it supported more than 600 governance initiatives or programmes with anticorruption components.²⁵⁷ During the fiscal years 1997-1999 the Bank's governance budget was raised from US\$4 billion to US\$7.5 billion, while governance-related "lending for technical assistance, including stand-alone technical assistance projects and technical assistance embedded in other projects, totaled [sic] approximately \$2 billion to \$2.5 billion per year – equivalent to about 9 percent of total Bank lending".²⁵⁸

As the United Nations' development agency, the UNDP is endowed with extensive funds from governments but also from multilateral and local donors from around the world and has a major role to play in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals which articulates their overarching aim of cutting poverty in half by 2015. In 2011, earmarked contributions to the UNDP from all its partners amounted to US\$3.86 billion.²⁵⁹ Since 1997, the UNDP has been a "leading provider of technical assistance in the area of anti-corruption",²⁶⁰ and via its country and regional offices 103 countries are currently receiving its support in anticorruption efforts.²⁶¹

Analysing the section of IAC discourse involving these three organisations also promises particularly important insights with regards to the consensus thesis as due to their very different historical trajectories and organisational structures these actors could be expected not only to have different approaches to anticorruption but also different societal ideals inherent in their work.

²⁵⁵ TI (A)

²⁵⁶ WB (2000: 29)

²⁵⁷ WB (c)

²⁵⁸ WB (2000: 29)

²⁵⁹ UNDP (2012b: 34)

²⁶⁰ UNDP (2008a: 2)

²⁶¹ UNDP (b)

Following reforms in the World Bank's voting power distribution in 2010, high-income countries still hold over 60 percent of the vote.²⁶² Therefore, their influence on the WB's strategic and thematic decisions remains greater than that of the large mass of the very developing and transition countries that the Bank's loans are supposed to benefit and that remain under 40 percent. Thus, the World Bank continues to be criticised for this unequal distribution of power among its members. It has also been criticised for its good governance and anticorruption activities.²⁶³ The NGO Transparency International in turn has been treated somewhat more gently by the critics.²⁶⁴ There are certainly a number of critical works as discussed in the last chapter,²⁶⁵ but overall, TI's engagement in the fight against corruption has often been treated positively.²⁶⁶ Having come into existence from criticism of what its founders saw as neglect of the problem of corruption in the Bank's development efforts, especially in African countries, TI tends to be regarded as an ethically committed fighter against corruption,²⁶⁷ and indeed, the inclusion of terms like 'ethics' and 'integrity' in its discourse suggests so too.²⁶⁸ Moreover, hopes seem to rest on TI to take on the role of a more culturally and politically sensitive global actor against corruption.²⁶⁹

Compared to the World Bank and the UNDP, TI is rather well-positioned to assume the role of an IAC reformer. As an NGO, TI is free to act politically openly, and to change its priorities and approaches according to what is deemed appropriate and successful by its members, rather than having to push its policies through a bulk of restrictive regulations and governments' foreign-political considerations. Unlike the World Bank and the UNDP, it does not require a mandate from donor and receiving governments to sanction its projects and therefore is not forced to evade 'sensitive topics'. Nor is it bound by anything like the World Bank's Articles of Agreement

²⁶² Bretton Woods Project (2010); WB (a)

²⁶³ Abrahamsen (2000); Harrison (2004); Weaver (2008); Marquette (2004); Williams (1999); Brackling (2009); Polzer (2001); Brown/Cloke (2004)

²⁶⁴ For a more detailed elaboration on the perception of TI in the literature, please see Gebel (2012).

²⁶⁵ Hindess (2005); De Maria (2008c); Murphy (2011)

²⁶⁶ Marschall (2002); Doig/McIvor (2003); Galtung (2006)

²⁶⁷ See for example Tänzler who calls it a well established "moral and political authority" Tänzler (2010: 331), and Wrage and Wrage who think that TI "clearly fit[s] the description of 'transnational moral entrepreneurs'" (Wrage/Wrage 2005: 322).

²⁶⁸ See e.g. TI (p)

²⁶⁹ Bukovansky (2006: 194) suggests that "TI's grass-roots approach may well be in tension with the efforts put forth through international institutions, insofar as those institutions draw primarily on the economic discourse on corruption, take the ends of modernity for granted, and neglect issues of political agency and the substantive, normative dimensions of the concept of public good".

which prevent the Bank from interfering in the “political affairs” of its member states and from acting according to any “political or other non-economic influences or considerations”.²⁷⁰ Furthermore, it is organised quite differently from the huge bureaucratic apparatus of the World Bank which requires all of its projects to be moulded into particular templates which may restrict their potential for innovation, adaptation to local contexts and modification during the process of implementation. Claiming to be a decentralised grass-roots organisation, TI could be expected to let its chapters create innovative projects which fit the cultural contexts under consideration, and to test manifold approaches. On the other hand, one must acknowledge that TI is originally the project of a former World Bank country director and other like-minded people²⁷¹ who provided not only the organisational capacities and networking but also the intellectual capital for the organisation. Eigen and his co-founders all came from either legal or economic background; some had worked at the World Bank or other development institutions. Thus, it may be plausible that in this way the economic approach of the World Bank became deeply embedded in the strategy of TI. These ambiguities present a highly interesting study to establish what unites and separates the approaches of TI and the World Bank. Apart from that elucidating in greater detail on areas of the discourse that have been partly researched already also seems expedient as it allows me to draw on existing insights while amending, modifying and revising them by way of my findings to provide a more complete and comprehensive picture.

In addition to this the research focus of this thesis extends to the anticorruption practices of the UNDP. Despite its international weight and long-time anticorruption work the UNDP has so far been completely neglected in critical anticorruption literature; the three strategy documents the organisation put out in 2008²⁷² in the context of its Programme Against Corruption for Development Effectiveness²⁷³ seem to have avoided comment entirely. Yet the UNDP’s position is quite interesting to analyse. While it is a government-led organisation like the World Bank, it takes its policy decisions in a more ‘democratic’ way than the latter, weighing the voices of its member states equally at least officially. Overall, it is often regarded as a less

²⁷⁰ IBRD (1989) Art. IV, Sect. 10; Art III, Sect. 5b

²⁷¹ See also Murphy (2011)

²⁷² UNDP (2008b); UNDP (2008c)

²⁷³ UNDP (2008d)

economistic and more reformatory or even radical player in international development than the WB.²⁷⁴ It will thus be interesting to assess the ways in which it contributes to the shape of IAC discourse.

Third, the reason I chose to focus on more strategic and general texts produced by the organisations and on the practices of their headquarters rather than on some of the diverse practices of implementation of IAC programmes on the ground is because due to their privileged structural position within the organisations the former can be expected to exert greater influence in eventual struggles about a Universal than the latter. However, it is important to avoid the trap of thinking in terms of articulatory power as a one-way street. It should be clear that IAC organisations' overall strategies and approaches may be subverted 'on the ground' to a considerable extent and that local and national practices can be expected to partly re-articulate and dislocate the overall strategies. Yet the organisations' headquarters and their strategic documents can be conceived as nodal points which are able to concentrate potential hegemonic articulations (of money, strategy, experts etc.) regarding the fight against corruption. Thus, it is important that they be studied, before (in future research steps) the local practices including ways of subversion and resistance to (or dislocation of) an eventually hegemonic IAC discourse can be investigated in a fruitful manner.

In total, I have examined 117 general anticorruption policy documents and web pages associated with Transparency International,²⁷⁵ the World Bank and the UNDP all of which were publicly available. I have also conducted interviews with staff from these organisations at their headquarters. The 18 semi-structured interviews, which exist in both recorded and transcribed form, were conducted with TI-Secretariat officials in Berlin during October 2010 (8 interviews), and with UNDP officials in New York (2 interviews) and World Bank officials in Washington DC (8 interviews) during November and December 2010.

²⁷⁴ See e.g. Charlesworth (2011)

²⁷⁵ In this respect it must be noted that in April 2012, after the greatest part of the analysis conducted here was completed, TI started an overhaul of its website. The latter is not yet completed, which is why currently the new website <http://www.transparency.org/> exists simultaneously with the former one which remains accessible via <http://archive.transparency.org>. The material used in this thesis stems almost exclusively from the now archived website.

In terms of publication dates, the text material analysed extends over the time period of twelve years from the year 2000 to 2012. However, it was collected over a period of three years from 2009 to 2012. During this time the documents and information made reference to here were made available by the chosen organisations as key reference points in their anti-corruption work. Crucially, they were made available ‘simultaneously’ or ‘concurrently’ to each other and thus constituted ‘a discourse’ during this time, regardless of their specific publication date. For this reason, and with the aims of the thesis in mind (that is, close study of current discursive logics of IAC work), the material is analysed independently of publication dates as a ‘discursive entirety’ constructing the fight against corruption during the collection period. Thus, it is not the aim of the thesis to provide a historical perspective on IAC discourse or to discern at which point in time particular discursive articulations have emerged. Given the choice to treat discourse as an ‘entirety’ within a specific period only ad hoc commentary can be made on chronological and processual developments in the discourse. Even so, analysing the texts within the chosen focus and through the Laclau and Mouffian methods described here comes with great benefits: it enables us to assess in detail, within this period, the presence and absence of specific discursive constellations and their discursive effects with regards to constructions of corruption and societal ideals.

The material was selected with the aim of gathering data on conceptions of corruption and on the main parameters of the societal ideal implicit in IAC discourse (which are dominantly structured by particular conceptions of the realms of politics, economics and civil society).²⁷⁶ The web pages accessed mainly contain general information concerning the organisations, co-operation with partners, approach and fields of activity with regards to fighting corruption, while the policy documents analysed mainly contain information about anticorruption strategy, programming, research and finances.

²⁷⁶ As mentioned before, “the distinctions between political, economic and ideological practices are pragmatic and analytical, and strictly internal to the category of discourse,” meaning that the discourse itself makes these distinctions, not the analyst (Howarth et al 2000: 6). IAC organisations also work on other areas, like e.g. the environment and sports. Yet, these clearly do not play as important a role for societal organisation as do the areas of politics, economics and general civil society which form the three major discursive categories within IAC discourse.

While the statements from the interviews are not to be taken as representative for all subject positions in the organisations, the interviewees were selected from diverse organisational sectors and according to diverse thematic areas in order to facilitate the inclusion of the broadest possible cross-section of organisational subject positions and articulations within the limited number of interviews. Against the background of the document analysis the interviews served, on the one hand, to obtain more information about approach, cooperation and financing practices; but also to highlight the staff's conceptions of corruption, the societal ideals it subverts and related concepts in both chains of equivalences. This was done in order to verify or question conceptual findings that emerged from the documents; to reveal conceptual contestations and ultimately to clarify superficial contradictions. The questions, which varied from interview to interview and according to the interviewees' expertise, covered a broad range of topics including operational / organisational aspects, co-operations with and differences from other organisations, conceptions of corruption, conceptions of human nature, political and economic ideals, the meanings of different important concepts (such as integrity, accountability, development) and their relation to corruption, cultural diversity and universality regarding corruption, consensus and difference among (different parts of) the organisations, research methods and sources of knowledge. Subjects and concomitant subject positions and articulations are parts of discourse in the Laclau-Mouffian sense, and therefore the interviews are treated as such in the thesis. Data from the interviews have been made anonymous in the thesis in order to safeguard the interviewees' privacy.

It must be stressed that my study is not a comparative case study in the positivist sense, i.e. it does not aim to detect, through comparison of organisations, generalisable causal relations between organisational characteristics and policy outcomes. Instead, it is more interested in *how* articulations about (anti)corruption work together or against each other in the construction of corruption and particular societal ideals. Moreover, although I examine a part of the discourse involving three organisations, there is no reason to treat the respective actions and speech as isolated arrangements of practices produced by sovereign social actors, or to assume a necessary divide of the discourse along organisational lines; instead, all articulations are understood as part of the same discourse and can be distinguished as 'pertaining' to particular organisations only through their discursive links to the organisations' of-

fices, resources and names as prominent nodal points. However, those nodal points should not be conceived as having an exclusive defining function for the discourse since at the same time its elements can be expected to be linked to the practices of other organisations and donors, to certain research practices and particular kinds of knowledge as well as to societal ideals constructed in other discourses. By now, it should also be clear that the discursive area which I delineate with these materials is only one part of the whole IAC discourse. The latter includes many more organisations, extends into the implementation of anticorruption programmes on the ground, and is linked to domestic corruption discourses in almost all the countries of the world. Thus, my thesis is not an analysis of the dominance or contestation of certain constructions of corruption, societal ideals or of subject positions in the target countries where the anticorruption programmes are implemented or in an even wider discursive context; rather I examine the ‘organisational main stage’ of IAC discourse, by looking at constructions of corruption, societal ideals and their contestations within and between the three major IAC organisations (for the sake of simplicity I will continue calling this section of IAC discourse that I analyse ‘IAC discourse’ in the rest of the thesis). This also means that when drawing out the ‘social logics’ that characterise the Universal as constructed in IAC discourse, the analysis does not reveal to what extent these logics actually reflect the societal practices ‘on the ground’. The principal use of this category of logics in the thesis is thus to characterise the kind of Universal that IAC discourse attempts to institute.

In the pursuit of answers to the research questions centring on the construction and advancement of societal ideals through discursive logics, the existence of hegemonic stratagems and on eventual contestations within the discourse, the analysis of the empirical material was conducted according to retroductive principles of explanation (rather than inductive, deductive or narrative ones). These involve the generation of multiple hypotheses which are “tested through a to-and-fro movement with the available empirical data until we are persuaded that the putative *explanans* clears away the confusion and properly fits the phenomenon under consideration”.²⁷⁷ In the present case this was applied in the following way. First, the empirical material was categorised according to concepts and other terms figuring frequently in the discourse, while paying attention to eventual contradictions and contestations in the

²⁷⁷ Howarth (2010: 325)

ways in which they were articulated. These concepts were grouped according to conceptual clusters which were then sorted into two chains of equivalences that started emerging quite clearly from the material analysed, confirming the hypothesis of the hegemonic project – one chain constructing corruption and other problematic aspects related to it, and the other constructing adequate counter-measures leading to a societal ideal. Within the chains, the elements were then analysed and re-arranged according to the emerging categories of aims, specifications of the Universal, instrumental claims and concrete policy demands. Within these categories, the elements were then discussed according to the other hegemonic stratagems and more specific discursive logics which, in the form of multiple hypotheses, could be surprisingly distinctly and coherently discerned in the material and with much fewer contestations than one might have expected. This was done by following catenations of discursive articulations and interpreting the discursive effects of these catenations in terms of fantastic, political and social logics. In a last retroductive step, the found social logics were interpreted further with the help of a theoretical framework, a theory of the governing logics of advanced liberal rule, to which many of the logics drawn out from IAC discourse could be related.

However, this is not to argue that these logics are objectively observable features of IAC discourse. As Howarth puts it, logics are “in the practices examined, yet they are not subsumable by the latter”.²⁷⁸ Thus, while many unexpected logics, connections and contradictions emerged from the material, their interpretations in this thesis will necessarily bear my subjective trace. However, at the same time, while logics “bring something to the explanation that is not simply given by the practices or interpretations of agents, (...) they are always anchored in some way in the latter”,²⁷⁹ in this case the articulations constituting IAC discourse.

In an attempt to render the ontic level or the social reality of the political project that IAC discourse is even more intelligible than it could become through my PDHT inspired analytical narrative, the structure of the empirical part of the thesis reflects the dominant logic or ontological structure of IAC discourse which is the antagonistic division of the discursive space. As we will see, this poses some practical challenges

²⁷⁸ Howarth (2008: 13)

²⁷⁹ Howarth (2008: 13)

given that some logics stretch not only within but also across the two chains of equivalences; yet overall it has the merit of bringing out how this political logic dominates the discourse and other logics, giving it the shape of a hegemonic project.

Therefore, chapter 3 deals with the ‘corruption chain’ (called chain C), which is oriented against the Universal and constructs the meaning of corruption (amongst other things), while chapters 4, 5 and 6 deal with the ‘anticorruption chain’ (called chain AC), which constructs the meaning of an uncorrupted society, and outlines how it is to be achieved. The unequal distribution of chapters per chain is due to the simple fact that chain AC is longer because it comprises detailed articulations of the complex workings of the uncorrupted society, while chain C is mainly concerned with constructing a (specific) enemy.

More specifically, chapter 4 deals with the aims articulated in chain AC of IAC discourse as well as with the specifications of the Universal; chapter 5 is occupied with the instrumental claims with regards to the ways in which to go about in fighting corruption; and chapter 6 is concerned with the concrete policy demands for the organisation of the societal realms of the state, the economy and civil society, unfolding the institutional and cultural arrangements shaping the uncorrupted society, and thus completes the unveiling of the Universal advanced by IAC discourse.

3 Corruption – the creation of an enemy

This chapter investigates the first of two opposing chains of equivalences that can be distinguished as constituting IAC discourse – the chain that is oriented against the Universal or the ‘antagonistic chain’. This chain articulates all the hindrances to the Universal (set out in the second chain). Unlike other hegemonic projects analysed in the hegemony theoretical literature so far, in which the main nodal point of the discourse is the symbolic equivalent of the Universal located in the ‘hegemonic chain’,¹ IAC discourse seems to centre on the main signifier or nodal point of its ‘antagonistic chain’ of equivalence, corruption. Given this particular characteristic, I start my empirical analysis by looking at the ‘antagonistic chain’, which in this thesis I call chain C, the ‘corruption chain’. However, this will necessarily involve making some links to the ‘hegemonic chain’ or the ‘anticorruption chain’ (which I call ‘chain AC’) and also to wider discourses at certain points.

The chapter shows how corruption is constructed as a very important and at the same time quite specific problem through being articulated in particular relations of equivalence, difference and contrariety with other specific concepts and attributes. Importantly, however, the chapter reveals how at the same time these articulations serve to construct particular modes of societal organisation as inadequate and highly problematic.

Specifically, the chapter demonstrates how chain C constructs corruption as well as problematic modes of societal organisation by defining corruption in a particular way, locating it in particular parts of the world, and reasoning in specific ways about its causes and consequences. It also shows how the significance of corruption as a problem and thus the persuasiveness of the fight against corruption is expanded through giving it attributes and metaphors and thus equivalising it with threat, danger and damage. It highlights how, through contradictory discursive logics, IAC discourse substitutes potential subject positions in chain C with corruption itself, and how this serves to increase the number of potential supporters of the fight against corruption.

¹ See e.g. Nonhoff’s analysis of the social market economy as a hegemonic project (Nonhoff 2006), or Wullweber’s analysis of the Nanotechnology project (Wullweber 2010).

In revealing all these discursive moves, and while paying particular attention to the coherence or divergence of these logics, the chapter demonstrates the surprisingly coherent equivalisations of particular claims that are oriented against the Universal articulated in IAC discourse² and draws out the political nature of these equivalisations;³ it traces how these equivalisations prepare the ground for stratagem II, the antagonistic division of the discursive space, and thus for a very particular kind of political intervention in the form of the international fight against corruption. It also distinguishes the first appearance of the stratagem of super-differential demarcation (IV), showing how it shields IAC discourse from dislocation due to criticisms regarding the proclamation of Western superiority.

I will start my examination of how corruption is constructed by looking at how it is equivalised with particular definitions and manifestations before I discuss its causes and consequences as constructed in chain C and finally I investigate the existence of subject positions associated with corruption in the ‘antagonistic chain’ of IAC discourse.

Definitions, manifestations and locations of corruption

So what is corruption according to IAC discourse? What is this thing that needs to be fought so urgently? By tying it up in particular discursive relations with particular concepts and attributes in a chain of meaning, the IAC discourse makes corruption mean one thing and not another. The following sections will examine its meaning by examining how it is tied up with what could be regarded as a set of minor nodal points in chain C. When examining these equivalisations in chain C, looking at the definitions of corruption is key to get closer to its meaning.

² To be clear, the signifiers merged in chain C are equivalent in that they are all constructed as contributing to the constitution of a hindrance to the realisation of the Universal as laid out in IAC discourse.

³ Political nature refers here to the advancing of particular societal ideals.

Definitions of corruption

At first glance, the three organisations use very similar definitions of corruption. When looking at them more closely, however, it turns out that there are important differences. The WB sticks to the definition of corruption as the “abuse of public office for private gain”⁴ which was originally used by all three organisations. It insists that any kind of corruption involving private sector actors needs to “interface with and affect public sector performance: for example, collusion among bidders to a public procurement with the intent to defraud the state”,⁵ or consist of a situation where “an official accepts, solicits, or extorts a bribe”.⁶ The bribe does not necessarily have to be monetary but can be “anything of value to influence improperly the action of another party”.⁷ Through conceiving it as necessarily having to do with public office (equivalisation between corruption and public office), the WB constructs corruption as a phenomenon of the public sector. For the WB, public office needs to be abused in order for corruption to happen.

TI and the UNDP in turn seem to abstain from tying the signifier corruption to the public sector and thus the meaning of corruption in their discourse seems to remain more open. Thus, there is divergence in the discourse about the incorporation or not of the signifiers public office/public sector into the definition of corruption in chain C, and therefore about the exclusion or not from chain C of ‘corrupt’ activities that take place exclusively in the private sector.⁸

Yet also *within* TI’s discourse there are divergences of understanding. TI has reformulated the definition of corruption to the “abuse of entrusted power for private gain”⁹ or “the misuse of entrusted power for private benefit”¹⁰ – definitions which can also accommodate the abuse of power in the private sector. A TI interviewee explained that

⁴ For example WB (2007: 67)

⁵ WB (2007: 67)

⁶ WB (2007: 67)

⁷ WB (2007)

⁸ That the explicit construction of corruption as a phenomenon of the public sector in chain C has the effect of excluding private sector corruption is due to the established construction of public and private spheres as mutually exclusive spheres of society.

⁹ TI (o)

¹⁰ TI (2000: 1)

yes, we have been broadening our definition of corruption, and I don't think it's just an imperialistic way, you know, that we try to broaden our mandate. I think it's genuinely a growth of our understanding, that yes, we have misunderstood corruption to be only this much, and actually speaking corruption happens in up-stream processes, in state-capturing, and once you're into state-capture, you know, everything is linked to corruption.¹¹

Yet, despite this broadened definition of corruption as existing in both the public and the private sector the 'old' public-office centred definition of corruption as "the abuse of public office for private gain" or the "misuse of offices and institutions for private advantage" can still be found in several locations in its website documentation.¹² Also the famous CPI focuses on corruption in the public sector and is based on a conception of corruption as the abuse of public power for private benefit, comprising political as well as administrative aspects. The CPI results are based most of all on experts' opinions of the prevalence of phenomena like the bribery of public officials, kickbacks in public procurement, and the embezzlement of public funds, which clearly exclude activities that happen solely in the private sector, such as business fraud or socially irresponsible behaviour of brokers.¹³

Similarly, in 1998 the UNDP still defined corruption as "the misuse of public power, office or authority for private benefit" but then came to regard this definition as limited because "it considers corruption a sin of government and public servants, and does not take into account the fact that corruption also prevails in the private sector". The definition was thus reworked towards the 'misuse of entrusted power for private gain'¹⁴ which, as a UNDP interviewee explained, encompasses everything "from bribery to embezzlement, from corruption in private sector to public sector, to non-governmental sector. It doesn't matter whether you're a media person or a public official, or in private sector, business men or women – if you are misusing entrusted power for private gain, then you are corrupt".¹⁵ Yet, despite this broadening the UNDP seems to maintain in its documents a focus on the public sector, stating for example that "[w]hen public money is stolen for private gain, it means fewer re-

¹¹ TI-S official 2

¹² TI (o); TI (j)

¹³ TI (q); see also Andersson/Heywood (2009); De Maria (2008c)

¹⁴ UNDP (2008c: 7)

¹⁵ UNDP official 1

sources to build schools, hospitals, roads and water treatment facilities” or that corruption diverts “public resources to private gain”.¹⁶ Thus, it seems that the broadening of chain C through including private sector corruption has been fully accomplished neither in IAC discourse nor in the more specific parts of it that are associated with TI and the UNDP.

These differences and contestations in regard to the inclusion of private sector corruption in the definitions of corruption blur the ‘edges’ of chain C to a certain extent and thus show that the consensus on corruption is not complete in IAC discourse. Yet, there are some elements which the three definitions share, and which will turn out to structure the discourse in important ways.

All three definitions clearly target abusive and egoistic human behaviour; corruption is an *act* that is committed by human beings for their own benefit. This definition of corruption constructed in chain C excludes other possible constructions of corruption from IAC discourse and thus not only negates their significance for determining what should be fought in the fight against corruption; it also means that if chain C expands it will also work towards a marginalisation of such alternative conceptions more generally.¹⁷ Excluded, for example, is the republican conception referred to in chapter 1, of corruption as the destruction of individuals’ ability to seek the good and virtuous, as the decay of morals or customs in society, or as human contribution to such decay. Corruption in IAC discourse is not explicitly conceived as a violation of higher moral values, such as justice or virtue, but rather as the violation of rules (in the case of the public office) or some kind of a contract (in the case of entrusted power). Also excluded from these equivalisations are conceptions of corruption prevalent in some African societies, as discussed in chapter 1, which construct corruption not so much as a problem of morality but rather function as an expression of negative sentiment about the onlooker’s own disadvantaged social position.

Furthermore, in all three definitions corruption serves private benefit, meaning the benefit of the corrupt person or their family and friends.¹⁸ As Philp has argued (see

¹⁶ UNDP (a)

¹⁷ How far chain C has already expanded, and thus to what extent alternative conceptions of corruption have already been marginalised, cannot be determined in this study which focuses solely on a section of IAC discourse as defined in chapter 2.

¹⁸ TI (2000: 1)

chapter 1), every definition of corruption that refers to an abuse *for private gain* thereby also introduces some notion of the public interest, since private gain or interest can only be distinguished in relation to some public gain or interest.¹⁹ Moreover, as Philp argues, rules for public office or the law (as in the WB's definition) do not provide an exhaustive definition of the public interest, which refers to more comprehensive conceptions of what constitutes a good society.²⁰ This means that while all three definitions of corruption contained in chain C evade an explicit reference to ultimate values, we can still assume that they point to a conception of the public interest, which is constructed as being subverted by the particular conception of corruption present in chain C. The question of what kind of conception of the public interest this is, and whether its normativity will then be more explicit and easier to recognise, remains to be addressed in chapters 4 to 6.

Following from that, all three definitions of corruption are based on the distinction between a private and a public sphere as constitutive areas of a society – a distinct feature of modern Western liberal systems that emerged in the late 16th and early 17th century with contract and natural rights theories aiming to set limits to state power as well as with parallel developments in legal thought.²¹ These spheres are typically distinguished through an articulation of different rules or aims for each of them, and as we can see from the definitions of corruption in chain C, corruption is constructed as a breach of rules or a contract that have to do with the public sphere. Bratsis has argued that such constructions of corruption identify corruption mainly as a transgression of the boundaries between those spheres; while the free pursuit of personal economic interests (often to the detriment of others) is accepted in the private realm, it becomes problematic when carried out in the public sector.²² IAC discourse can thus be regarded as drawing on wider discourses that have constructed and firmly established these two separate spheres as a normal feature of societies; at the same time it reinforces these categories through the way it defines corruption.

We can now already recognise the normative and potentially political character of IAC discourse given that chain C has been found to construct corruption as a form of

¹⁹ Philp (1997)

²⁰ Philp (1997: 441)

²¹ Horwitz (1982)

²² See Bratsis (2003) on this paradoxical characteristic of the 'modern conception of corruption'.

confusion of rules or *norms* which *should not* be confused and belong to two different spheres of society. However, the effects of this construction will need to be further investigated and will only become fully clear when we also look at the second chain of equivalence in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Manifestations of corruption

The meaning of corruption in IAC discourse is further elaborated through the equivalisation of corruption with a diverse range of phenomena that are articulated as its manifestations, telling us what it is that constitutes the norm-violations that are to be combated by IAC organisations. The latter provide long lists of forms of corruption, including bribery, fraud, money laundering, extortion, kickbacks, peddling influence, cronyism/clientelism, nepotism, patronage, insider trading, the provision of speed money, embezzlement, abuse of public property, and the looting of state resources²³ but also smuggling, treason, torture, false evidence, vote-rigging, the misuse of official seals and stationery,²⁴ just to mention a few out of approximately seventy examples of such manifestations. The relations and differences of these types of corruption are not clarified in the discourse and many of them seem to be used interchangeably.

Surprisingly though, despite the long lists of such phenomena, which equivalise corruption with a vast array of illegitimate acts of individuals, IAC documents seem to treat corruption mainly as a synonym to bribery.²⁵ Thus, one could wonder what the actual use of these listings is. From our theoretical perspective these lists provide for the equivalisation of a large number of activities in chain C, constructing corruption as manifesting itself in multiple practices and locations. This expansion of chain C contributes to the construction of corruption as a major hindrance (while at the same time sticking to a construction of it as the act of breaking the rules of the public sphere).

²³ UNDP (2008c: 7-8)

²⁴ TI (2000: xviii); UNDP (2008c: 7-8)

²⁵ See e.g. TI (o); Broadman/Recanatini (2000)

Geographic locations of corruption

The analysis of chain C also reveals that different geographic locations are linked to corruption in different ways, constructing it as an omnipresent threat but also as a problem that is particularly significant in certain places of the world, while at the same time articulating these places as particularly problematic with regards to corruption.

Corruption is frequently portrayed in IAC discourse as a “global problem”²⁶ permeating the whole world²⁷ and TI explains that “no region of the world is immune to the perils of corruption”.²⁸ Corruption is a problem which is not geographically restricted but invades all people, countries and regions on the globe – articulations which expand chain C considerably and thus construct corruption as a threat to be taken seriously.

However, despite such affirmations we find many articulations in IAC discourse which construct corruption as being much more problematic in developing than in developed countries. While TI insists on the one hand that corruption “affects every sector, every bureaucracy, every country”, which is why “it cannot be approached as a developing country issue”,²⁹ it argues on the other hand that a fruitful environment for corruption “is more likely in the emerging democracies of the South and East”.³⁰ Similarly, while corruption “thrives when economic policies are poorly designed, education levels are low, civil society is underdeveloped, and the accountability of public institutions is weak”, these are “conditions that exist in many settings but are particularly prevalent in some developing countries”.³¹ This is why corruption is “found in rich and poor, developing and developed countries alike, albeit in different forms and magnitude”.³² As proof the WB cites “economic research” which has proven that in developing countries the corruption problem is “endemic at every level”.³³

²⁶ WB (1997: 4)

²⁷ See also TI (v); TI (a)

²⁸ TI (y); see also WB (h)

²⁹ TI (l)

³⁰ TI (o)

³¹ WB (1997: 5)

³² UNDP (2008d); see also WB (1997: 4)

³³ UNDP (2008c: 10)

The prevalence of corruption in developing countries is certainly most prominently articulated by TI's CPI which since 1995 annually ranks (now almost 200) countries according to their levels of corruption. It is the nature of a ranking system that some come out at the upper and some at the lower end, and in the case of the CPI the vast majority of the developing countries assessed usually scores in the lower half of the CPI, while Western countries tend to score in the upper half.³⁴ While such articulations serve to construct corruption as a problem that is particularly pressing in developing countries, these equivalisations also 'do' something to the signifiers that become included into chain C – in this case, a wide range of countries in the Global South. De Maria has pointed out that while not actually being able to grasp the types and levels of corruption in the countries ranked, the CPI serves most of all as a means to stigmatise those countries ranging at the end of the scale, fostering "images of countries beyond salvation, or [in the case of the countries ranging at the top] so flawless that no further improvements are needed".³⁵ By presenting particular countries as more and others as less corrupt the CPI articulates them as more or less part of the problem that the discourse aims to overcome, as more or less of a hindrance to the Universal set out in the second chain of equivalence.

Such criticisms like De Maria's present a dislocation to TI's discourse insofar as they associate (or equivalise) the organisation with stigmatising developing countries, instead of helping them, as TI portrays itself. The analysis of TI documentation reveals that the NGO has already made efforts to deal with such criticisms. In its Frequently Asked Questions About Corruption it explains with regards to the question 'Where is corruption most prevalent?':

At a first, indiscriminate glance, the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), published annually by TI, seems to confirm the stereotypical notion that corruption is predominantly a problem of the South. (...) It would not only be wrong to conclude, however, that - according to the CPI 2008 - Somalia and Myanmar are the most corrupt countries in the world; it would also be counterproductive. The index is not intended to brand any one country or territory, or to pit the North against the South. Rather, it is a tool to raise

³⁴ See CPI 2009. The CPI ranges from 1 to 10 – the lower, the 'more corrupt'.

³⁵ De Maria (2008a: 782)

public awareness of the problem and promote better governance. Corruption is as much a problem of the North as it is of the South.³⁶

This presents a ‘super-differential demarcation’ (stratagem IV) in the sense that TI discourse is demarcated against discourses that articulate the West as superior and/or developing countries as particularly corrupt. While TI continues to publish the index, its defence strategy against dislocations of its discourse by criticism of the CPI is apparently to emphasise that the criticisms are wrong because the CPI does not actually brand countries and has nothing to do with such discourses. Such statements by a widely respected anticorruption NGO may well be capable of re-articulating the CPI as an unproblematic tool and thus legitimising its continued and widespread use by development practitioners, positivist academic scholars but also by the media which sometimes has very direct political consequences for the countries ranked.³⁷ This again strengthens the hegemonic project against further dislocations.

When asked about the problematique concerning the interpretation of the CPI, a TI interviewee told me that “the weird thing or the funny thing is that then the other day you read the media coverage and they always go back to the rankings. So that seems to be part of human nature in a sense, using these kinds of numbers, and our response here is to promote ‘do not rank countries’”.³⁸ Rejecting responsibility by pointing to human inclinations to using figures, the interviewee touches on an important reason for the continued prominence of the CPI and thus also TI, namely the authority of statistical figures as particularly legitimate forms of knowledge – a point which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 5. While this authority has been established concomitantly with positivist science in other discourses over time, IAC discourse draws on this authority (by equivalising it into chain AC) through the CPI and its methodology, thus providing authenticity to its very particular findings about corruption and developing countries.

The ranking of countries in the CPI is also justified with the alarm function of the CPI: “The CPI itself rings the bell”, as a TI interviewee explained.³⁹ TI sticks to the index because its prominence and high media coverage gives the national chapters a

³⁶ TI (o)

³⁷ For such political consequences of media coverage of the CPI see for example De Maria (2008a)

³⁸ TI-S official 8

³⁹ TI-S official 8

floor for voicing their anticorruption message, and “that’s the main point for us. It’s how we’re telling people, do something here”; yet after that “you need to go deeper to look up this problem”. So far, the TI interviewee argued, “the moment to drop the index altogether” has not come for TI.⁴⁰ Thus, while being aware of the negative effects of the CPI that reify colonial notions of civilisation and barbarism in developed and developing countries, TI continues constructing them for the sake of its leverage; the latter, as we will see in chapters 5 and 6, is quite important for the achievement of the Universal set out in IAC discourse. The construction of developing countries as more corrupt, in turn, provides the ground for international intervention.

Distancing itself from TI’s often-criticised use of the CPI (and thus protecting itself against potential dislocations) the WB states that it is “undesirable to rigidly classify countries in any way” and emphasises that “no lists or rankings of countries is being considered”;⁴¹ yet the conviction that the corruption situation is worse in developing countries is still confirmed and re-articulated by the numerous examples presented by the WB to illustrate the damaging effects of corruption, which are almost exclusively from developing countries. On its homepage we find examples of corruption in Kenya, South Africa, Indonesia, Uganda, Mexico, ‘African countries’ in general, Albania, Bulgaria and ‘several Asian countries’, and also Russia, Ukraine, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Poland, Slovakia and Romania.⁴² Despite Kaufmann and Gray stating in a WB article that “survey responses suggest that Botswana and Chile have less bribery than many fully industrialized countries”,⁴³ the predominant impression created by these many examples is that corruption is worse in developing countries than in developed ones.

This is reiterated by statements in IAC discourse that *even* Western, developed countries are not immune to the perils of corruption. TI reminds us for example that “[e]ven industrialised countries cannot be complacent”⁴⁴ and that “even where political, economic, legal and social institutions are well entrenched” (which is suppos-

⁴⁰ TI-S official 8

⁴¹ WB (2007: v); see however WB (s) for an example of how the WB nevertheless ranks countries according to their extent of bribery.

⁴² WB (d); WB (e); WB (f); WB (g)

⁴³ Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 1)

⁴⁴ TI (y)

edly the case in the West) corruption is to be found.⁴⁵ Such statements take up widespread assumptions that so-called ‘developed’ countries are generally better off in all areas of life than developing countries; despite stating that this is not the case when it comes to corruption, such assumptions are still confirmed through the articulation of these findings as extraordinary and as an exception to the commonly-known rule of their superiority.

In sum, while articulations of the ubiquity of corruption and of its “significant transnational dimensions”⁴⁶ render corruption an omnipresent hindrance and enable IAC discourse to call for “collective solutions”⁴⁷ in chain AC (see chapter 5), the articulation of developing countries as more corrupt constructs the hindrances to the Universal as particularly prominent there and prepares the ground for IAC interventions in the Global South (set out in chain AC). While IAC organisations deal with (potential) dislocations by directly defending themselves against them, the discourse however also features other logics that are potentially able to ‘cover over’ dislocations and contradictions.

Attributes for severeness and danger of corruption

PDHT draws our attention to the multiple ways in which hindrances or dangerous ‘enemies’ to the Universal are constructed in hegemonic projects, amongst others through negative attributes. In IAC discourse we find numerous articulations of the dangerous and destructive character of corruption as equivalisations in chain C. Corruption is linked up with different verbs with a negative connotation that most of the time refer to all sorts of ‘good’ elements belonging to chain AC which it hinders, paralyzes,⁴⁸ distorts,⁴⁹ damages, drains,⁵⁰ worsens,⁵¹ deters,⁵² impedes,⁵³ destroys, endangers, threatens,⁵⁴ sabotages,⁵⁵ kills,⁵⁶ violates,⁵⁷ severely affects,⁵⁸ under-

⁴⁵ TI (2009e); see also TI (o) and WB (1997: 4)

⁴⁶ WB (1997: 4)

⁴⁷ TI (2008b: 5)

⁴⁸ TI (p)

⁴⁹ TI (p)

⁵⁰ TI (o)

⁵¹ UNDP (2008d)

⁵² TI (o)

⁵³ UNDP (2008d)

⁵⁴ UNDP (2008d)

mines,⁵⁹ erodes,⁶⁰ impairs,⁶¹ devastates,⁶² blocks,⁶³ deteriorates,⁶⁴ and fractures.⁶⁵ Apart from that, corruption is linked up with many negative attributes and concepts, including the “seriousness of the corruption problem” as well as the “harm” done by it,⁶⁶ its “devastating effects”⁶⁷ and its “disastrous consequences”.⁶⁸ Corruption is “particularly concerning”, a “major concern”, a “serious” or “significant” “problem” or “challenge”, and it is “rampant”.⁶⁹ It gets easily ‘aggravated’,⁷⁰ provides for a “bleak outlook”,⁷¹ and causes enormous “scandals”,⁷² as well as ‘immense damage’.⁷³ It can even be lethal, and leads to a “vicious cycle”⁷⁴ or a “corrosive cycle”.⁷⁵ Corruption is “harmful”,⁷⁶ “costly”,⁷⁷ “pervasive”,⁷⁸ a “menace”,⁷⁹ an “obstacle”,⁸⁰ a “crime”⁸¹ and a “threat”;⁸² it is “complex”, “deep-seated” and “not fully understood” – tackling it is “not easy”.⁸³ Corruption makes bad things ‘normal’.⁸⁴

While these signifiers have obtained their negative meaning in articulation in other discourses they are now equivalised with corruption in chain C, conveying its danger and imminence in what can be understood as fantasmatic logic. More precisely, what seems to be at work here is the ‘horrific dimension’ of fantasy that presents an obsta-

⁵⁵ WB (h)

⁵⁶ UNDP (a)

⁵⁷ Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the UN, in the foreword to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, cited in UNDP (2008a: 1).

⁵⁸ WB (c)

⁵⁹ TI (o)

⁶⁰ TI (p)

⁶¹ TI (2009f)

⁶² TI (n)

⁶³ TI (y)

⁶⁴ TI (p)

⁶⁵ TI (2008b: 4)

⁶⁶ TI (2000: xxiv)

⁶⁷ TI (n)

⁶⁸ WB (2007: i-ii)

⁶⁹ TI (2009d); TI (2009c); TI (2009e); TI (2009b); TI (2009f); TI (2009b); TI (2009f); TI (o)

⁷⁰ TI (2009g)

⁷¹ TI (2009g)

⁷² TI (2009f)

⁷³ TI (a)

⁷⁴ TI (2009f)

⁷⁵ TI (y)

⁷⁶ WB (h)

⁷⁷ TI (p)

⁷⁸ TI (o)

⁷⁹ TI (p)

⁸⁰ WB (c), WB (h)

⁸¹ UNDP (a)

⁸² TI (2000: xv); TI (y)

⁸³ WB (1997: 5)

⁸⁴ TI (y)

cle as threatening and “foretells of disaster if the obstacle proves insurmountable”.⁸⁵ Accordingly, Peter Eigen, the founder of TI, calls the “explosion of corruption the world has witnessed (...) one of the greatest challenges of our age”⁸⁶ and argues that doing nothing against it is “simply not an option”, since in this case corruption will grow, becoming even more threatening.⁸⁷

In addition to these equivalisations, IAC discourse also displays a vast array of figures to demonstrate the enormous costs with which corruption burdens the world’s societies.⁸⁸ For example, the UNDP states that the bribes paid each year are estimated at US\$1,000 billion, that corruption can cost a country 17% of its GDP, and that the volume of illicit financial flows from Africa during the period 1970-2008 has been US\$1.8 trillion.⁸⁹

These articulations of corruption as a threat in chain C provide justifications for confronting it. Together with the constructions of corruption as a particular problem reviewed earlier they function as an important logic that enables the construction of the fight against corruption (as outlined in chain AC) as an important enterprise worth supporting.

TI pairs this with articulations of corruption as ever-present and impossible to completely eradicate. It insists that “the potentially corrupt” as well as “the scourge of corruption will, to some degree or another, always be with us”.⁹⁰ The fight against corruption is thus articulated, on the one hand, as an important and necessary one, and, on the other, as one that can never be entirely won. Strikingly, this provides anticorruption institutions with an eternal mandate – which requires that the issue is “kept at the forefront of national and international attention even after the battle may appear to have been won”.⁹¹ This reasoning even allows IAC organisations to concede that the fight against corruption has not been very successful so far, that “the world on average has not made sufficient progress on governance and corruption

⁸⁵ Glynos/Howarth (2007: 147)

⁸⁶ TI (2000: xv)

⁸⁷ TI (2000; TI (h))

⁸⁸ See for example WB (c) and subtopics; UNDP (a)

⁸⁹ UNDP (a)

⁹⁰ TI (2000: xv, 1)

⁹¹ TI (2000: 1)

control”⁹² and that “corruption may actually be increasing”.⁹³ Instead of evidencing the failure of IAC activities so far, such statements serve to underline the necessity of supporting ongoing efforts against a mighty enemy who is unlikely to ever finally capitulate.

Causes of corruption

Our efforts to get closer to the particular conception of corruption constructed in IAC discourse are also helped by examining the range of signifiers that are articulated in causal or consequential relations of equivalence to corruption in chain C. In addition to specifying the meaning of corruption, however, the articulation of these concepts in equivalence to corruption also articulates these concepts as problematic, thus expanding chain C. As we will see in the course of the empirical chapters, crucially, the articulation of these particular causes and consequences of corruption in chain C gives rise to the articulation of particular ways of fighting corruption in chain AC. IAC measures are designed to remedy what is articulated as the causes of corruption and thus hindrances to the Universal in chain C.

Partly, these causes and consequences are negatively connoted concepts, such as poverty or conflict. Yet for the greater part they take the form of negations or absences of something good – the ‘absence of integrity’, for example, is mentioned as a cause and consequence of corruption.⁹⁴ These articulations of contrariety point to things which are desirable and *should* be present and which as such belong to chain AC. However, they are discussed in this chapter since it is through their absence that corruption acquires its meaning as a threat to a good society. In the following sections I will first discuss the signifiers that are articulated as causes of corruption, and then those that are articulated as consequences of corruption.

⁹² WB (2007: 3)

⁹³ TI (2000: 1)

⁹⁴ TI (2009h: 2)

Permissiveness, opportunities, incentives

The causes of corruption articulated as such in the form of equivalents in chain C of IAC discourse can be and often are grouped into the three categories of ‘opportunities’, ‘permissiveness’ and ‘additional economic incentives’ in the discourse.

According to TI, “the risk of corruption exists as soon as there is opportunity”. This is redolent of Lord Acton’s quote that “[a]ll power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely”.⁹⁵ Indeed, numerous IAC documents point out that “unfettered personal power” of bureaucrats and politicians provides opportunities for corruption.⁹⁶ More specifically, wide discretion, the allowed range of individual judgment regarding different decisions, and monopoly, the exclusive decision-making power over particular policy or administrative areas, are articulated as fostering corruption.⁹⁷ In turn, these problems are brought about or exacerbated by the “excessive role of government in the economy and business sector”,⁹⁸ a large state in general,⁹⁹ protected markets,¹⁰⁰ privatisation policies,¹⁰¹ the emergence of new and still unregulated markets,¹⁰² too lax, poorly defined but also inefficiently restrictive or excessive rules,¹⁰³ and the “level of political stability or instability of a country”.¹⁰⁴ In addition, opportunity in the private sector itself can bring about corruption and concomitant problems. TI claims for example that some responsibility for the current financial crisis “lies with the poor regulation of financial markets, including inadequate rules and lax regulators” allowing for private sector corruption.¹⁰⁵

Another important cause of corruption articulated in chain C is permissiveness. It is mainly constructed as the absence of desirable things, such as accountability,¹⁰⁶ con-

⁹⁵ The complete quote says “All power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men, even when they exercise influence and not authority: still more when you superadd the tendency or the certainty of corruption by authority. There is no worse heresy than that the office sanctifies the holder of it” (Figgis/Laurence 1907: appendix p. 504).

⁹⁶ TI (d); see also UNDP (2004), TI (2000: xx), TI (h)

⁹⁷ UNDP (2008c: 9); Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 2)

⁹⁸ TI (2009g); UNDP (2004: 3)

⁹⁹ UNDP (2004: 3)

¹⁰⁰ UNDP (2004: 3)

¹⁰¹ TI (l)

¹⁰² TI (2009i: 2); Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 2); UNDP (2004: 3)

¹⁰³ TI (2000: xx), UNDP (2004), WB (2007: ii), Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 1)

¹⁰⁴ UNDP (2004: 3)

¹⁰⁵ TI (2009h)

¹⁰⁶ Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 2); UNDP (2008c: 9)

trol and oversight,¹⁰⁷ adequate punishment and transparency¹⁰⁸ (which are located in chain AC) but is also articulated in relation to secrecy,¹⁰⁹ obscurity, opacity,¹¹⁰ and impunity. More specifically, these permitting factors include obscurity-related signifiers like obscure decision-making,¹¹¹ or “tax havens”;¹¹² signifiers related to the absence of oversight such as weak watchdog and political institutions;¹¹³ “[s]oft social control systems”¹¹⁴ for example in the form of a weak or ‘thin’ civil society¹¹⁵ or high tolerance levels among citizens with regard to corruption;¹¹⁶ a restrictive environment for journalists and the media;¹¹⁷ and signifiers relating to the absence of punishment such as low or weak enforcement, prosecution or exposure,¹¹⁸ and mild or inadequate punishments,¹¹⁹ to mention but a few. The logic of permissiveness, as articulated in IAC discourse thus conveys that if people’s actions are not constantly exposed and then checked, and eventually punished by different actors, people will engage in corrupt practices in order to advance their own interests against those of the public. Permissiveness is articulated in direct contrariety to the concept of accountability, which will be discussed in chapter 4.

In addition to opportunities and permitting factors, the three organisations also equivalise other hindrances in chain C as causes of corruption which can be regarded as additional economic incentives which make the occurrence of corruption particularly likely. These include factors that foster the so-called ‘supply-side’ of corruption, like natural resources,¹²⁰ bribes from multinational companies,¹²¹ and increased levels of aid,¹²² but also factors such as economic need¹²³ and social insecurity,¹²⁴

¹⁰⁷ UNDP (2008c: 10), Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 2), UNDP (2004), TI (o)

¹⁰⁸ UNDP (2004 TI (c); TI (2009d), UNDP (2008c: 9)

¹⁰⁹ Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 2)

¹¹⁰ TI (y)

¹¹¹ TI (o)

¹¹² TI (p); see also TI (y); TI (c), TI (c); TI (2009d)

¹¹³ TI (2009e); Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 2), TI (2009b); TI (o)

¹¹⁴ UNDP (2004)

¹¹⁵ TI (o); TI (2009b); WB (1997: 5)

¹¹⁶ TI (2009g); UNDP (2004)

¹¹⁷ TI (2009b); TI (2009e), TI (2009g), Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 2)

¹¹⁸ UNDP (2004: 2-3); Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 2), WB (2007: 53), TI (d)

¹¹⁹ Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 2); UNDP (2004: 2-3)

¹²⁰ UNDP (2004: 3); UNDP (2008c: 11); see also TI (c); TI (2009d); Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 2)

¹²¹ TI (o), WB (2007: 53)

¹²² TI (l);

¹²³ TI (2008b: 2); see also Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 2)

¹²⁴ Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 2); see also TI (2009d)

inequalities in society¹²⁵ low pay of public officials¹²⁶ and un-meritocratic salary structures¹²⁷ that enhance the so-called ‘demand side’. Also a slow or overly-complicated bureaucratic system can be an incentive for bribery in the form of so-called ‘speed-money’.¹²⁸

One might now wonder what to make of these articulations of opportunities, permissiveness and additional economic incentives as causes of corruption. Why exactly are these things articulated as causing this enormous problem that corruption is according to IAC discourse, and not for example the lack of moral education, a sense of responsibility, or empathy? What is the logic that links them together?

Below I show that an even closer look at the discursive logics of IAC discourse makes clear that these ‘causes of corruption’ can be better understood as different conditions which allow corruption to ‘thrive’ in the logic of IAC discourse, as determining the likelihood of people succumbing to the temptation of corruption. This is because the constructions of these causes of corruption centre themselves on a very particular conception of human nature; this conception has already been identified by the critical IAC literature as an important component of the IAC agenda, but will, in this thesis, be shown to be the principal logic structuring IAC discourse. Despite not being explicitly articulated in IAC discourse as a cause of corruption, it clearly emerges in chain C as what may be regarded as the original source of corruption.

Human nature

That IAC discourse articulates human nature as the original source of corruption is not that extraordinary, at least not in the context of Western conceptions of corruption. Republican conceptions of corruption as a loss of civic virtue¹²⁹ and the Marxist conception of corruption as the corruption of proletarians by the tempting wealth

¹²⁵ TI (o)

¹²⁶ TI (o); see also UNDP (2004: 2); UNDP (2008c: 9), Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 2)

¹²⁷ WB (2007: 49), UNDP (2004: 2); UNDP (2008c: 9)

¹²⁸ TI-S official 1

¹²⁹ Euben (1989)

of the bourgeoisie¹³⁰ seem compatible with such articulations, given that they seem to construct corruption as arising from the weakness of human character. Crucially, however, IAC discourse indirectly articulates all people as universally and irredeemably predisposed to act corruptly; it is in the nature of all people to seek their self-interest regardless of whether they violate that of others in the process.

The conception of self-interested human nature as the original source of corruption can be drawn out from the articulations of causes of corruption but is made even clearer by countless other articulations in chain C. Let us first examine these other articulations in more detail, before we can gain a better understanding of the so-called causes of corruption.

On the basis of TI documents, something like morality does not seem to be present in people. Whenever an opportunity to abuse public resources or trust for personal gain arises, accompanied by a comparably low risk of detection, people, regardless of their socio-cultural background, will take it. They are “as corrupt as the system allows them to be”¹³¹ and accordingly, “every society is as corrupt as its institutions and practices allow”.¹³² The more opportunities or incentives there are for corruption, the more likely it is that people will succumb to the temptation. TI stresses that if some countries are “less corrupt” than others, it is only due to their “more developed and stronger institutions and practices to control the menace”, rather than due to any “moral superiority”;¹³³ consequently, as we will see in the analysis of chain AC, such institutions and practices play a central role in governing the good, uncorrupt society as envisioned in IAC discourse. Establishing them is articulated as difficult (but at the same time all the more necessary); as the TI Source Book remarks replete with fatalism, “[t]here seems to be no end to human ingenuity when it comes to circumventing systems designed to protect the integrity of institutions and processes”,¹³⁴ which is why “[t]emptation remains a challenge anywhere”.¹³⁵ Thus, human nature seems to be articulated in chain C as extremely easily corruptible and

¹³⁰ Mayer (1993): Marx, Lenin and the Corruption of the Working Class

¹³¹ TI (o)

¹³² TI (p)

¹³³ TI (p); see also TI (o)

¹³⁴ TI (2000: xviii)

¹³⁵ TI (o)

thus fundamentally and universally problematic, and human behaviour is articulated as a function of external conditions which form incentive structures.

Interestingly, several TI interviewees exhibited different views on human nature, which did not always seem to conform to the purely egoistic actor model set out in TI documents and thus seemed to contest this construction in chain C. One TI official stated “I wouldn’t say that everybody would be equally corrupt” and expected differences, depending on “how people are socialized, and the way it’s actually imbedded in the education in the very beginning”.¹³⁶ Another interviewee was of the opinion that, if people were conceived as self-interested individuals who behave according to incentives, this “misses out the whole ethical foundation – which is a bit strange, and I don’t think we’ve been very consistent”.¹³⁷ Yet surprisingly, the same interviewees would a couple of sentences later resort to talking about human behaviour in terms of incentives and the “greedy individual interest (...) which every single person has”,¹³⁸ thus demonstrating how deeply the logic of the rational self-interested actor is embedded in the NGO, its operational culture and its staff’s thinking.

In this respect one TI interviewee presented an interesting ‘theory of the human being’, which s/he had heard about, according to which people can be put into different groups: 25 percent are “absolutely honest”, 25 percent are “totally selfish” and corrupt, and nothing can be done to change them. But the 50 percent of people in the middle are malleable and should be worked on – via incentives: “If you create the conditions and the environment and the correct incentives for them to behave towards the law and not against it that can really make a difference”.¹³⁹ Another TI interviewee nevertheless explained to me that conceiving corrupt behaviour in terms of incentives rather than individual or social morality, and to “talk about systems and structures, not about people”, is a tactical move by TI which does not really mean “that people cannot be blamed because it’s all structural”. Instead, “human agency is completely acknowledged as a (...) component of anticorruption”.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ TI-S official 1

¹³⁷ TI-S official 2

¹³⁸ TI-S official 5

¹³⁹ TI-S official 5

¹⁴⁰ TI-S official 6

Overall, whether tactical or not, the contestations revealed in the interviews of the rational actor model were only minor and did not indicate any dislocations to the official discourse and to the constitution of chain C. While some TI members apparently believe that some people are more corrupt than others, an investigation into the question of why some people might not feel tempted to try and ‘beat the system’ does not seem to be of interest to the organisation and is thus excluded from the discourse; instead, corruptness or non-corruptness are articulated almost as inalterable genetic conditions.¹⁴¹ The consequence is that despite minor contestations within chain C, TI’s work remains centred on a conception of human beings as naturally inclined to be corrupt.

Although WB and UNDP anticorruption documents do not make their conception of human nature as evident as TI documents, a similar perspective is easy to recognise. A WB article on corruption uses “a framework based on the incentives for opportunistic behavior by public officials” and assumes that public officials will choose or accept corruption if the expected gains exceed the expected costs of undertaking a corrupt act, reiterating TI’s articulation of human beings as rational and self-interested.¹⁴² Also the WB constructs people as universally so, stating for example that “[c]orruption is widespread in developing and transition countries, not because their people are different from people elsewhere but because conditions are ripe for it”.¹⁴³

However, things are not that simple in the WB discourse either. In a WB article, Shah and Huther note that some public officials “may be motivated, in part, by a desire to perform civic duties or a desire to help others”,¹⁴⁴ which contests the rational self-interested actor model. Yet, the authors also assume that in developing countries the incentives to act corruptly are usually stronger¹⁴⁵ and thus override people’s values of social responsibility. A WB interviewee answered the question whether s/he

¹⁴¹ TI-S official 5

¹⁴² Shah/Huther (2000). The authors even provide a mathematical formula for their reasoning: $E[B] = nxE[G] - \text{prob}[P] \times [P] > 0$ (E is the expectations operator, n is number of corrupt transactions, G is the gain from the corrupt transaction, prob [P] is the probability of paying a penalty, and P is the penalty for the corrupt activity).

¹⁴³ Broadman/Recanatini (2000); One of the authors of this World Bank paper, Daniel Kaufmann, was formerly director of the World Bank Institute, where he led the work on governance and anti-corruption.

¹⁴⁴ Shah/Huther (2000)

¹⁴⁵ Shah/Huther (2000)

thinks that people follow mainly material incentives in their behaviour with “yes, I’m an economist [...] I’m cynical”. However, even in this interviewee’s view human behaviour also seemed to be somehow related to the social environment; s/he believed that not being corrupt is “very difficult when everybody else is doing it”.¹⁴⁶ Yet overall, while “up to a point”, human beings follow particular norms, while “there is a part of human behaviour that is not necessarily explainable with incentives”, and while people “might have very high moral standards”, in the end monetary incentives decide their behaviour. “There are some good souls”, but these people are “very few, maybe a handful of people, you know like Ghandi, Martin Luther King”. These statements show that the rational self-interested actor model is not completely uncontested in the WB discourse either, but also that external incentives are articulated as ultimately decisive for most people’s behaviour.

While TI interviewees justified their attachment to the rational actor model as a tactical move, WB interviewees explain this with reference to the WB’s organisational structures. One WB official was convinced that “people’s perceptions of what is acceptable matter *hugely* to how much corruption goes on”, but that it is not possible for the WB to work with a conception of corruption that takes this into account.¹⁴⁷ Similarly, another WB interviewee conceded that the mechanistic conception of human nature inherent in IAC efforts at the WB is a problem and contributes to their failure; yet, s/he also held fatalistically that nothing can be done about it. While, according to the interviewee, corrupt behaviour may well be “the product of a culture in which it might be absolutely legitimate to reward your immediate family members”, s/he remarked that “that’s a level of anthropological and philosophical reflection that doesn’t fit into a cost-benefit calculus on an excel spreadsheet” as the WB prefers. Big bureaucracies like the WB system “have to see people as midgets in a big production” and “can only understand mechanistic behaviour”.¹⁴⁸ Thus, while partly, the social and cultural construction of corruption, norms and people’s behaviour is acknowledged, once again, there is no attempt by WB staff to modify the overall discursive logic according to these contestations of the rational actor model.

¹⁴⁶ WB official 4; see also TI-S official 5

¹⁴⁷ WB official 3

¹⁴⁸ WB official 5

This keeps chain C rather coherent, centring on a conception of human nature according to which “each of us has a price. It all depends on the price”.¹⁴⁹

The UNDP’s discourse is no exception to this. It draws on Robert Klitgaard, “a leading expert in this field”, and his “hugely influential, although not undisputed”¹⁵⁰ corruption formula in order to explain corrupt behaviour.¹⁵¹ Based on rational choice assumptions, as discussed in chapter 1, Klitgaard identifies the causes of corruption as “monopoly control of public officials wielding discretionary powers in the absence of accountability systems”, resulting in C (Corruption) = M (Monopoly) + D (Discretion) – A (Accountability).¹⁵² As we can see from the formula, neither an individual’s moral values nor the socio-cultural processes of their formation in society play a role in this kind of thinking. In one of its more recent documents the UNDP has argued that – next to accountability – integrity and transparency are also important to balance monopoly and discretion, and has thus amended the formula to $Corruption = (Monopoly + Discretion) - (Accountability + Integrity + Transparency)$.¹⁵³ The inclusion of the concept of integrity could mean a modification of the rational actor model towards one that takes people’s values or social norms into account and thus reflect a re-articulation of chain C; yet such a reading is contradicted by the UNDP’s explanation that a “rational official” will balance the expected benefits from corruption against the expected costs. If the former outweigh the latter, the official will use his/her powers of office to create “concentrated gains for the private partner beyond those he/she could earn without state intervention”.¹⁵⁴ This makes the conception of human beings as rational and self-interested particularly clear, and as we will see in more detail in chapter 4, the concept of ‘integrity’, much like ‘ethics’ reiterates constructions of human beings as rational, self-interested actors.

We can sum up this discussion by concluding that chain C of IAC discourse articulates the irredeemable self-interest of rational human beings relatively coherently as the original source of corruption. As we have seen, there are certain contestations of this conception of human nature by staff of each of the three organisations, with no

¹⁴⁹ WB official 4; Brown/Cloke (2004: e.g. 287) have come to similar conclusions, while Williams (1999) has shown the dominance of the concept of *homo oeconomicus* in the WB in general.

¹⁵⁰ UNDP (2008c: 9)

¹⁵¹ UNDP (2008c: 9)

¹⁵² UNDP (2004: 3)

¹⁵³ UNDP (2004: 3)

¹⁵⁴ UNDP (2004: 3)

distinct organisation-related pattern being recognisable. While these contestations indicate that the consensus is not absolutely complete and that chain C is not completely consistent, overall these contestations do not seem to be translated into noticeable dislocations of the discourse. Corruption is specified as corrupt behaviour, and it is relatively consistently equivalised with human self-interest which in turn, is constructed as a natural and unchangeable human character trait. However, as we will see later on in this chapter, interestingly, this equivalisation of human nature in chain C does not necessarily lead to an articulation of subject positions for all people as equivalents to corruption in chain C.

Against the background of this conception of human nature, the assemblage of causes of corruption presented above now becomes much more intelligible. While 'inclination' towards corruption is articulated as always existing in human beings already, 'opportunities', 'permissiveness' and 'additional economic incentives' will determine whether corruption does or does not happen, and whether the public interest will or will not be abused for private gain. Imagine, for example, a rational, self-interested public official: The power to decide on the allocation of money or services provides him/her with opportunities for corruption. If in addition to that s/he carries out transactions involving people either willing or needing to pay a bribe, thus providing an incentive for corruption, the likelihood of corruption to happen increases. If the transactions now happen in a permissive environment with low or no risk of detection and punishment, the public official will abuse his/her power for his/her own gain, i.e. the corrupt act is bound to take place, mechanistically. We can recognise that the causes of corruption as articulated in IAC discourse are in fact structured quite coherently along what I call the 'rational actor logic', functioning as conditions or incentives that influence the behaviour of the self-interested individual.

However, based on this conception of human nature, the three categories of causes of corruption articulated in chain C not only specify the meaning of corruption but simultaneously, serve to construct as inadequate any societal system that is permissive (in the sense of not featuring efficient controls and heavy punishments), that allows its public officials and politicians a great amount of discretion, and that does not make sure to minimise additional economic incentives for corruption. Together with the articulations of corruption as a dangerous enemy discussed above, these articula-

tions thus construct such systems as highly problematic and as hindrances to the Universal.

Furthermore, it can be argued that the conception of human nature as naturally inclined to corruption serves still another particular strategic purpose in IAC discourse.¹⁵⁵ As we have seen earlier, IAC organisations are quite eager to defend themselves against accusations of Western cultural imperialism.¹⁵⁶ Larmour remarks in this respect that TI has from its beginning been “keen to deflate what it saw as Western claims to moral superiority in matters of corruption”.¹⁵⁷ Articulating people all over the world as equally corrupt allows IAC discourse to deal with dislocations arising from charges of practising Western-centric moralisation or advancing anything that could be interpreted as ‘Western values’. Yet, this does not eliminate Western-centricity from IAC discourse, as we will see in greater detail further in the thesis. Instead of claiming Western moral superiority IAC discourse insists that developing countries are more corrupt only because they do not set the right incentives and that Western liberal political systems (featuring better incentives) are only better equipped to achieve the ‘good’ organisation of society because Western experts know better how to deal with human nature. After all, corruption is a “symptom of unresolved governance problems, resulting from incompetence in the process of building an effective and accountable state (OECD 2006)”.¹⁵⁸ This remedying of one universalism (‘Western people and culture are better’) with another (‘all people are naturally inclined to be corrupt’) of course does not solve the problem of Western cultural imperialism. The rational actor model structuring IAC discourse is clearly reflective of the liberal conception of human nature as rational and self-interested discussed in chapter 1 and thus must be regarded as the product of Western history and liberal political thinking. The same is valid for the (scientific/political) ideas about how this human nature can be ‘tamed’ and made to work for the public interest. As will become clear in the following chapters these ideas drive IAC policies towards a particular liberal re-organisation of societies.

¹⁵⁵ ‘Strategic’ in the sense of ‘serving the hegemonic articulation’

¹⁵⁶ TI (p); WB official 3; TI-S official 6; UNDP official 1

¹⁵⁷ Larmour (2005: 2)

¹⁵⁸ UNDP (2008c: 21)

This reveals the great importance of constructions of human nature and the respective causes of corruption just discussed for understanding the structures of IAC discourse. The analytical focus on the two chains of equivalences taken in this thesis allows showing how both chains depend on and support each other, while each fulfils a distinct function.

Social, political and economic consequences of corruption

Chain C is further expanded by numerous negative consequences of corruption, and examining these is equally interesting since it is through these equivalents that the image of a corrupt society is constructed in IAC discourse.

The status of society that results from corruption constitutes the very reason why the IAC project is necessary and stands in direct contrariety to the Universal that IAC discourse attempts to create. By condemning the corrupt society, IAC discourse not only articulates corruption as having terrible social, political and economic consequences; by being equivalised with corruption, also the respective signifiers are constructed as problematic and as hindrances to the Universal. Through this simultaneous operation chain C not only works towards enhancing the desirability of fighting corruption, but it also prepares the ground for a particular Universal that claims to overcome all the deficits of corrupt societies so articulated, providing the reasons for its specific measures.

Poverty and the absence of development

Poverty forms a primary nodal point in chain C; the creation or aggravation of poverty is articulated in the discourse of all three organisations as a particularly serious consequence of corruption.¹⁵⁹ The WB even identifies corruption as “the greatest obstacle...to reducing poverty”.¹⁶⁰ It is particularly frequently portrayed as affecting ‘the poor’ (sometimes also the vulnerable, marginalised¹⁶¹ and disadvantaged¹⁶²)

¹⁵⁹ UNDP (2008d); UNDP (2008a: 6); UNDP (2008c: 11); UNDP (a); TI (o); TI (h); TI (p); TI (2008b); TI (k)

¹⁶⁰ WB (c)

¹⁶¹ UNDP (a); WB (2007: i-ii); TI (2008b: 2)

particularly severely.¹⁶³ Corruption for example “saps the resources of poor people by forcing them to offer bribes in exchange for access to basic goods and services — many of which may be ‘free’ by law”.¹⁶⁴ Thus, the poor resort to corruption as a “survival strategy” or in order to go to school, get a job, buy a house, get healthcare, vote or “simply participate in their societies”.¹⁶⁵ Apart from such direct extractions of bribes, IAC discourse explicitly articulates many more indirect consequential relations between corruption and poverty. However, poverty is a fuzzy concept the meaning of which oscillates between the common understanding of it as economic poverty (lack of money and, consequently, food, housing, insurance etc.) and a broader meaning of poverty as also encompassing social and political exclusion. TI and the WB for example argue that, in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), “poverty is about more than inadequate income”,¹⁶⁶ namely it also concerns a lack of access to public services, of voice and representation, of basic civil rights, of opportunities or empowerment in general and of human development.¹⁶⁷ In any case IAC discourse articulates “the level of poverty that still prevails in the world as unacceptably high”.¹⁶⁸

Moreover, the exact link between poverty and corruption is not articulated very coherently. While the WB states that “[c]orruption and poverty are linked through many indirect channels”,¹⁶⁹ TI stresses that corruption is both “a cause and a consequence of poverty”¹⁷⁰ as well as a “barrier to overcoming it”,¹⁷¹ and that the “fight against poverty and corruption is only sustainable and successful when the two phenomena are addressed together”.¹⁷² The UNDP explains that corruption’s correlation with poverty does not necessarily mean that corruption causes poverty, but that “corruption and poverty go hand in hand”.¹⁷³ It explains that corruption causes poverty by reducing economic growth and worsening inequality, while at the same time re-

¹⁶² UNDP (2004); TI (y); WB (d); TI (e)

¹⁶³ WB (c); see also UNDP (2008d)

¹⁶⁴ TI (2008b: 3); TI (k); TI (k)

¹⁶⁵ TI (2008b: 3); WB (d); TI (k)

¹⁶⁶ WB (d)

¹⁶⁷ WB (d); TI (2008b: 2)

¹⁶⁸ TI (2008a: 2)

¹⁶⁹ WB (d)

¹⁷⁰ TI (2008b: 2)

¹⁷¹ TI (o)

¹⁷² TI (2008b: 3)

¹⁷³ UNDP (2008c: 12)

ducing governments' capacity to respond to people's needs. Poverty, in turn, is portrayed as reinforcing corruption.¹⁷⁴ So while its actual meaning is not entirely clear, poverty nevertheless functions as an important hindrance to the Universal in chain C, underlining the necessity to fight corruption.

However, the creation or aggravation of poverty is by no means the only negative consequence of corruption according to IAC discourse. Again, while some consequences of corruption are articulated as actual hindrances to the Universal in themselves, such as poverty, many of the consequences of corruption appear in the form of absences or subversions of 'desirable concepts'. As such, the latter are part of chain AC and will be discussed in chapters 4, 5 and 6. The articulations of their absences however belong to chain C which embodies the hindrances to the Universal; they symbolise the lack of the Universal and at the same time contribute to its construction by pointing to desirable signifiers in chain AC.

In this respect, chain C articulates the negative consequences of corruption on 'development' particularly prominently.¹⁷⁵ For example, the UNDP identifies corruption as "one of the biggest impediments to the world's efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals" and appeals "Don't Let Corruption Kill Development".¹⁷⁶ While corruption is articulated as enhancing poverty by inhibiting development, it is also articulated as inhibiting development by enhancing poverty and also by having all sorts of other negative effects, the relations of which to development and poverty are often not entirely clarified.

Most of the following, more specific consequences of corruption, are articulated as damaging development or enhancing poverty in one way or another; these equivalisations reveal in interesting ways the political, social and economic constitution of the corrupt and thus highly problematic societies that the fight against corruption aims to improve, and at the same time serve to picture the magnitude of the threat that corruption poses, thus further developing the horrific fantasmatic logic referred to above.

¹⁷⁴ UNDP (2008a: 1)

¹⁷⁵ See for example UNDP (a); WB (2007: i-ii); see also WB (2007: i-ii); TI (1)

¹⁷⁶ UNDP (a); see also UNDP (2008d); WB (h); TI (2008b)

Malfunctioning political processes and institutions, social consequences

Corruption is articulated as causing different malfunctions of political institutions and processes, which in turn have negative social consequences. For example, in the judicial area, corruption leads to violations of the constitution and of human rights,¹⁷⁷ it undermines the rule of law,¹⁷⁸ breeds impunity¹⁷⁹ and creates uncertainty and unpredictability for those who seek recourse to justice.¹⁸⁰

An important consequence of corruption with regards to the state is that it weakens political institutions,¹⁸¹ limits their efficiency,¹⁸² and reduces the state's governance capacities in general.¹⁸³ In doing so it skews decision-making, budgeting and implementation processes, thereby affecting development initiatives, denying participation to citizens and limiting their access to political and economic decision-making.¹⁸⁴ This hurts the public interest¹⁸⁵ and fosters an undemocratic environment.¹⁸⁶ The latter is highlighted particularly by TI and the UNDP who accuse corruption of 'striking at the heart of democracy'.¹⁸⁷

In the social sector, corruption denies citizens' access to state services,¹⁸⁸ increases the price of those services¹⁸⁹ and lowers their quality,¹⁹⁰ but in particular leads to a neglect of the poor's basic needs.¹⁹¹ All three organisations denounce corruption as decreasing government revenues,¹⁹² increasing the costs of government procurement,¹⁹³ wasting or diverting state resources¹⁹⁴ and aid¹⁹⁵ and thus decreasing the

¹⁷⁷ TI (2009f); TI (2008b); UNDP (2004); UNDP (2008b); WB (d)

¹⁷⁸ UNDP (a); UNDP (2008a: 8); WB (d)

¹⁷⁹ TI (2009b); UNDP (2004: 2-3)

¹⁸⁰ UNDP (2004; TI (y); WB (d)

¹⁸¹ UNDP (2008a: 2)

¹⁸² WB (d); see also TI (2008b: 3)

¹⁸³ UNDP (2008a: 2)

¹⁸⁴ TI (2008b); UNDP (a), UNDP (2008a: 2)

¹⁸⁵ TI-S official 2

¹⁸⁶ UNDP (a); UNDP (2008a: 1); TI (2000: xv)

¹⁸⁷ UNDP (a); see also TI (o); TI (a), see also UNDP (2008b: 15). The WB, the 'non-political' mandate of which does not allow mention of democracy, chooses to stick to more technically sounding terms like governance and accountability.

¹⁸⁸ UNDP (2008d); WB (d); UNDP (a); WB (2007: i-ii)

¹⁸⁹ UNDP (2008c: 11); WB (d)

¹⁹⁰ UNDP (2008a: 2); UNDP (2008c: 11); WB (d); TI (h)

¹⁹¹ TI (h); TI (k); TI (2008b: 2); WB (c)

¹⁹² UNDP (2004)

¹⁹³ TI (h)

¹⁹⁴ TI (h); TI (r); UNDP (2004); UNDP (2008a); WB (t); WB (2007; UNDP (a); UNDP (2008d); TI (r); UNDP (2008c: 11); WB (d); TI (k)

¹⁹⁵ UNDP (a); TI (l); TI (r); TI (2008b: 2); TI (k)

capacity of the state to provide services, such as the building of schools, hospitals, roads and water treatment facilities.¹⁹⁶ Corruption also leads to the dumping of fake or substandard medicines on the market,¹⁹⁷ and to hazardous waste being dumped in landfill sites and in oceans.¹⁹⁸

Both the undemocratic consequences of corruption and its tendency to infringe upon state service provision lead to social and economic inequalities,¹⁹⁹ poverty, social cleavages, fractured communities, the marginalization of groups of citizens from society,²⁰⁰ and the decline of moral values and disrespect for authority in society.²⁰¹ This in turn is regarded as undermining the state's credibility and effectiveness;²⁰² it erodes public confidence, corrodes citizens' trust in their political leaders and institutions, and deteriorates the legitimacy of governments as well as the whole state and its institutions.²⁰³ These effects are articulated as particularly dangerous since "large numbers of people in emerging democracies might become disillusioned with the democratic form of government and start to yearn for times of greater certainty".²⁰⁴ In new democracies, this lack of legitimacy will either cause "cynicism and apathy on the part of citizens" or, if things get worse, lead to the "questioning of the entire political system".²⁰⁵

Consequently, insecurity and instability figure among the major consequences of corruption articulated in chain C. The UNDP explains that corruption "contributes to instability"²⁰⁶ and "may play a key role in fomenting and prolonging conflicts, leading to an unstable and failed state".²⁰⁷ This is because the disillusionment of citizens caused by corruption in the ways described above leads them to revolt against or ignore the state, causing political unrest, instability²⁰⁸ and "ungovernability",²⁰⁹ inse-

¹⁹⁶ UNDP (a)

¹⁹⁷ UNDP (a)

¹⁹⁸ UNDP (a)

¹⁹⁹ TI (2008b: 2); UNDP (2008a: 7); WB (d); TI (l)

²⁰⁰ TI (2008b: 3)

²⁰¹ TI (2009f); TI (2008b); UNDP (2004); UNDP (2008b); WB (d)

²⁰² TI (2008b)

²⁰³ TI (p); TI (f); TI (2000); Broadman/Recanatini (2000); WB (1997: 5); TI-S official 2; UNDP (a); UNDP (2008c: 12); WB (d)

²⁰⁴ TI (2000: xv)

²⁰⁵ TI (f)

²⁰⁶ UNDP (a)

²⁰⁷ UNDP (2008a: 8)

²⁰⁸ UNDP (a); UNDP (2008c: 11); TI (o); UNDP (2008a: 1)

²⁰⁹ TI (2008b)

curity, conflict, civil war²¹⁰ and state failure.²¹¹ This endangers the development and existence of states as a whole and can even lead to death and violent conflict.²¹²

In sum, IAC discourse conveys that corruption's damaging effects on democracy, equality and public service provision (and to a limited extent legal justice) ultimately have the worst possible consequence; corruption submerses societies into chaos and ungovernability.

Economic malfunctions and failures in politico-economic relations

Corruption is also articulated in equivalence to different negative outcomes in the realm of economics and politico-economic relations. TI, the WB and the UNDP agree that corruption imposes enormous economic costs on society,²¹³ and that this has further negative consequences.

The rationale is that corruption in the public sector promotes excessive and inefficient spending,²¹⁴ wastes scarce resources and development aid²¹⁵ and diverts investments from infrastructure, environmental protection, institutions and social services towards unnecessary 'white elephant' projects.²¹⁶ This not only disadvantages the poor, but it also increases a country's debt burden and depletes national wealth.²¹⁷ Here and there, references to the effect of corruption as deepening economic inequalities are found,²¹⁸ usually without an explanation as to why this is problematic or as to how much inequality is tolerable.

In the private sector, public-private corruption impedes sustainable economic growth²¹⁹ because it raises transaction costs and uncertainty²²⁰ and thus limits a

²¹⁰ UNDP (2008a)

²¹¹ UNDP (a)

²¹² TI (o); TI (2009f); TI (2009d); TI (2009f); UNDP (2008c: 11)

²¹³ Broadman/Recanatini (2000); TI (h); TI (2000); TI (2000); TI (o); TI (h); UNDP (a); UNDP (2008d)

²¹⁴ WB (d)

²¹⁵ TI (h); TI (r); UNDP (2004: 4)

²¹⁶ UNDP (2008a: 1); Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 1); UNDP (2008d)

²¹⁷ TI (o); TI (p)

²¹⁸ WB (2000: 6); WB (d); TI (o); UNDP (2008a); TI (2008b)

²¹⁹ TI (2008b: 2), UNDP (2008c: 11); UNDP (2008a: 2); WB (2007: i-ii); WB (d)

²²⁰ UNDP (2008a); Broadman/Recanatini (2000)

“country’s ability to attract investment”.²²¹ It reduces growth through losses of time, and through maintaining high company costs and low economic output,²²² imposes a regressive tax on small enterprises²²³ and thus decreases not only private profits but also government revenues.²²⁴ Corruption also damages economic growth by distorting market principles, mainly through the purchase of monopoly rights to the detriment of competition, leading to inefficiencies.²²⁵ TI argues that such a “market in sleaze” which is no longer ruled by “the arms-length pricing of goods and services” is “unlikely to produce what it should for the benefit of the wider community”.²²⁶ Furthermore, the WB warns that corruption contributes to “financial and economic collapse, public alienation, and even violence and failed states”.²²⁷

TI, which out of the three IAC organisations is particularly concerned with private sector corruption, points out that corruption can also intensify certain dangers that are inherent to the market.²²⁸ It claims that accounting fraud and other forms of private sector corruption can cause sudden economic collapses.²²⁹ Yet also the WB warns that “obscure insider lending practices and improper financial schemes” can contribute to macroeconomic crises.²³⁰

The main consequence of corruption that IAC discourse articulates here is obviously that it inhibits the efficient functioning of the economy and the public sector for stable economic development. Corruption in the public and the private sector renders the private sector unable to produce the desired level of economic growth. If the private sector does not generate wealth, this also infringes upon the revenues of the public sector and will necessarily exacerbate the problem of the lack of state services and therefore create a security problem. What is more, these consequences can even lead to a collapse of the economy which again can lead the state on a whole to fail.

²²¹ WB (d); TI (p); UNDP (2008a)

²²² TI (2009h)

²²³ Broadman/Recanatini (2000); UNDP (2008c: 11)

²²⁴ UNDP (2004); WB (d); WB (f); Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 1)

²²⁵ TI (o); TI (2000); TI (2009i: 1); TI (h); Broadman/Recanatini (2000); UNDP (a); UNDP (2008a: 7)

²²⁶ TI (2000: xxvi)

²²⁷ WB (2007: i-ii)

²²⁸ TI (2009h)

²²⁹ TI (2009h: 5)

²³⁰ Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 1)

In sum, although the WB seems to be less concerned with corruption's consequences in the political realm than TI and the UNDP (which is likely due to its alleged non-political mandate), the three organisations still share a rather strong consensus on the damaging consequences of corruption. All these rather consensual articulations of corruption's appalling consequences seem to articulate corruption as endangering everything that is necessary for a good life. Corruption symbolises all the bad things which hinder the good things, as a TI interviewee confirmed.²³¹ The signifiers poverty and the absence of development concentrate all these equivalisations of powerful hindrances to the Universal in chain C. While poverty functions as the opposite of that good life, and while development fulfils an important function in signifying that life, both highlight the importance of fighting corruption.

However, a closer look reveals that IAC discourse stresses two main causal explanations for exactly how corruption committed by self-interested actors harms societies: On the one hand, corruption creates inefficiencies in the private sector. Such inefficiencies come about through the lack or distortion of market principles like competition and efficiency, thus they are negative because they hinder economic growth. This affects the economic capacity, development and the wealth of the country in general (which is problematic), but it also causes a lack of state revenues which is seen to affect particularly poor people who are dependent on state services and therefore vulnerable to an increase in their cost and/or a deterioration of their quality. This increases poverty and is capable of affecting the stability of a country. In the public sector, on the other hand, the self-interest of those in government leads them to set incorrect priorities for spending state money. By putting money that is supposed to benefit their fellow citizens (and especially 'the poor') into their own pockets or spending it on unnecessary prestige projects, they foster economic, political and social inequality and exclusion. This is articulated not only as undemocratic and unjust but also as a threat to stability.

Thus, these articulations of consequences not only shape the meaning of corruption as a hindrance to the Universal and scale up its significance as an enemy even further, but simultaneously serve to construct the 'endangered' society as desirable; the

²³¹ The interviewee told me "I like the way you put it" after I had asked towards the end of an interview whether that all meant that corruption was something like the bad thing that hinders all the good things (TI-S official 2).

logic of consequences of corruption in chain C conveys that corruption needs to be combated *because* it has all those damaging consequences. Thus, this analysis of constructions of the enemy in chain C already allows us to see a particular antagonistic division of the discursive space emerging (stratagem II, the main political logic), and also to get a glimpse of the social logics structuring the Universal pursued in IAC discourse; this is possible despite the fact that we have not yet investigated the “hegemonic chain”, which would allow us to discern the equivalisation of differential claims oriented towards the Universal (stratagem I). This demonstrates how closely interrelated the construction of both chains of equivalence is in IAC discourse.

Together with the definitions and the causes of corruption discussed above, these articulations of negative consequences point to a society that is stable, wealthy, peaceful, just, democratic, and safe; a society in which the state takes care of its citizens, in which the poor are provided for by state services (at least to a certain extent) and where poverty is reduced (at least to a certain extent), and where there is equality (at least to a certain extent). It is a society where public and private sphere are separated, where money is efficiently spent, where the state and its institutions function effectively, where markets are well-regulated and free, where the economy is constantly growing and providing the state with revenues, and where international aid effectively helps development. What emerges is a society in which citizens are included and participate, are engaged and believe in democracy, respect their governments and trust in them, and where the right moral values are in place and are given importance; but also a society where opportunities and incentives for corruption are minimised, and where people’s actions are made transparent, controlled and eventually punished if they happen to damage the public interest.

This is the kind of good, uncorrupted society and the kind of public interest that these articulations of the consequences of corruption in chain C sketch out. It remains a relatively vague picture, and the analysis of chain AC, which sets out the Universal pursued in the fight against corruption and the ways in which it is pursued, should not be prejudged, as the two chains need not necessarily be entirely consistent. Nonetheless, and without having examined any articulations of actual anticorruption measures in IAC discourse yet, we are already able to tell that the Universal pursued in the fight against corruption seems to be a market-liberal democracy with

participatory elements and social security systems that foster economic welfare, social cohesion and civic engagement and responsibility, but that also exerts a considerable amount of control over the actions of its citizens.

Subject positions

If we want to know more about the ‘enemy’ constructed in IAC discourse, looking at the subject positions that are articulated as corrupt in chain C is particularly interesting. As mentioned in chapter 2, the construction of an ‘antagonistic chain’ usually also involves the institution of subject positions as equivalents in that chain.

Following the argument of Laclau and Mouffe,²³² that social identity relies on that which it is not, the setting up of some subject positions in C might serve to define and strengthen the identity of the subject positions in chain AC, i.e. those that support the fight against corruption. However, as we have seen earlier in this chapter, *all* people are articulated as being equally inclined to corruption. In fact, apart from the articulation of human nature as naturally corrupt, also many other very general subject positions appear in chain C. Public servants are certainly at the forefront of the corrupt subject positions,²³³ but politicians²³⁴ or high public officials²³⁵ are also seen as engaging in grand corruption. Indeed, they are often aided by Northern corporations which pay “bribes around the world”,²³⁶ protected by “governments of the North”.²³⁷ Next to them, donors,²³⁸ trade unions,²³⁹ lobbyists²⁴⁰ and business people²⁴¹, for example “rogue employees” and managers “abusing the power that shareholders have granted them”,²⁴² are constructed as perpetrators of corruption. Apart from these subject positions in governments and the private sector, citizens in general²⁴³ and more specifically voters²⁴⁴ and poor people are also articulated as corrupt.

²³² Laclau/Mouffe (2001[1985])

²³³ TI (q); TI (2000: xix)

²³⁴ TI (l)

²³⁵ TI (p)

²³⁶ TI (p)

²³⁷ TI (o)

²³⁸ TI (l)

²³⁹ TI (b)

²⁴⁰ TI (c)

²⁴¹ TI (l)

²⁴² TI (2009h: 2)

²⁴³ TI (2008b: 3)

In addition to this, and in accordance with the aforementioned articulations that corruption is worse in developing countries, there is a tendency in IAC discourse to articulate specific corrupt subject positions for people from developing countries,²⁴⁵ while Western subject positions are more frequently mentioned as only hindering the curing of the lack of the Universal by anticorruption efforts.²⁴⁶ Yet overall, all these articulations of subject positions in chain C serve to construct every one of us as a potential enemy, as inclined to endanger or destroy the Universal.

While this certainly serves to deepen the antagonism between corruption on the one hand and the realisation of the Universal on the other, and to emphasise the importance of the fight against corruption, IAC discourse however seems to face a serious challenge. If every possible subject position was part of this enormous mass of enemies, crucially, no one would be left to support the fight against corruption and bring about the Universal in chain AC. Yet, as we will see, IAC discourse is more complicated and aptly prevents this from happening; through a series of discursive moves it avoids such a potential stalemate and re-articulates the mass of potentially corrupt subject positions into chain AC on the whole as supporters of the fight against corruption.

This occurs because in IAC discourse, the articulation of all humans as equally prone to corruption simultaneously serves as a kind of absolution for everyone. In line with and supported by liberal political thought, people are not to blame for the self-interest that is found in their nature.²⁴⁷ The resulting absolution for corrupt behaviour occurs in a number of ways. On the one hand the corrupt actions by different subject positions are re-articulated as a necessity. In the case of the poor for example corruption is “a survival strategy”,²⁴⁸ which makes them victims of corruption rather than perpetrators. Similarly, businesses ‘must pay’ and ‘have to pay’ bribes “to win or retain business”;²⁴⁹ thus, it is due to external incentives that they have no choice

²⁴⁴ TI (e)

²⁴⁵ See for example TI’s CPI 2009 Regional Highlights documents which articulate corrupt subject positions in developing countries (like the President of Niger, or the Azerbaijani society) much more clearly than in developed ones (TI 2009b; TI 2009c; TI 2009d; TI 2009e; TI 2009f; TI 2009g).

²⁴⁶ See for example TI (c)

²⁴⁷ Hobbes did not see human self-interest as problematic *per se*. Instead, he reasoned that it is a person’s natural right to pursue wealth, power and a save life.

²⁴⁸ TI (2008b: 3)

²⁴⁹ TI (p)

but to become corrupt. Not even most public officials are really corrupt: They “may be grossly underpaid and depend on small rents from the public to feed their families and pay school fees”;²⁵⁰ the fact that their corruption is also called ‘survival corruption’²⁵¹ indicates that they have no option but to become corrupt if they wish to save their lives and the lives of their families. Overall, TI declares that it is rather a concern for the world’s poorest, “rather than a distaste for the corrupt and their deeds, that rightly drives the global movement against corruption”,²⁵² conveying a sense that acting corruptly is not distasteful. Secondly, corrupt individuals are also absolved from blame through the articulations of the causes of corruption investigated earlier as opportunities, permitting factors and incentives, and thus as properties of the system. As all people simply respond to external incentives according to their nature, they cannot really be blamed for corruption; it is the system that makes them corrupt. However, there is also a third and quite interesting discursive strategy which absolves people from the charge of corruption and helps to re-articulate them as subject positions in chain AC. Like the causes of corruption, this discursive logic externalises corruption away from the subjects perpetrating corruption; it works through a metaphorical thingification, animalisation and even personification of corruption in IAC discourse.

Metaphors

Although IAC discourse officially defines corruption as particular abusive acts carried out by human beings, and also articulates particular groups of people as possible or actual perpetrators of corrupt acts, corruption is nevertheless also articulated quite often as a phenomenon in itself in the discourses of all three organisations. Through equivalisation with particular metaphors in chain C, the signifier corruption assumes particular characteristics which demonstrate its evil nature. IAC discourse turns ‘corruption’ itself into the enemy, thus putting the persons committing it out of the focus of the fight against corruption. The most prominent example of this strategy is

²⁵⁰ TI (2000: xix)

²⁵¹ TI (2000: xix)

²⁵² TI (2000: 1)

probably Wolfensohn’s 1996 speech in which he portrays corruption as a ‘cancer’.²⁵³ This metaphor is reiterated in other WB documents, which explain that “no country, rich or poor, is immune” against this ‘cancer’²⁵⁴ and insist that it needs to be “tackled aggressively”²⁵⁵ or ‘attacked vigorously’, given the “dreadful conditions most of the world’s population endures”.²⁵⁶ Apart from this medical metaphor, corruption is also endowed with malicious intentions, for example in that it “sabotages policies and programs that aim to reduce poverty”.²⁵⁷ Hence, corruption here becomes a malicious subject itself.

While the UNDP also articulates corruption as a ‘killer’ of development,²⁵⁸ its preferred metaphor consists of two halves of an apple (see image below). While one, fresh and healthy-looking side of it symbolises “life and prosperity”, the other is rotting, thus representing “the spoiling aspect of corruption”.²⁵⁹

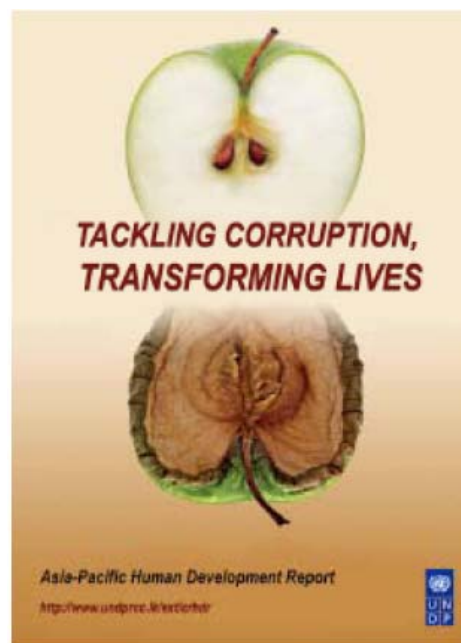


Figure 1 Rotten apple - rotten society Source: UNDP²⁶⁰

²⁵³ WB (u); see also James Wolfensohn, Foreword, in WB (1997: 2)

²⁵⁴ WB (h)

²⁵⁵ WB (u)

²⁵⁶ WB (h)

²⁵⁷ WB (h)

²⁵⁸ UNDP (a)

²⁵⁹ UNDP (2008d); Here, the UNDP draws on the concept’s etymological roots: the Latin word ‘corumpere’ which is the origin of today’s term ‘corruption’ and similar terms in European languages also meant ‘spoil, rot, taint’.

²⁶⁰ UNDP (2008d)

Given that the “fresh apple at the top conveys the idea that it is possible for *clean* institutions to stand above corruption”,²⁶¹ corruption is articulated not only as tainting but also as something dirty.²⁶² Some statements imply that if institutions are ‘clean’, these can also “yield fruits such as healthy, educated, freer people”²⁶³ and thus articulate corruption as making a society not only rot, but also remain uneducated, sick and unfree. The UNDP also cites Kofi Annan, who in the foreword to the United Nations Convention against Corruption operates with other biological and even chemical metaphors; he calls corruption an “insidious plague” which allows “organized crime, terrorism and other threats to human security to flourish”, while having “corrosive effects” on societies.²⁶⁴

However, TI is probably most adept in metaphorising corruption. The organization warns that “corruption continues to lurk where opacity rules”,²⁶⁵ making corruption appear like an aggressive animal lurking in the dark, waiting for an opportunity to strike at its victims. It is indeed “alive and well”, even in established democracies, and when it decides to show itself, it “scares away foreign investment”.²⁶⁶ Like a wild and dangerous animal it can be “rampant”²⁶⁷ and get “out of control”,²⁶⁸ which is why it needs to be curbed²⁶⁹ and kept in check.²⁷⁰ In other places in the discourse, the metaphors equivalised with corruption tend to convey images of a poisonous or pest plant. In a favourable environment, “corruption takes root on a wide scale”, it ‘thrives’ and ‘flourishes’,²⁷¹ and when “left alone and not contained, it is likely to increase”.²⁷² This is why it must be ‘eradicated’,²⁷³ with TI lamenting that it cannot

²⁶¹ UNDP (2008d, e.a.)

²⁶² This recalls very much Bratsis’ interpretation of the concept of corruption as serving to articulate certain things or acts as bad or ‘dirty’ *in a particular environment*; drawing on Douglas (1966) he explains that “dirt is best understood as something that is out of place”. Applying this to the concept of corruption, he argues that “[o]nce we have the contamination of the public by the private, politicians and politics itself become dirty, tainted, infected, and thus corrupt. The opposite is equally true” Bratsis (2003: 15).

²⁶³ UNDP (2008d)

²⁶⁴ UNDP (2008a: 1)

²⁶⁵ TI (y)

²⁶⁶ TI (p)

²⁶⁷ TI (2009f); WB (2007: 40)

²⁶⁸ TI (y)

²⁶⁹ TI (2009g)

²⁷⁰ TI (o)

²⁷¹ TI (o)

²⁷² TI (2000: xviii)

²⁷³ TI (2009c)

be “rooted out in one big sweep”.²⁷⁴ Another image brought up by TI is that of an iceberg.²⁷⁵ Due to the secrecy implicit in corruption, the organisation assumes that most of it remains hidden and goes undiscovered which, in turn, creates fear of the unknown extent of the threat we are facing. Not least, corruption in itself is also a ‘temptation’,²⁷⁶ which, when coupled with permissiveness, seduces public officials to succumb to its advances. In other places TI emphasises the importance of tackling corruption with the right ‘tools’, thus conveying the image of an operation or of a technical problem.²⁷⁷

Lastly, there is of course the phrase the ‘fight against corruption’, which is frequently used by all three IAC organisations and conveys the impression of a fight against a very concrete threat, rather than of a lengthy process of changing people’s behaviour, attitudes, morals, or social systems. Much as the negative attributes reviewed earlier in this chapter, and in what could be seen as an important fantasmatic logic of the discourse, these metaphors present corruption as a dangerous and destructive threat humanity is facing. So while the metaphors used differ among the discourses of the three organisations, they work together quite nicely to constitute the fantasy of corruption as a monstrous enemy victimising the world, thus rendering the fight against corruption more persuasive.

Quite aside from this, by transforming corruption into an illness, something animalistic, or subject-like, with its own personality and almost a will of its own, these articulations in chain C contribute to a detachment of the concept of corruption from the actual persons or groups of people committing it. The blame no longer lies with a particular person or their actions, but rather with this wild and uncontrollable thing which spreads its poison out of the dark and secretly invades and eats away at the body of society. As a political logic this turns all people into victims rather than irredeemable perpetrators of corruption; anyone may fall victim to corruption at any time, and we are always in danger of suffering the consequences. This discursive logic has a very particular effect for the success of the hegemonic project under concern: It undoes the articulation of the immense number of subject positions into

²⁷⁴ TI (o)

²⁷⁵ TI (p)

²⁷⁶ TI (o)

²⁷⁷ TI (2009c)

chain C and enables their re-articulation into chain AC, as having a stake and a role in the IAC project. If one so wants, corruption itself, ‘monstrified’, remains as the only ‘subject position’ in chain C. At the same time, its fantasmatic monstrification ‘covers over’ the contradiction between the simultaneous articulation of everyone as inclined to corruption and as a supporter of the fight against corruption. Closely interrelated, the fantasmatic logic of monstrifying corruption and the powerful political logic of equivalising all potential subject positions in chain AC have the potential to substantively aid the hegemonisation of the IAC project, i.e. the expansion of its chains.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the construction of corruption and its equivalents in chain C of IAC discourse as hindrances to a Universal which will be further investigated in the following chapters. It was dedicated particularly to drawing out the different logics of the articulations that link different signifiers as equivalents of corruption in chain C. This analysis has produced important insights regarding the closely interrelated discursive stratagems and logics through which chain C serves the expansion of the IAC hegemonic project as well as the kind of system that is purported as a Universal by IAC discourse.

The equivalisation of differential claims that are oriented against the Universal could be distinguished quite clearly and coherently in chain C. While this is not distinguished as a hegemonic stratagem by Nonhoff,²⁷⁸ the present analysis was able to show that the importance that these equivalisations in the ‘antagonistic chain’ have for the hegemonic project of IAC discourse is not to be underestimated; chain C has been shown to be quite important in terms of defining the Universal and advancing the expansion of IAC discourse as a hegemonic project.

The extraordinary coherence of chain C is a very important finding of this chapter. While the chapter has pointed out minor contestations among and within the three

²⁷⁸ Nonhoff distinguishes only the ‘equivalisation of differential claims that are oriented towards the Universal’, which takes place in the ‘hegemonic chain’, here chain AC, as a hegemonic stratagem (I) (see chapter 2).

organisations (as with regards to the conception of human nature and the location of corruption in sectors of society), it has become clear that the meaning of corruption in IAC discourse is constructed very coherently, forming one chain of equivalence with slight contestations rather than several 'rivalling' chains. Noticeably, the contestations of the conception of human nature emerging from the interviews stretch across organisational divides. However, in all cases they seem confined to the interviewees thinking and speech without effecting on the strategic documents or overall conception of corruption of their organisations. The difference between the WB's definition of corruption as necessarily involving the public sector and TI's and the UNDP's definition as including private sector corruption turned out to be the only contestation that can be found between the organisations and can partly be explained by organisational characteristics, namely the WB's scepticism towards state involvement into the economy. However, it did not seem to take any affect in the articulations of causes and consequences of corruption.

Furthermore, corruption could be quite easily recognised as the main nodal point of chain C. In the course of the analysis it emerged more and more clearly as the symbol of all the hindrances to or the lack of the Universal. While Nonhoff does not account for such a function in his hegemonic stratagems, corruption can be regarded as the representative of chain C. The fact that the discourse is identifiable as such mainly because its articulations are about fighting corruption or doing something *anti* corruption suggests in fact that corruption fulfils an important representative function for the whole of IAC discourse.

The investigation of logics of equivalisations in chain C showed how corruption is constructed as a powerful threat that requires to be fought. We have seen that IAC discourse articulates corruption as a geographically ubiquitous phenomenon (but one that is worse in developing countries), and that it links it with a range of negative attributes to demonstrate its severity and danger. The threatening and omnipresent nature of corruption is also conveyed through its construction as intrinsic to human nature. While articulating the fight against corruption as important and necessary, chain C constructs it at the same time as a fight that can never be entirely won and consequently will require endless support.

While the allocation of subject positions to the two chains is more complex than in the case of the other equivalents and is partly contradictory, it was important to draw out the contradictions and re-articulations which are at work here. While Nonhoff emphasises the necessity for the antagonistic boundaries to be impermeable,²⁷⁹ the chapter has shown that consistency is not necessarily the only successful strategy and that contradictory allocations of elements to both chains (or rather constantly across chains) can actually serve the hegemonic purpose; in the case of IAC discourse, as has been shown, it is precisely through holding them together that the hegemonic project is able to acquire strength. Through a triple discursive move, which involves the metaphorisation of corruption, the IAC project manages to articulate subject positions into chain AC, as supporters of the fight against corruption:

On the one hand, through the construction of human nature as intrinsically corrupt, all possible subject positions are articulated into chain C, thus strengthening the seriousness of the enemy and the importance of the project. At the same time, IAC discourse absolves everyone from bearing the seed of corruption by locating the causes of corruption outside any human subject and thus beyond the control of any individual, which serves to lift all corrupt subject positions out of chain C. In a third (and simultaneous) discursive move and what could be called a fantasmatic logic, the metaphorisation of corruption in chain C personifies corruption and transforms it into an external threat to mankind which substitutes all subject positions in chain C. All people are thus turned into victims of corruption and are articulated as having a stake and a role in the fight against corruption in chain AC. The power of this fantasmatic logic is able to cover over the contradictions involved in the constant re-articulation of subject positions across chains of equivalences.

At the same time, both the articulation of humans as universally corrupt and the metaphorisation and detachment from human beings of corruption work as a discursive strategy to deal with (potential) dislocations in that they defend IAC discourse against accusations of proclaiming Western moral superiority.²⁸⁰ Such accusations are also explicitly dealt with in TI discourse (and to a more limited extent also WB

²⁷⁹ Nonhoff (2006: 226)

²⁸⁰ Actually, many interviewees were eager to emphasise that they are by no means claiming any kind of Western superiority, which indicated that they were aware of the criticism which has already been made of their organisations in this regard.

discourse) through stratagem IV, which demarcates a super-difference between IAC discourse and discourses that articulate Western superiority and thus works towards shielding IAC discourse from dislocation. At the same time however, developing countries are still articulated as being more corrupt than Western countries. This contradiction has far-reaching discursive effects not only in that articulations about the corruptness of people and especially of politicians in developing countries (even if based on ‘technical’ explanations) certainly reinforce still existing stereotypical assumptions about their backwardness, but also in that it helps to justify and advance Western-led intervention into those countries as conducted among others via IAC programmes, as we will see more clearly in the analysis of chain AC.

Yet, the equivalisations in chain C reviewed in this chapter serve not only to justify the existence and convey the importance of IAC activities, thus rendering them persuasive. They also prepare the ground for the construction of a particular politico-economic system as the desirable Universal; in fact they already open up a particular antagonistic division of the discursive space by pointing to different elements of chain AC, thus sketching what will be shown to be the defining political logic of the discourse.

As the examination of definitions and manifestations of corruption has shown, while TI and the UNDP operate with the concept of private sector corruption, the WB sticks to the ‘traditional’ concept of corruption as necessarily involving the public sector. Given this contestation within chain C, it was an important finding that the organisations still share a conception of corruption which reinforces the modern liberal distinction between public and private interests, and which, at the same time, conceals the political character of the concept of corruption by not making this obvious. But the analysis of chain C allowed us to get even more of a glimpse of the social logics that are to structure the Universal pursued in IAC discourse, and in that sense confirmed Philp’s hypothesis that conceptions of corruption are intrinsically linked to conceptions of a public interest.

The investigation of the constructions of causes and consequences of corruption showed that in constructing corruption, chain C points to a number of signifiers (often through articulating their absence as equivalents of corruption) that are articulated as desirable and thus form part of the Universal. Thus for example, corruption

is equivalised with poverty (belonging to chain C), but also with the *lack* of state services and growth (two concepts belonging to chain AC).

Moreover, the analysis of the causes of corruption demonstrated that those causes (opportunities, permitting factors and additional economic incentives) are consensually constructed as failures in the design of societal systems, rather than as moral failures. The conception of human nature as irremediably self-interested and rational was revealed as the key logic structuring the articulation of causes of corruption, de-personalising these causes and locating them in the social actors' environment. In the following chapters we will come to see the important effects of these constructions of causes and human nature for the design of IAC measures. In chain C these constructions are also linked to explanations that corruption is worse in developing countries than in developed ones because of incorrect external incentives; at the same time, it conveys the impression that in developed countries (where corruption is allegedly less serious, or where it is an exception), such incentives are better set. This not only articulates Western societal systems as superior in design because they are better able to deal with human nature, but also negates the legitimate existence of societal systems that do not set the right incentives. In line with these findings, the review of the damaging consequences of corruption equivalised in chain C has furthermore sketched out the contours of a market-liberal democracy that IAC discourse claims to rescue from the claws of corruption.

Thus, chain C was found to sketch a particular politico-economic ideal as a Universal to strive for, which will be further specified through equivalisations in chain AC; in doing so it forecloses articulations of potential alternative politico-economic systems in IAC discourse, which can however only be further specified when the analysis of chain AC is concluded. Having analysed the particular interrelated political, fantasmatic and social logics of equivalisations in chain C and having drawn out the contours of the particular antagonistic division of the discursive space that it sketches, the political nature of IAC discourse thus revealed forebodes its shape as a hegemonic project. In order to verify this finding, however, we will have to inquire in detail into chain AC; the analysis conducted in the following three chapters will draw out not only the political logics of how IAC discourse attempts to change what it articulates as an omnipresent and comprehensive problem of societal organisation,

but also the social logics according to which the good, uncorrupted society (or the Universal) strived for is to function.

4 Vagueness and specificity – aims of the fight against corruption and specifications of the uncorrupted society

Having examined the rather coherent constitution of chain C of IAC discourse, we can now move on to investigate the second chain of equivalence of IAC discourse. Chain AC, the ‘anticorruption chain’, constructs the Universal, the imaginary ideal of a good, uncorrupted society.

The analysis conducted in the following three chapters will not only demonstrate the impressive consensus within IAC discourse with regards to how corruption should be fought, but also clearly confirms that IAC discourse has the form of a hegemonic project attempting to advance a particular Universal. More precisely, in the course of this and the following two chapters, I will show that chain AC, the ‘hegemonic chain’, is constructed in an equally coherent manner as chain C, in what can be distinguished as the ‘equivalisation of differential claims oriented towards the Universal’ (stratagem I). Given that a coherent ‘antagonistic chain’ has already been distinguished in the last chapter, the finding of stratagem I allows us to confirm the existence of an antagonistic division of the discursive space within IAC discourse (stratagem II), which is the main political logic structuring IAC discourse. Furthermore, the stratagems ‘representation’ (III), ‘super-differential demarcation’ (IV), ‘emergent openness of interpretation of the symbolic equivalent of the Universal’ (V) and ‘institution/perpetuation of subject positions for socio-political forces’ (VI) will be distinguished in the discourse.

However, distinguishing these stratagems is only possible by tracing in detail the equivalisations in chain AC and the complex logics structuring them, and only these logics will, at the same time, reveal step by step the kind of Universal pursued in IAC discourse. To this end, this and the two following chapters will, on the one hand, employ the ‘analytical grid’ provided by Nonhoff (see chapter 2). According to Nonhoff, the equivalisations constituting ‘hegemonic chains’ of hegemonic projects typically articulate particular values or aims which form part of the realisation of the Universal, specifications of the Universal pursued, instrumental claims about how the Universal is to be achieved, and more concrete policy demands or measures that are to serve the attainment of the Universal. Yet in addition to distinguishing these elements in chain AC, the chapters will, on the other hand, investigate in detail the

more specific discursive logics involved in the construction of these elements in chain AC. This process, in turn, will allow us to recognise the interrelated functioning of political, fantasmatic and social logics in IAC discourse, explaining how they come together to make IAC discourse a hegemonic project that advances a particular societal ideal in a particular way.

The present chapter examines the construction of particular aims of the fight against corruption and specifications of the Universal through equivalisations in chain AC, while instrumental claims and concrete demands will be subject to investigation in chapters 5 and 6.¹ It reveals that the ‘fight against corruption’ functions as the representative of chain AC (III) and demonstrates how it is rendered persuasive through a number of vaguely defined aims that serve the emergent openness of this representative (IV) and at the same time provide it with a beatific dimension. The second half of the chapter shows that, quite apart from the aims, the specifications of the Universal, in the form of the nodal points ‘competition’, ‘minimisation of discretion’, ‘transparency’, ‘accountability’ and ‘integrity’, come to define in crucial ways the shape of the Universal. Importantly, the chapter demonstrates how the construction of these specifications heavily centres on the conception of human nature drawn out in the last chapter as the original source of corruption and reveals how this leads to a preoccupation with securing governing mechanisms as the main social logic of the Universal.

‘Representation’

As mentioned previously, stratagems I and II are being unfolded in the course of the analysis of the three remaining empirical chapters and we will only know by the end of chapter 6 whether they are constituted coherently. Yet the third core stratagem of a hegemonic project, the ‘representation’ of the hegemonic chain by a particular signifier, should be much easier to identify. As will become clear shortly, it makes

¹ In the construction of aims and specifications, linguistic ways of articulation are particularly prominent, while we will see that instrumental claims and concrete demands are articulated in linguistic and non-linguistic ways. Both the linguistic and non-linguistic articulations are accessed through the text material and interviews as described in chapter 2.

sense to inquire into the existence of this stratagem before dealing with the aims of the fight against corruption articulated in chain AC.

‘Representation’, according to Nonhoff, is an important stratagem of hegemonic projects because the ‘representative’ or main hegemonic claim fulfils an important function in evoking the lack of an imaginary Universal and at the same time in claiming to address this lack by realising the Universal.² In doing so, the stratagem ‘representation’ gives the hegemonic project direction, while the openness of interpretation of the ‘representative’ (the next stratagem, V) renders the project persuasive.³ Nonhoff seems to argue that the role of the ‘representative’ is usually carried out by the main nodal point in the discourse, which is at the same time the main nodal point in chain AC. As such, it should be easily identifiable because it gives the discourse its name, or makes it identifiable as a discourse in the first place. Yet the case of IAC discourse is somewhat different. In chapter 3 it became clear that corruption is the main nodal point in chain C; given that the anticorruption agenda clearly centres on fighting corruption (which is what distinguishes it as a discourse), corruption also seems to function as the main nodal point of IAC discourse as a whole. However, corruption cannot fulfil the role of the ‘representative’ or the ‘symbolic equivalent of the Universal’ because it is articulated as the symbolic equivalent of the *lack* of the Universal in IAC discourse. What this points to is a negatively phrased hegemonic claim or ‘representative’ embodying everything that corruption is not or centring on eliminating the ‘enemy’ corruption. In IAC discourse, this role is clearly fulfilled by the terms ‘anticorruption’ or the ‘fight against corruption’; the ‘fight against corruption’ functions as the main hegemonic claim and symbolises the Universal pursued in IAC discourse. This is in line with Nonhoff’s assumption that the role of the hegemonic claim is usually fulfilled by what he calls an instrumental claim, which links up the aims of a hegemonic project by claiming that they can only be fulfilled when the hegemonic claim is fulfilled.⁴ As we will see, in articulating all sorts of appealing aims IAC discourse conveys that they can only be fulfilled when corruption is com-

² Nonhoff (2006: 214)

³ Combining Nonhoff with Glynos and Howarth, this can be regarded as the “vector” of the hegemonic project acquired through the fantasmatic dimension of the ‘representative’ (see Glynos/Howarth 2007: 147).

⁴ See Nonhoff (2006: 119)

bated, and at the same time renders the signifier ‘fight against corruption’ extremely open to interpretation.

Aims of the fight against corruption

One may wonder why this chapter discusses separately the aims that form part of the realisation of the Universal according to IAC discourse and the specifications of that Universal. This is because they tend to fulfil quite different functions in the hegemonic project. As we will see, while the aims primarily provide the hegemonic project with appeal, the specifications do much more to clarify the social logics of the Universal pursued.

In the following sections the articulations of aims of the fight against corruption by IAC discourse will be investigated in more detail, revealing how they contribute to stratagem V, the emergent openness of interpretation of the Universal. It will become clear that the three organisations articulate a wide range of aims that can be distinguished as nodal points in chain AC. However, their meanings and relations are rather vaguely and inconsistently articulated both within and among the three organisations.

A world free of corruption

According to TI, the central aim of its anticorruption measures and its sole purpose as an NGO is “to create change towards a world free of corruption”.⁵ In turn, this official aim seems to concentrate a vast range of different signifiers within TI discourse, as the interviews revealed. There is no agreement on the signifiers that constitute the “whole list”⁶ of components and TI does not seem to attempt to reach such an agreement.⁷ Overall the interviewees’ answers ranged from “development”⁸

⁵ TI (z)

⁶ TI-S official 5

⁷ One TI interviewee answered the question about what exactly constitutes the world without corruption thus: “This is a good question and something that I think we should discuss more often” (TI-S official 1).

⁸ TI-S official 3

and “increased wellbeing for the population”⁹; “welfare for the good of the public”,¹⁰ social change,¹¹ fairness,¹² and the keeping of promises by the people in power;¹³ “social justice”, poverty reduction and “that countries are able to develop as they choose”;¹⁴ to “integrity” as a “combination of elements that ensure the public good, at the end”.¹⁵ One interviewee explained that “we believe in cultural diversity, so definitely a world without corruption would look different in every single place” but still saw “justice” and “fairness” as well as “a world without poverty” as overarching concepts in this regard.¹⁶ This broad spectrum of concepts and the differences in the interviewees’ answers means that TI discourse articulates the world without corruption and consequently the fight against corruption as able to bring about a wide range of desirable things. This contributes to the openness of interpretation of this ‘representative’ and at the same time works towards rendering it persuasive. According to PDHT, this is not problematic; such a “broad” vision can have the capacity to “bring different people together”,¹⁷ in the sense of allowing the hegemonic project to acquire new subject positions. A TI interviewee even implied that TI keeps the meaning of the ‘world free of corruption’ intentionally open: “I think the vision is defined as a world free of corruption. We are not saying a world free of corruption so that ‘bum-bum-bum-bum-bum’ can happen, and I think that’s fine, because it depends”.¹⁸

A world without poverty

Both the WB and the UNDP do not seem to join in the articulation of a ‘world without corruption’ as the highest aim of the fight against corruption. The WB claims instead to fight corruption because it is “the greatest obstacle” to the Bank’s overarching mission of poverty reduction¹⁹ or of achieving ‘a world free of poverty’.²⁰

⁹ TI-S official 3

¹⁰ TI-S official 1

¹¹ TI-S official 6

¹² TI-S official 1, TI-S official 2

¹³ TI-S official 1

¹⁴ TI-S official 4

¹⁵ TI-S official 5

¹⁶ TI-S official 2

¹⁷ TI-S official 6

¹⁸ TI-S official 6

¹⁹ WB (k); see also WB (l); WB (2007: i-ii)

However, TI also articulates poverty eradication as an aim of the fight against corruption (even if not *the* aim) by claiming that “a world without corruption would be a world without poverty”.²¹ In the analysis of chain C, we have already seen that poverty is articulated as an important consequence of corruption and as a hindrance to the Universal. Equivalisations in chain AC now positivise these articulations by constructing poverty eradication as an explicit aim. However, much like the world without corruption, the world without poverty is only very vaguely defined in IAC discourse – the nodal point of the world without poverty concentrates a diverse range of components.

For example, the WB anticorruption website conceives the world without poverty (to be brought about by the fight against corruption amongst other efforts) as a world with economic and social development; this in turn includes the rule of law and “the institutional foundation on which economic growth depends”.²² Conceiving itself principally as an economic organisation,²³ the WB is quite explicit about the economic aspect of poverty and about the consequences of corruption on poverty reduction.²⁴ However, the view that “poverty is a monetary issue”²⁵ and that the world without poverty conceived by the WB is principally one without economic poverty is disputed by other WB articulations that “poverty reduction is about more than inadequate income” and economic growth, but also about equality, access to and quality of vital public services, opportunities, the absence of harassment, having one’s voice heard, representation, and access to information.²⁶ The list of aims equivalised with ‘the world without poverty’ is extended further by the webpage of the WB’s social development section (which also deals with anticorruption questions); stressing that ultimately ‘the world without poverty’ also means “more inclusive, cohesive, and accountable societies”.²⁷ One WB interviewee emphasised that “eradicating poverty is entirely about economic justice”, which in turn includes “inclusion and cohesion”, extending to gender equality, religions equality, and ethnic equality.²⁸ The meaning

²⁰ See the WB’s logo: ‘The World Bank – working for a world free of poverty’

²¹ TI-S official 2; see also TI (k); TI (k); TI-S official 5; TI (o)

²² WB (k)

²³ WB (2007: 6)

²⁴ See e.g. WB (d)

²⁵ WB official 4

²⁶ WB (d)

²⁷ WB (j)

²⁸ WB official 2

of ‘the world without poverty’ – and thus of the aim of the WB’s fight against corruption – is broadened further by ambiguities with regard to the degree of poverty that is tolerable or not. While the WB and also the UNDP stress the importance of the MDGs,²⁹ which concentrate on eradicating economic conditions of under a dollar a day,³⁰ a WB interviewee told me that “I don’t think there’s a sort of official line (...) on what is the absolute right amount of money for everybody to have”.³¹ Thus, via the broadening of the meaning of ‘the world without poverty’ through multiple equivalisations in chain AC, the meaning of the fight against corruption is broadened quite substantively in WB discourse. Similarly, for TI, poverty eradication not only means the absence of economic poverty³² but also includes “access to essential services (health, education, sanitation, etc.), basic civil rights, empowerment and human development” but also the “values of freedom, equality, solidarity and tolerance”³³ and a situation where people are not disadvantaged.³⁴

As with the meaning of ‘the world without corruption’, the components of ‘the world without poverty’ are not coherently articulated in IAC discourse. Again, this can be understood as a reflection of the ‘absorbing’ capacity of the nodal points ‘world without poverty’ but also ‘fight against corruption’ in IAC discourse, which are able to concentrate a wide range of differential claims. We can also see that the high concentration of equivalisations around these nodal points blurs the differences and relations between the respective surrounding claims to a certain extent so that their meanings become hardly distinguishable from each other and are used almost interchangeably in the discourse.

Development

While the achievement of a ‘world without poverty’ is constructed as the highest aim of the WB’s anticorruption efforts, and while TI holds up the ‘world without corruption’ as an aim, the UNDP articulates ‘development’ as the principal aim of its IAC

²⁹ WB (2007: i-ii); UNDP (2008d); UNDP (a); UNDP (2008a: 1, 3); UNDP (2008c: 12); see also TI (2008b: 1)

³⁰ United Nations (a)

³¹ WB official 3

³² TI (2008b)

³³ TI (2008b: 2)

³⁴ TI-S official 2

work.³⁵ Tellingly, the UNDP's anticorruption programme is called 'Global Programme on Anticorruption for Development Effectiveness', and a UNDP interviewee explained that this is because "we wanted to reflect (...) the UNDP's needs, upfront. It's a global (...) programme on anticorruption – but it's for development effectiveness".³⁶ At the same time, development is articulated as an important aim of the fight against corruption by the two other organisations. Moreover, the WB aims to foster development and has identified corruption as "among the greatest obstacles to economic and social development".³⁷ TI, too, constructs corruption as "the main hindering factor for development"³⁸ and the achievement of development as "one of the main reasons" for its work.³⁹

While chapter 3 has shown how countless condemnations of corruption's damaging effects on development contribute to the desirability of the concept, countless articulations in chain AC construct it as an explicit aim of the fight against corruption.⁴⁰ Yet again, its meaning is much less coherently articulated and seems to encompass an enormous range of values. The UNDP works with the concept of 'human development', which is defined as "a process of enlarging people's choices".⁴¹ It involves, again, a wide range of concepts including economic growth, equality, governance, the quality of services such as health and education, human rights, gender equality and empowerment as well as environmental sustainability,⁴² which are all to be fostered by fighting corruption. TI in turn articulates a rights-based and inclusion-focused conception of development as providing "all citizens with a level playing field, regardless of income, race, gender, religion, education or ethnicity",⁴³ or links it to the "right of people to participate in decisions affecting their lives".⁴⁴ Furthermore, development is also articulated as consisting of several sub-categories, such as social development,⁴⁵ political development,⁴⁶ equitable and sustainable develop-

³⁵ UNDP (2008a)

³⁶ UNDP official 1; see also WB official 6 who stated that development effectiveness is the WB's reason for combating corruption

³⁷ WB (k); see also WB official 3

³⁸ TI-S official 1, see also TI (2008b: 2)

³⁹ TI-S official 1; for similar articulations see TI (k); TI (k)

⁴⁰ TI (2009f); UNDP (2008d); TI (l); TI (2008a: 2); TI (y)

⁴¹ UNDP (2008a: 6)

⁴² UNDP (2008a: 6); UNDP (2008d), see also UNDP (a)

⁴³ TI (2008b: 5)

⁴⁴ TI-S official 2

⁴⁵ TI (r); TI (2009f)

⁴⁶ TI-S official 4

ment⁴⁷ all of which are rarely defined and the meanings of which are hardly separable from each other. A WB interviewee explained that in WB discourse, development and poverty eradication basically mean the same thing,⁴⁸ demonstrating the fusion of meanings among all these equivalisations.

These examples illustrate the immense amount of signifiers (which do not need to be summarised here) that are articulated in chain AC as aims of the fight against corruption. By being equivalised with the ‘world without corruption’, the ‘world without poverty’ and ‘development’ in the form of aims, the fight against corruption comes to represent the immense assemblage of desirable concepts that these concepts themselves already concentrate in the discourses of the three organisations.

Other values and aims

Next to or amongst these ‘sub-aims’ of the three concepts just discussed (the relations are inconsistently articulated or ‘blurred’ in the discourse), several values and ideals appear relatively frequently as societal aims in IAC discourse. They form smaller nodal points which work towards providing the discourse with positive appeal and also serve to concretise the Universal to a certain (although still limited) extent.

One such example is democracy, which is articulated as an aim of the fight against corruption by TI and the UNDP.⁴⁹ Both organisations seem to conceive of it as a form of liberal democracy. TI articulates it as modern, representative, multiparty democracy⁵⁰ with an element of social inclusion,⁵¹ also within the realm of “economic decision-making”.⁵² The UNDP cites research showing that “highly developed, long established liberal democracies, with a free and widely-read press, a high share of women in government, and a history of openness to trade are perceived as less corrupt (Treisman 2007)”⁵³ and links its aim of democracy with functioning

⁴⁷ TI (1); TI (2009b); TI (2008b: 5); WB (c); UNDP (2008a: 3)

⁴⁸ TI-S official 1

⁴⁹ TI (o); UNDP (2008c: 26, 27, 29); UNDP (2008b: 6); UNDP (a); TI (2000: xv); UNDP (2008a: 5)

⁵⁰ See TI (2008b: 3); TI (2009f); TI (a); TI (b); TI (a); TI (o); TI (2009f)

⁵¹ TI (2008b: 3)

⁵² TI (2008b: 3)

⁵³ UNDP (2008c: 21)

institutions, participation, trust and stability, and the fulfilling of the public will.⁵⁴ While these equalisations confirm the articulations in chain C of Western liberal systems of societal organisation as superior, they do little to clarify how such systems are supposed to function and how the fight against corruption contributes to their realisation. Such articulations mainly serve to enhance the persuasiveness of the fight against corruption, while only an inquiry into the specifications, instrumental claims and concrete demands of IAC discourse will help us understand the social logics of the Universal pursued.

In addition, equality (or equity) is constructed as an important aim, as we have already seen in the discussions above.⁵⁵ When it is ‘concretised’ in articulations in chain C, equality emerges as an “increase [of the] sharing between rich and poor”,⁵⁶ as “economic equality”,⁵⁷ and “distributive justice norms”,⁵⁸ but also as political or social forms of equality such as “democratic equality”,⁵⁹ equal participation and rights of citizens,⁶⁰ equality of opportunities for poor people⁶¹ and equality of opportunity for women and minorities.⁶² While this stress on equality as an aim of the fight against corruption may make IAC discourse seem like a leftist project, such a concretisation is prevented because there is no explicit articulation in the discourse of how much of, or what kind of equality is the actual aim.

Inclusion or inclusiveness is another signifier which frequently appears as an aim in IAC discourse,⁶³ while we have already seen in chapter 3 that marginalisation and exclusion are denounced as negative consequences of corruption. It seems to be particularly important for TI but is also mentioned as an aim in the discourses of the other two organisations. Inclusion is articulated as “access to essential services

⁵⁴ See e.g. UNDP (2008b: 12); UNDP (2008c: 12); UNDP (2008a: 1)

⁵⁵ UNDP (2008b: 15); TI (2008b: 2); see also WB official 3; WB official 2; WB (d)

⁵⁶ TI (2008a: 2)

⁵⁷ TI (2008a: 2); TI (2008b: 4)

⁵⁸ TI (2000: xxii)

⁵⁹ TI (2008b: 4)

⁶⁰ TI (2008b: 3)

⁶¹ WB (2007: without page) see also WB (2007: 3); WB (d); UNDP (a)

⁶² UNDP (a)

⁶³ TI (2008b: 2, 3, 4); TI (2008b: 3); WB (d); WB (j); WB (j)

(health, education, sanitation, etc.)”⁶⁴ but also as citizens’ inclusion and participation in “political and economic decision-making” and social processes in general.⁶⁵

Economic growth clearly stands out as another important part of the Universal to be realised by the fight against corruption.⁶⁶ Condemnations of the negative consequences of corruption on economic growth in chain C are mirrored by articulations in chain AC as an important aim for which to strive. In addition, stability and security are articulated as aims of the fight against corruption. While concern with stability in IAC discourse is mainly expressed through the construction of the horrific consequences of corruption in chain C, as we have seen in the last chapter, stability also appears among the aims. While TI calls for the right “infrastructure (governmental, social, economic and physical) that is seen as essential for achieving growth and stability”,⁶⁷ the WB emphasises the importance of “macroeconomic stability”.⁶⁸

In sum, while a liberal, representative, inclusionary democratic system shines through these aims as a model of a good, uncorrupted society and thus confirms the societal contours of the Universal derived from the analysis of chain C in the previous chapter, these aims still only rather vaguely define the Universal. Often, they are articulated in inconsistent ways both within and among the organisational discourses, leaving their meanings unclear and blurring the relations and differences between them. This not only prevents us from establishing a clearer picture of the Universal strived for, but could also be regarded as problematic for the hegemonic project. Can a hegemonic project be successful if its final aims are not clear? As the next section shows, PDHT allows us to interpret the amount of vague aims as a hegemonic stratagem that serves to advance the IAC project by endowing its ‘representative’ with persuasiveness.

⁶⁴ TI (2008b: 2); see also WB (d); UNDP (a); UNDP (2008a: 9, 16); UNDP (2008b: 6)

⁶⁵ TI (2008b: 3, 4); WB official 3; UNDP (2008d); UNDP (2008b: 6); UNDP (a)

⁶⁶ WB (2007: iii-iv, 1, 3, 4); TI (2009h: 2); UNDP (2008b: 6); WB (g); WB (o); UNDP (2008a: 1, 8)

⁶⁷ TI (2008a: 2)

⁶⁸ WB (2007: 2)

‘Emergent openness of interpretation of the ‘representative’

In chapter 3 we saw that IAC discourse already endows the fight against corruption with persuasiveness via the construction of corruption itself as an enormous, monstrous threat that will cause all sorts of other horrific things to occur if it is not fought.

Yet chain AC builds up the persuasiveness of the ‘representative’ even more, this time from the ‘other side’ of the antagonistic divide, providing the fight against corruption with a beatific dimension. Development, democracy, equality, inclusion, health, education, stable economic welfare and security for everyone are the promises of IAC discourse if only the fight against corruption is supported by us all. These equivalisations of the fight against corruption with such a broad range of concepts that are already positively connoted and open to a variety of interpretations render the ‘representative’ of IAC discourse extremely open to interpretation. Thus, they constitute the fifth hegemonic stratagem, the ‘emergent openness of interpretation of the symbolic equivalent of the Universal’.⁶⁹ This stratagem, which can also be regarded as a fantasmatic logic, serves the expansion of IAC discourse by facilitating the acquisition of new subject positions in chain C as supporters of the fight against corruption. It does so by allowing the discourse to accommodate very diverse and diffuse expectations regarding the Universal;⁷⁰ anyone who strives for any one of the values constructed as aims of the fight against corruption can be ‘gripped’ by the fight against corruption and its promises of the “fullness-to-come” once corruption is contained.⁷¹

If we try to evaluate the ‘representative’ of the Universal in IAC discourse with regards to its potential ‘qualification’ for advancing the hegemonic project, the signifier ‘fight against corruption’ seems particularly ‘suitable’. Due to its negative formulation which does not include any already connoted and politically contested concept but which refers solely to the elimination of something widely considered as detrimental, it is able to unite a particularly wide range of positively connoted signi-

⁶⁹ This openness can be understood as ‘emergent’ because it becomes more distinct in the course of the expansion of the hegemonic project. Yet, given that this is also the case with all other stratagems distinguished by Nonhoff, the significance of the adjective ‘emergent’ for this particular stratagem is left slightly unclear.

⁷⁰ Nonhoff (2006: 233)

⁷¹ Cf. Glynos/Howarth (2007: 145, 147)

fiers. Sustainable development discourse, for example, runs the risk of excluding all that is already constructed as unsustainable as well as anyone who is critical of development efforts. In contrast, and at first glance at least, the fight against corruption only excludes corruption, which seems to be universally regarded as detrimental (see chapter 1).

Thus, with regards to the questions of consensus in, and advancing of IAC discourse we can conclude that although the aims of the fight against corruption are not consistently articulated, paradoxically, this serves rather than deranges the expansion of the hegemonic project. The reason for this paradox is that the differences of these aims are so blurred by equivalisations that they do not actually exclude but rather complement each other in rendering the ‘representative’ persuasive.

Having understood how the fight against corruption is rendered persuasive through the vagueness of its aims and its subsequent openness to interpretation, we can now start to investigate the nature of the Universal, or the ideal of the good, uncorrupted society that the fight against corruption attempts to bring about and through which all those aims are supposed to be fulfilled.

Specifications of the Universal: The social as a space in which interests are governed in the ‘right’ ways

While the ‘fight against corruption’ functions as the symbolic equivalent of the Universal, the shape of this Universal is not immediately intelligible and can only be comprehended by reconstructing in detail the logics that structure its articulation in IAC discourse. In a first step in this enterprise the following sections investigate a set of specifications that characterise the Universal or the good, uncorrupted society according to IAC discourse and that render the governing logics of this society much more concrete. These specifications comprise five important nodal points in IAC discourse: competition, the minimisation of discretion (or: clear rules), transparency, accountability, and integrity, and we will see that the consensus on these specifications contrasts heavily with the vagueness of the aims discussed above.

Yet let us first examine how the focus on these concepts as nodal points comes about in IAC discourse. The rational actor logic discerned in chain C re-emerges in chain AC and plays a crucial role in constructing the specifications of the Universal, yet it does so in a particular way. While chain C constructs human beings as naturally inclined to corruption and unable to change in this regard, chain AC suggests that their behaviour can still be made serve the ‘public interest’ – through particular societal designs. As the TI Source Book emphasises, the “primary emphasis” of IAC efforts should be on the “prevention of future corruption and on changing systems (rather than indulging in witch-hunts)”.⁷² Thus, in line with the ‘rehabilitation’ of self-interested individuals through their re-articulation from chain C to chain AC discussed in the last chapter, individuals’ self-interest is put to work for the creation of a good society. The logic is that societal structures need to be designed in a way which does not rely on people’s ability to work for the public good (since they will be unable to fulfil such expectations); rather, the ‘insight’ that they will always try to fulfil their own (economic) interests needs to be used to construct societal institutions (in a broad sense) in a way which merges the individual interest with the ‘public interest’.

This way of organising societies, which in IAC discourse is sometimes also equivalised as synonymous with the term ‘good governance’,⁷³ relies on setting the ‘right’ external incentives to individuals’ self-interest. Following what I call the ‘incentives logic’, the articulations of this mode of societal organisation specify the uncorrupted society as a society in which people’s interests are governed in the ‘right’ ways, namely so as to align the interests of social actors with the rules they are supposed to follow for both their own and everyone else’s good.

According to the WB, the strategy to institute good governance (and thus prevent corruption) is “to align the incentives of state officials with these goals, through an appropriate combination of rules, restraints, and rewards; competitive pressures; and voice and partnership”. Yet the “incentives of nonstate actors, too, need to be aligned with these goals, especially those of businesses and other nongovernmental entities that often play a pivotal role in undermining governance”.⁷⁴ Finally, incentives for

⁷² TI (2000: xx-xxi)

⁷³ See e.g. TI (f); WB (2007: 1, 3, 67); WB (d); TI (y); UNDP (2008b: 6); TI (2009d); TI (n); UNDP (2004: 3); UNDP (2008a: 1); UNDP (2008c: 5); TI (2009j: 22)

⁷⁴ WB (2007: 47); see also WB (2007: 44, 45, 54)

an “entrepreneurial citizenry” are also needed.⁷⁵ In its 2007 Governance and Anti-corruption (GAC) strategy the WB particularly stresses the importance of creating “positive incentives for change”⁷⁶ as a balance to the “enforcement culture” fostered so far,⁷⁷ and thus signals a new concentration on institutional and possibly other positive incentives (also termed corruption ‘prevention’⁷⁸) as an amendment to the concentration on legal and judicial reform that characterised early phases of the IAC enterprise. Similarly, the UNDP stresses the necessity of “powerful disincentives for the would-be corrupt”,⁷⁹ and TI also articulates the incentives logic as structuring its IAC efforts; in the private sector for example it “considers strong corporate governance systems a vital component of company efforts to reinforce the right incentives and practices and to address the corrupt practices they confront”.⁸⁰ By way of the example of public water supply, one TI interviewee articulated incentives as being able to align the “greedy interests” of individuals to achieve positive outcomes.⁸¹ Another interviewee told me, “I do think that systems could create incentives for people to be corrupt, or could create disincentives for them to be corrupt (...) if you don’t have the systems in place, it can be just going wild, so yes, I do think that systems are important in that sense, and systems can create very powerful incentives”.⁸²

As with the rationalist conception of human nature, the dominance of the incentives logic is not completely uncontested in IAC discourse, at least not in the cases of TI and the WB. One WB interviewee explained that what anticorruption measures need to bring about is only “partly an incentive and partly a cultural change”,⁸³ and another claimed that “you have to both work on values and behaviours. (...) We work on both obviously”.⁸⁴ Yet, as Shah and Huther argue in a WB study, “[p]olicies which promote altruistic behavior face significant hurdles” and are “unlikely to be successful by themselves”; in contrast, they hold that much can be done to improve external incentives.⁸⁵ As we shall see, this is what the WB attempts to do. The domi-

⁷⁵ WB (2007: 45)

⁷⁶ WB (2007: 30); see also Kaufmann/Gray (1998: 3, 7)

⁷⁷ WB (2007: 30), see also Kaufmann/Gray (1998: 3)

⁷⁸ WB (2007: 30); see also Kaufmann/Gray (1998: 3, 7); TI-S official 3

⁷⁹ UNDP (2004: 11, see also 10)

⁸⁰ TI (2009h: 2)

⁸¹ See TI-S official 4

⁸² TI-S official 1

⁸³ WB official 5

⁸⁴ WB official 2

⁸⁵ Shah/Huther (2000: 6-7)

nance of the incentives logic at the WB was also confirmed in interesting ways by the fact that, in the interviews, WB interviewees articulated WB staff themselves as following particular (adequate and less adequate) incentives in their anticorruption work.⁸⁶ Also a TI interviewee articulated the incentives focus of his/her organisation as somewhat problematic, conceding that “ethics is an important feature which we have not paid enough attention to”. Yet again TI’s “more technocratic and institutional approach” and its avoidance of “this issue of morals and values” was justified by articulating it as less imposing than an approach that concentrates on fostering values within people and their cultures or societies. As the interviewee explained, TI is keen to avoid preaching Western values, and this is particularly important for an organisation that has its Secretariat in Berlin.⁸⁷ This statement re-iterates the ‘super-differential demarcation’ (IV) drawn between IAC discourse and claims about Western superiority discerned in chapter 3, this time in form of claims about the superiority of Western values. While the slightly contested relationship between values and incentives within IAC discourse may thus be due to inconsistencies regarding the relationship between ‘values’ and ‘the West’ in the discourse, in any case these minor contestations in TI and WB discourse do not seem to translate into any dislocations regarding the specifications of the Universal, as we will see.

The incentives logic in which the Universal is constructed in IAC discourse means that this Universal is characterised by positive and negative incentives. While positive incentives appeal to people’s self-interest by dangling rewards, negative incentives appeal to the individual by threatening it with damage to its self-interest. Through the combination of both types of incentives individuals’ behaviour is to be channelled in ways that benefit a particular conception of the ‘public interest’ which will be fully comprehensible only by the end of chapter 6. Five concepts in chain AC form important nodal points concentrating the articulations of these incentives: competition, minimisation of discretion (what I call clear rules), transparency, accountability, and integrity. These nodal points are articulated in contrariety to the causes of corruption discussed in chapter 3. However, as will become clear in the analysis

⁸⁶ See e.g. WB official 3; WB official 4; WB official 5; see also the WB’s GAC strategy for similar statements WB (2007: v, x, 10, 38, 43, 57, 72)

⁸⁷ TI-S official 5

below, they are linked in different and complex ways amongst each other and to the setting of positive and negative incentives.

One may wonder why I present these concepts as specifications of the Universal in IAC discourse and perhaps not as instruments leading to the higher goals drawn out previously. As we will see, the answer is that the installation of these concepts in societies is indeed the main preoccupation of IAC discourse – which is why a TI interviewee called them the “means to an end as well as an end in itself”. While the discourse conveys that they “have positive effects for social change, development, inequality, democracy, trust among people, (...) economic growth” and so on, at the same time they are articulated as making societies in general “better societies” if they are put in place.⁸⁸ The good, uncorrupted society is one that features transparency, accountability, competition and clear rules, nothing less and nothing more. While this may appear as a strangely technical, hollow, value-empty and procedural specification of a good society, we will see that it is in line with what has been interpreted as contemporary neoliberal notions of societal organisation, in which the safeguarding of particular governing mechanisms has become more important than the long-term realisation of particular grand societal visions.⁸⁹

The following sections investigate how the meaning of competition, clear rules, transparency, accountability and integrity is constructed in IAC discourse, and how these constructions concretises the nature of the Universal, structuring it according to the incentives logic.

Clear rules of the game

In chain AC, the clarification of rules and tasks functions as a precondition for the working of positive and negative incentives. There is no one handy term in IAC discourse that would represent this specification of the Universal; chain AC merely calls for the ‘minimisation of discretion’ or the introduction of things like ‘clear rules

⁸⁸ TI-S official 6

⁸⁹ Cf. Dean (2010)

of the game'.⁹⁰ As the UNDP states, for example, "clear rules of the game are less susceptible to corruption than are systems where official discretion is paramount".⁹¹

As we have seen, according to chain C, discretion provides opportunities for corruption. Obviously, the logic here is that as soon as individuals have some freedom in decisions that concern the fate of others, they will be tempted to take those decisions in their own interest to the detriment of the interests of others – which is why this freedom must be diminished by providing clear rules. The minimisation of discretion is advocated for both the public sector⁹² and the private sector,⁹³ albeit in differing intensities, as we will see.

However, the installation of clear rules not only takes away opportunities for corruption but it also sets the rules according to which the system is to function, which in turn prepares the ground for the 'right incentives' to be effectively set and to get their grip on the self-interested actors. Interestingly, in order to be enforceable by incentives, the rules of the game need not only specify the tasks of public officials, but also institute the game. As is discussed in greater detail in chapter 6, it is those clear rules themselves that posit that society is to be structured according to incentives that in turn will enforce those rules. The following sections will discuss how, according to the incentives logic in chain AC, the rules are enforced in the uncorrupted society via competition, transparency, and accountability, thus ensuring what IAC discourse also articulates as the 'rule of law'.⁹⁴

Rewards through competition

The market principle 'competition' is articulated as a particularly important nodal point of the uncorrupted society in chain AC, concentrating the articulation of positive incentives in different areas of society. Originally a principle associated with the private sector, competition is also advocated for the public sector, in order to align

⁹⁰ See e.g. TI (2009h: 2)

⁹¹ UNDP (2008c: 9); see also WB (f)

⁹² TI (f); TI (2000: xxiii); UNDP (2008c: 31); WB (g); WB (2001); WB (i); WB (n)

⁹³ See e.g. TI (2009h: 2)

⁹⁴ See for example UNDP (2008a: 8, 15); WB (2007: 30, 31, 34); WB (o); WB (f); Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 1); TI (o); UNDP (2008c: 29, 31); UNDP (a); TI (2000: xxiv)

the interests of assumedly egoistic politicians and other public officials with the public interest.

In accordance with Klitgaard's corruption formula,⁹⁵ competition is advocated as the main remedy against monopoly which is articulated as the main source of temptation for the abuse of power: "Regardless of whether it is in the private sector or public sector, competition is less vulnerable to corruption than monopoly".⁹⁶ Concerns in IAC discourse about monopoly, cartels and collusion in the private sector convey the damaging nature of monopoly for economic growth and reflect worries that monopolies and the inhibition of competition that they bring with them will lead to rising prices, lower business volume, less pressure for innovation and lower quality goods. However, also in the public sector, monopoly is articulated as a problem by IAC discourse. Following the rational actor logic, a self-interested public official will use the power deriving from his/her monopoly not for the good of others but solely for the satisfaction of his/her own short-term economic interest. Consequently, the quality of public services will suffer and bring about all the negative consequences articulated in chain C.

Thus, in the uncorrupted society, monopoly needs to be ruled out by the institution and safeguarding of competition. IAC discourse claims that the private sector needs to be "thriving, open and competitive"⁹⁷ and also the public sector is to be structured by the "principles of merit and competition".⁹⁸ The logic structuring articulations of competition conveys that through the provision of rewards for sticking to the rules, self-interested actors will be made to compete for rule-compliance and corruption will disappear. Apart from that, competition is articulated as leading to a more efficient allocation of resources in both the public and the private sector and thus to be able to help societies provide better or more for people than other systems.⁹⁹ Furthermore, competition is also supposed to automatically insert a control element – as

⁹⁵ C (Corruption) = M (Monopoly) + D (Discretion) – A (Accountability); UNDP's modified version of it: $Corruption = (Monopoly + Discretion) - (Accountability + Integrity + Transparency)$ (see chapter 3)

⁹⁶ UNDP (2008c: 9)

⁹⁷ WB (2007: 9); see also WB (2007: iii-iv, 40, 56); WB (i); Broadman/Recanatini (2000); WB (i); UNDP (2008a: 34); TI (2000: 259-268)

⁹⁸ UNDP (2008c: 8); see also WB (2007: 17, 47); UNDP (2008a: 19); WB (n); TI (2000: xxii-xxiv); TI (h)

⁹⁹ TI (h)

IAC discourse tells us, competitors will expose whoever tries to circumvent the rules of the competitive struggle, fleecing them of their rewards.¹⁰⁰

Yet according to IAC discourse, a society full of rational actors does not only need positive incentives. For example, the WB warns that excessive political competition “can become a destabilizing factor” if not properly regulated.¹⁰¹ While positive incentives direct self-interested actors by encouraging them to improve over others by sticking to the rules of the game, negative incentives are needed that threaten to damage individuals’ self-interest if they try to circumvent the rules.

Transparency

According to the logic of incentives, transparency is articulated as a crucial precondition for negative incentives to be put in place. As the WB explains, transparency is “a system-wide feature that helps to make accountability relationships work”.¹⁰²

Statements abound in IAC discourse about the necessity of introducing transparency into the public sector and the realm of politics,¹⁰³ the private sector,¹⁰⁴ or just generally. The UNDP, for example, articulates transparency as one of the “indispensable pillars of democratic governance”,¹⁰⁵ and TI, named after the concept of transparency, claims that “across the globe, transparency and accountability are critical to restoring trust and turning back the tide of corruption”.¹⁰⁶ The NGO defines transparency as the “[c]haracteristic of governments, companies, organisations and individuals of being open in the clear disclosure of information, rules, plans, processes and actions”.¹⁰⁷ While it suggests that the 2008 financial crisis has been “precipitated by transparency and integrity deficits”¹⁰⁸ amongst other failures, it claims that “public officials, civil servants, the managers and directors of companies and organisations, and board trustees have a duty to act visibly, predictably and understanda-

¹⁰⁰ See e.g. WB (m); also WB (2007: 30)

¹⁰¹ WB (m)

¹⁰² WB (2007: 40)

¹⁰³ TI (2000: xxii-xxiv); UNDP (2008b: 37); TI (y); TI (b); TI (2009j: 44); WB (2007: 18)

¹⁰⁴ See e.g. TI (p); TI (2009i: 1); UNDP (2008b: 37)

¹⁰⁵ UNDP (2008b: 37)

¹⁰⁶ TI (w)

¹⁰⁷ TI (2009j: 44); see also UNDP (2008b: 37)

¹⁰⁸ TI (w)

bly”.¹⁰⁹ However, transparency is not only articulated as the visibility of actions but, importantly, as the accessibility of information. For example, the UNDP defines transparency measures as comprising “all means of facilitating citizens’ access to information and their understanding of decision-making mechanisms”.¹¹⁰ The logic that emerges very coherently from the articulations of transparency in chain AC is that the visibility and the accessibility of information about the actions of self-interested individuals in the public and private sectors will facilitate the discovery of rule-breaking. However, such discovery will only serve to threaten the would-be corrupt actors into compliance with the rules if they are sure that they will face damage to their self-interest.

Accountability: oversight and sanctions

Following the incentives logic, self-interested actors will only be sufficiently afraid of detection if they can be sure that someone actually looks at the information that has become available about their actions through transparency measures. Thus, in order to incentivise rational actors to stick to the rules of the uncorrupted society, transparency needs to be combined with oversight (also under the names of monitoring or checks). Most regularly, the two concepts are advocated together in IAC discourse; for example when the WB recommends “[s]trengthening transparency and oversight over the use of budgetary resources”.¹¹¹ While all three IAC organisations frequently articulate oversight as necessary within the public sector,¹¹² TI seems to articulate the importance of oversight mechanisms for the private sector slightly more prominently than the other two organisations, for example, articulating the financial crisis of 2008 as a result of failures in “policy, regulations, oversight and enforcement” that allowed for corruption.¹¹³

Yet again, clear rules, transparency and oversight will only have the capacity to restrain rational actors from becoming corrupt if they can be sure that they will be fol-

¹⁰⁹ TI (2009j: 44)

¹¹⁰ UNDP (2008b: 37); see also WB (2007: 18)

¹¹¹ WB (2007: 19, v)

¹¹² WB (2007: v, 6); Kaufmann/Gray (1998: 4); UNDP (2008c: 5); UNDP (2008b: 12, 37); UNDP (2008a: 9); UNDP official 1; TI (y), TI (2000: xxii-xxiv)

¹¹³ TI (2009c); see also TI (2009h: 2); TI (y), yet also WB (2007: v, 18)

lowed by actual sanctions in the case of detected rule-breaking. The establishment of a combination of oversight and sanctioning mechanisms, which guarantee cuts for individuals' self-interest in the case of rule-breaking, signifies in chain AC that accountability is in place. As the UNDP puts it, accountability exists "when a power holder must explain or justify his or her behaviour to another actor, and/or face the threat of sanctions".¹¹⁴ The WB makes the incentive logic behind the concept very explicit: "As political accountability increases, the costs to public officials of taking decisions that benefit their private interests at the expense of the broader public interest also increase, thus working as a deterrent/disincentive to corrupt practices".¹¹⁵

Accountability is an immensely prominent nodal point in IAC discourse; it is articulated in different forms, such as political,¹¹⁶ financial, administrative, and social,¹¹⁷ horizontal, vertical and diagonal accountability,¹¹⁸ and is frequently advocated as an important societal principle by all three organisations.¹¹⁹ One TI interviewee for example claimed that the "need for creating the accountability mechanisms is everywhere".¹²⁰ Another explained that "[w]e are saying that values of integrity and accountability should be mainstreamed into all policies and regulations"¹²¹ and yet another called the "core message" of TI "the need for transparency and accountability, participation, integrity".¹²² Like transparency, accountability is most frequently articulated in chain AC as an important structuring principle for the public sector; however, attention should be drawn to divergences in IAC discourse here. The WB mentions the concept of accountability exclusively with regards to the public realm, for example as political accountability, which refers "to the constraints placed on the behavior of public officials by organizations and constituencies with the power to apply sanctions on them".¹²³ However, TI argues that the private sector also needs accountability;¹²⁴ and the NGO defines accountability as "[t]he concept that indi-

¹¹⁴ UNDP (2008b: 37); see also WB (m)

¹¹⁵ WB (m); see also WB official 4; UNDP (2008b: 37)

¹¹⁶ WB (m); UNDP (2008b: 37)

¹¹⁷ UNDP (2008b: 37)

¹¹⁸ TI (2009j: 2); UNDP (2004: 19) and UNDP (2008b: 37)

¹¹⁹ UNDP (2008c: 9, 12, 13, 21, 25, 29); TI (f); TI (b); TI (y); TI (2000: xv); TI (2009f); WB (2007: 40)

¹²⁰ TI-S official 1; see also TI-S official 2

¹²¹ TI-S official 3

¹²² TI-S official 4; see also TI-S official 1; TI-S official 7; TI-S official 6

¹²³ WB (m)

¹²⁴ TI (2009d)

viduals, agencies and organisations (public, private and civil society) are held responsible for executing their powers properly”.¹²⁵ A TI interviewee highlighted how important it is that companies are also “transparent and accountable in their actions, to stakeholders, not just their shareholders”.¹²⁶ Yet surprisingly, as we will see in chapter 6, this divergence does not have any consequences on the concrete policies articulated for the uncorrupted society and thus does not affect the advancement of the Universal.

Importantly, instituting accountability is also articulated as less political and controversial than promoting democracy or talking about the public interest,¹²⁷ and as something on which people can agree despite political differences.¹²⁸ One TI interviewee explained for example, that within TI country teams, “you often find people from completely different political backgrounds and political tendencies working together – since the focus is in how to make more transparent and accountable government, and not whether the actors are or are not the ones that should be [in government]”.¹²⁹ Much like corruption, “the values of accountability, transparency and integrity” are assumed to contain “a common core which is understood the same way across countries”. This is why a TI interviewee believed that “this whole cultural relativity will be less of a problem than people would think”.¹³⁰ Next to the mechanistic construction of the concepts discussed above, such articulations of these concepts as uncontroversial serve to hide their political potential, in the sense of the ways in which their articulation may rearrange social structures to orient them towards the realisation of a very particular Universal.

From the discussion of the previous sections we can conclude that, according to the incentives logic discerned in chain AC, only when the rules are clear and when competition, transparency, oversight and sanctions are in place to ensure those rules, will self-interested individuals be ‘steered’ in the ‘right’ ways, and will society be free from corruption.

¹²⁵ TI (2009j: 2)

¹²⁶ TI-S official 4

¹²⁷ Cf. TI-S official 4; TI-S official 1

¹²⁸ See also TI-S official 6; UNDP official 1

¹²⁹ TI-S official 5

¹³⁰ TI-S official 6

Integrity and ethics

One last, quite curious but also very important specification of the Universal in IAC discourse still requires discussion: integrity. Over the last decade, concepts like integrity, ethics and honesty were articulated into IAC discourse and now form an important nodal point in the articulation of incentives in chain AC.

That integrity is an important concept for the UNDP is clear from its modification of the Klitgaardian formula to include integrity.¹³¹ It is confirmed by the frequently used abbreviation ATI (accountability, transparency, integrity) in the UNDP's discourse¹³² and is also stipulated in UNCAC, which serves as the basis for UNDP's IAC work.¹³³ The UNDP demands that "corruption should also be looked at as a moral and ethical issue"¹³⁴ and warns that it implies "declining moral and ethical values and disrespect for constitutional institutions and authority".¹³⁵ Furthermore, it frequently demands "strong measures of ethics and integrity".¹³⁶ TI's emphasis on the concept of integrity is most clearly embodied in its concept of the National Integrity System (NIS); this concept functions both as a grid for assessing how well societies are organised and as blueprints for reforming them accordingly.¹³⁷ TI also gives out 'integrity awards' to "remarkable individuals and organisations" who have undertaken "an action that is likely to significantly influence, or to have had significant impact on existing levels of corruption in his, her or their respective country, region or globally".¹³⁸ Although for the WB, the terms integrity and ethics are not as important as for TI and the UNDP, nevertheless the organisation suggests the strategic promotion of "ethical behaviour by government, private sector, and civil society actors" in its governance and anticorruption strategy.¹³⁹

One might wonder how the articulation of such concepts with a moral-ethical connotation as an important feature of the uncorrupted society fits with the rational actor

¹³¹ Corruption = (Monopoly + Discretion) – (Accountability + Integrity + Transparency) (UNDP 2008c: 9)

¹³² UNDP (2008a); UNDP (2008b: 12, 13, 21, 25, 29)

¹³³ Article 8 of UNCAC emphasises the „Promotion of integrity, honesty and responsibility among public officials" (UNDP 2008a: 9).

¹³⁴ UNDP (2008c: 9)

¹³⁵ UNDP (2008c: 12)

¹³⁶ UNDP (2008c: 9, see also 12)

¹³⁷ See e.g. TI (2000); TI (2001); TI (E); TI (2010a); TI (f); TI (p)

¹³⁸ TI (F)

¹³⁹ WB (2007: 18); see also WB official 5

and the incentives logic structuring the discourse. In fact, one could be inclined to believe that articulations of integrity indicate that IAC discourse operates with a different and in fact more ‘moral’ and less mechanistic conception of human nature than the one I have discerned in the discourse so far. When the UNDP defines integrity as “incorruptibility, an unimpaired condition or soundness” and as “synonymous with Honesty [sic]”¹⁴⁰ this sounds indeed as if integrity was about someone’s character or moral values rather than about external incentives. Yet, a closer analysis of these concepts in their discursive context renders surprising insights.

The TI Anti-Corruption Plain Language Guide defines ethics as “[b]ased on core values, a set of standards for conduct in government, companies and society that guides decisions, choices and actions”.¹⁴¹ While the kinds of values or moral principles on which this set of standards is to be based or the way in which they are to be determined are not mentioned, integrity is in turn defined by TI as behaviour and actions consistent with such ethical standards, thus creating a “barrier to corruption”.¹⁴² The ‘examples in practice’ that the Plain Language Guide gives for ‘integrity’ reveal that an public official with integrity is one who complies with “relevant national laws”, and that ‘islands of integrity’ can be achieved through “community-based oversight mechanisms”.¹⁴³ Noticeably, also, the definition of integrity makes reference to people’s ‘behaviour’, rather than to their ‘conviction’. Thus, people’s internally held moral values have nothing to do with integrity; while law is indirectly articulated as constituting ‘ethics’, ethical behaviour or integrity is to be ensured through oversight.

Such interpretations of integrity as part of the incentives logic are confirmed by the fact that TI and the UNDP present the incorporation of integrity as part of their more recent focus on ‘prevention’, which is in turn articulated as an improvement of their former law enforcement strategy. The Source Book, for example, argues that “[i]mportant though enforcement undoubtedly is, a strategy that focuses only on enforcement is almost certain to fail and is unlikely to yield a sustained ethical envi-

¹⁴⁰ UNDP (2008b: 37)

¹⁴¹ TI (2009j: 18)

¹⁴² TI (2009j: 24)

¹⁴³ TI (2009j: 24); see also UNODC (2004)

ronment that is alien to corruption”.¹⁴⁴ Already the next sentence tells us that “[c]arrots are needed as well as sticks” and thus is paradigmatic for the incentives logic that also characterises the meaning of ethics and integrity in IAC discourse.¹⁴⁵ Similarly, the UNDP explains that while “[i]n the 1990s, technical assistance focused on law enforcement and public administration reforms designed to enhance transparency, reduce discretion and strengthen systems of oversight and control,” the perspective has now changed. To the UNDP “it became increasingly clear that such approaches were inadequate”, which is why it started to focus on “promoting ATI and improving ethics”, thus undertaking a shift “towards prevention”.¹⁴⁶

Yet it seems that this shift does not imply the equalisation into chain AC of claims for such things as social solidarity, civic virtue or the commitment of public officials to fostering the well-being of their fellow citizens. A UNDP official clarified the meaning of integrity to me: “No, we do not define in a moral sense, we define more about the complying, you know, with the rules and regulations and the reputation and objectives. (...) It’s not moral. (...) If you’re going to be moral, then who’s moral, what moral, it’s very contradictory”.¹⁴⁷ Rather than being “an end in itself”, the UNDP suggests, integrity is “better viewed as a path leading to the effective delivery of the services and performance of functions, which the public is entitled to receive from those who govern them”.¹⁴⁸ Thus, the UNDP explicitly excludes from chain AC any arguments about integrity as a moral value and instead equalises the concept with effective public service delivery and the rule-conforming performance of public offices. Equally, TI conceives “the term integrity not in a moral – so far – not very much in a moral [sense], but really as an institutional feature, as transparency, as technocratic”.¹⁴⁹ Accordingly, asked whether integrity meant something like ‘rule-conforming behaviour’ or anything beyond that, two TI interviewees and a UNDP official responded that this was “a good definition”.¹⁵⁰ In fact, through incentives, individuals can actually be forced into integrity or morality: “Knowing that they’re accountable and that they might lose their job, they will not cheat, they will

¹⁴⁴ TI (2000: xxii); see also TI (p)

¹⁴⁵ TI (2000: xxii)

¹⁴⁶ UNDP (2008b: 12)

¹⁴⁷ UNDP official 1

¹⁴⁸ UNDP (2008b: 37)

¹⁴⁹ TI-S official 6

¹⁵⁰ TI-S official 2; TI-S official 6; UNDP official 1

actually hold on to the moral standards”.¹⁵¹ Political institutions are articulated as setting “incentives for those in office to be honest as well as to punish the misbehaviour of those who are not”.¹⁵²

Thus, we can conclude that through their equivalisations in chain AC of IAC discourse, concepts like integrity, morality, honesty and ethics are rearticulated in accordance to the incentives logic in a way that seeks to untie their presumable discursive links to different social norms and values. They are ‘made to fit’ the rationalist, technical approach to IAC reform articulated in chain AC. Indeed, integrity is articulated as the very fact that a self-interested individual follows the ‘right’ incentives that have been ‘successfully’ set for its rule compliance. ‘Ethics’ in turn are rearticulated as those very rules and thus become a synonym for the ‘clear rules’ discussed above. With regards to the question of coherence or consensus this means that, again, while there is some divergence about the concept of integrity among TI and the UNDP on the one hand and the WB on the other (because the WB does not articulate the concept of integrity particularly prominently), this divergence does not lead to a dislocation of chain AC. This is because the concept, as articulated by the UNDP and TI, perfectly follows the incentives logic which coherently structures the discourses of all three organisations.

A clarification can now be made regarding the confusion of the critical literature regarding the role of morality or normativity in IAC discourse. By being structured according to the incentives logic, IAC discourse does not lose its normative character; as is increasingly becoming clear through the analysis, it strives for a particular Universal. The main norm that dominates and structures the good society according to IAC discourse articulates that people’s self-interest must be manipulated according to the values of competition, transparency, and accountability.

Thus, one could interpret the equivalisation of the concepts of integrity and ethics in IAC discourse as nothing more than simply a broadening out of the incentives logic via what could be interpreted as a redundant additive to accountability and transparency. A TI-interviewee actually problematised the mechanistic use of the term integrity: “I think it’s been our weakness not to make the link between integrity and val-

¹⁵¹ WB official 4

¹⁵² UNDP (2008c: 21)

ues more strongly. (...) I think we've missed out. (...) It's been more a mechanistic term".¹⁵³ Yet, the integration of integrity and ethics into chain AC can still serve to render the fight against corruption persuasive by expanding the chain via these signifiers. While their rearticulation in chain AC works towards untying the discursive links between integrity and ethics on the one hand, and signifiers such as a 'good or virtuous character' and a 'preoccupation for the welfare of others' on the other, IAC discourse can still draw on the positive connotation of these nodal points. This connotation extends far beyond IAC discourse and facilitates the acquisition in chain AC of subject positions preferring a more 'morally' connoted fight against corruption than the 'technical' enterprise of the 'early' IAC discourse seemed to be, with its focus on legal reform. At the same time, the discourse defends itself against potential dislocations that the support of explicit moral values in the fight against corruption might bring about, by redefining integrity and ethics according to its seemingly uncontroversial and 'simply technical' incentives logic.

While this insight adds to our understanding of how the IAC project advances, the examination of specifications has rendered many interesting findings on the social logics of the uncorrupted society, the Universal pursued in IAC discourse. The uncorrupted society pursued in IAC discourse consists of individuals that behave with integrity i.e. according to the rules due to being governed by the incentives set to their self-interest by competition, transparency, oversight and sanctions.

While the main aim of this thesis lies on drawing out the discursive logics that structure IAC discourse, rather than on discussing the existence or otherwise of different aspects of (neo)liberalism in IAC discourse, it should be noted here however, that the logics operating in these specifications of the good, uncorrupted society seem to be reflective of what has been interpreted as neoliberal logics of government in the Foucauldian governmentality literature.¹⁵⁴ Considering these interpretations here allows us to add another layer to the interpretation of social logics emerging from chain AC (see also chapter 6), rendering them even more intelligible. Moreover, referring these logics to what Dean interprets as wider logics of government character-

¹⁵³ TI-S official 2

¹⁵⁴ See Dean (2010)

ising the evolution of Western liberal systems of societal organisation allows us to contextualise the political nature of IAC discourse.

How can this ideal of the uncorrupted society be neoliberal, one might ask, if it is simply concerned with getting the mechanisms right? The answer is that it can be interpreted as neoliberal *because* it is about getting the mechanisms right – the mechanisms that allow self-interested individuals to be free. This requires some explanation. In liberalism generally, as Dean argues, people’s ‘natural’ self-interest must be respected in the sense that they should be provided with the freedom to pursue it. Failing to respect this freedom, in liberal political thought, is “above all ignorance of how to govern properly”.¹⁵⁵ A crucial precondition for the rational individual to be able to freely pursue its self-interest (without the interference of others), and in fact the sole justification of the state’s existence in liberal theory, is security – a preoccupation with which we could already identify among the negative consequences of corruption in chain C.

The neoliberal approach to government takes up this liberal key problematic, yet is distinct in that it aims no longer at the “security of processes considered external to the formal apparatuses of government” rather, what is at stake is “the security of governmental mechanisms themselves”.¹⁵⁶ This chapter has shown that the articulation of security risks posed by self-interested, corrupt individuals (in chain C of IAC discourse) is countered by a construction of the good, uncorrupted society (in chain AC) as principally one in which governing mechanisms are designed in a way that prevents them from being corrupted and thus destabilised. The good, uncorrupted society as specified by IAC discourse thus reflects this neoliberal preoccupation with governmental mechanisms, and interestingly its ‘representative’, the ‘fight against corruption’ evidences its processual character. It is a society that constantly fights against the corruption of its governing mechanisms, and it does so in a way that is again reflective of neoliberal logics of governing. As Dean explains, neoliberalism articulates individual choice as “no longer the rational response of the economic actor to the calculation of one’s natural interest” (as earlier liberalisms do) but instead conceives it as a “fundamental human faculty that can be made calculable and ma-

¹⁵⁵ Foucault et al (2007: 353), cited in Dean (2010: 138)

¹⁵⁶ Dean (2010: 224)

nipulated by working on the environment and spaces within which it is exercised".¹⁵⁷ In neoliberalism more generally, and in IAC discourse more specifically, as we have seen, the behaviour of rational actors becomes the effect of a modification of variables in its environment, reflected in the incentives logic as a governing mechanism.¹⁵⁸ Thus, we can not only interpret what the discourse constructs as corruption as wrongly conceived governmental mechanisms themselves; also, the good, uncorrupted society can be interpreted as one which constantly secures the right mechanisms for the governing of self-interested individuals, thus enabling them to be free. By focussing on governing mechanisms rather than grand societal visions, however, IAC discourse comes across as a rather technical enterprise, concealing its normative and potentially political nature.

Conclusion

This first part of the analysis of chain AC, the 'anticorruption chain' of IAC discourse has rendered different insights into the logics structuring IAC discourse, the ways in which the discourse constructs and advances a particular Universal, and the political nature of that Universal.

The equivalisation of different signifiers in the forms of aims and specifications of the Universal in chain AC revealed by this chapter indicates the existence of stratagem I, the 'equivalisation of differential claims which are oriented against the Universal' (I). This stratagem can only be fully confirmed after the following chapters have investigated its coherence further. Consequently, the same is valid for stratagem II, the antagonistic division of the discursive space; while the existence of a coherent chain of equivalence oriented against the Universal has been demonstrated in the previous chapter, the stratagem can only be confirmed when the existence of a second, coherent chain has been distinguished. So while the chapter worked towards revealing the political nature of IAC discourse, no concluding statements can be made about its status as a hegemonic project.

¹⁵⁷ Dean (2010: 186), drawing on Foucault (2008: 270-271)

¹⁵⁸ Dean (2010: 186)

The third core stratagem, 'representation', however could be clearly distinguished. While corruption (in chain C) forms the main nodal point of the discourse, the 'fight against corruption' was found to fulfil the function of the symbolic equivalent of the Universal (or representative) in chain AC, giving the discourse its name.

In a next step, the chapter showed how this 'representative' is rendered extremely open to interpretation through the equivalisations of a wide range of signifiers into chain C as aims of the fight against corruption. These aims, such as development, a 'world without poverty', a 'world without corruption' but also equality, inclusion, democracy, economic growth, stability and so on were identified as only vaguely defined concepts which are again articulated to embody a range of other desirable concepts. By demonstrating this, the chapter was able to distinguish the fifth stratagem, the 'emergent openness of interpretation' (V) of the fight against corruption, which can be interpreted as endowing the fight against corruption with a beatific dimension, rendering it persuasive and thus facilitating the acquisition of new subject positions in chain AC as supporters of the fight against corruption.

The second part of the chapter investigated several concepts that function as specifications of the Universal pursued in IAC discourse. Unlike the aims, these concepts were found to be very coherently articulated and their analysis was able to render the Universal, or the uncorrupted society, more intelligible. The analysis revealed that the rational actor logic discerned in chain C re-emerged in a particular way in the articulation of the five nodal points: minimisation of discretion (clear rules of the game), competition, transparency, accountability and integrity in chain AC. While internally held values of individuals were shown to be excluded from the articulation of these concepts, the five concepts were shown to be structured by what was called the 'incentives logic'. According to this social logic, the uncorrupted society is one in which positive and negative incentives are combined in a way as to manipulate the behaviour of self-interested individuals towards rule compliance; this manipulation is to happen via the setting of incentives to what are conceived fixed self-interests of rational actors.

Importantly, the chapter showed that also the concepts of integrity and ethics are rearticulated according to the incentives logic in chain AC, which constructs integrity as the rule-conforming behaviour brought about by 'successful' incentivisation,

and ethics as the rules of the incentives game. At the same time, it was argued, the equivalisations of these concepts however, can serve to facilitate the acquisition of subject positions in chain AC, thus aiding the expansion of the hegemonic project through articulating it as not only a technical but also an ethical enterprise.

At the time the analysis of specifications showed how the incentives logic articulates the fight against corruption as a technical and uncontroversial enterprise, camouflaging its political nature. However, with regards to that political nature it was argued that this particular social logic distinguished in the specifications of the uncorrupted society (the Universal pursued by IAC discourse) can be regarded as suggestive of neoliberal logics of government as distinguished in particular by Dean.

The next chapter will reveal the instruments with which this Universal is to be implemented in societies around the globe according to IAC discourse.

5 Instrumental claims – how to realise the uncorrupted society

The last chapter revealed the basic social logic structuring the Universal that is advanced in the fight against corruption, and it investigated how the fight against corruption is rendered persuasive through a particular fantasmatic logic, namely the (mainly linguistic) construction of aims in chain AC, thus constructing stratagem V and facilitating the advancement of the Universal. Yet IAC discourse works in many more articulations and logics towards dividing the discursive space and advancing that particular Universal, constituting its discursive nature as a hegemonic project. Some very important political logics are comprised, following Nonhoff, in what can be distinguished as ‘instrumental claims’ in chain AC of IAC discourse. These claims or articulations comprise what the discourse articulates as instrumental for fighting corruption and refer mainly (though not solely) to the more ‘material’ i.e. non-linguistic ways in which the Universal is being advanced through the discourse.¹

Investigating those claims is the aim of this chapter, thus forming the second part of the analysis of chain AC, the ‘anticorruption chain’ of IAC discourse. Analysing those claims is important because only by understanding their logics can we come to better understand the political nature of IAC discourse as a hegemonic project that aims to transform existing societal structures in order to realise a particular Universal.

The chapter reveals how IAC discourse attempts to advance the institution of the right incentives through different instruments which work on two levels of equivalisations. The first level consists in the instrumental claims for the societal reorganisation of the target countries in which corruption is to be fought, which I call ‘reform strategies’. This level of instrumental claims includes legal reforms, institutional reforms, and active involvement of citizens, and will only be briefly discussed given that we will see its operations again and quite clearly in chapter 6. However, the chapter distinguishes in these reform strategies another appearance of the stratagem of ‘super-differential demarcation’ with regards to the scope of the anticorruption reforms in IAC discourse.

¹ These non-linguistic articulations of instruments however are accessed in this thesis through the linguistic articulations in the text and interview material analysed.

The second level of instrumental claims in chain AC consists of articulations of what I call ‘instruments’; this refers to the manifold ways in which the reform strategies (and therefore also the Universal) are in turn pursued and put in practice in IAC discourse. As the chapter shows, this level comprises, on the one hand, equivalisations in chain AC of IAC actors but also other socio-political forces as implementers and supporters of the fight against corruption; by demonstrating this, the chapter distinguishes the stratagem ‘institution/ perpetuation of subject positions for socio-political forces’ (VI) and explains how it aids the expansion of the hegemonic project. On the other hand, the levels of ‘instruments’ comprises equivalisations of provision and production of expertise for the design of the reform processes; support in the form of advocacy, awareness-raising and civil society capacity building; the lending of financial resources; and technical support to target countries. The chapter discusses the logic structuring these ‘instruments’ and shows how the reform strategies set out in the first part of the chapter are pursued via these ‘instruments’, paying particular attention to the question of consensus among the discourses of the three actors.

The last part of the chapter deals with linguistic articulations in chain AC that construct the previously discussed reform strategies and instruments as context-sensitive, consensual and unpolitical. In doing so, it reveals further articulations of super-differential demarcations (stratagem IV), which work to defend IAC discourse against potential dislocations and facilitate the acquisition of subject positions in chain AC.

Societal reform in the target countries

Having outlined that this chapter will show us more about the political nature of IAC discourse, an explanation may be helpful here of why exactly the articulations of these reform strategies and instruments to pursue them are to be interpreted as political articulations. In chapter 2, political practices or articulations and hegemonic articulations more specifically, were defined as involving an element of force and repression, as necessarily negating identity. While other types of articulations may simply reiterate social practices within sedimented structures, political articulations work against such structures; they attempt to dislocate and transform them. If this

transformation is oriented towards a new Universal and occurs through the division of the discursive space into two new chains of equivalences, then political practices are hegemonic practices. Following from these explanations it can be established that the question whether a practice is political or not depends on the discursive context in which it takes place. The question is then how I can interpret these articulations of reform strategies in chain AC of IAC discourse as political practices, if by way of the empirical focus of this thesis I do not look at the discursive context of these articulations. The political character of IAC discourse however has become quite obvious in the course of the previous two chapters and will become even clearer in the present one. While chain C articulates corruption as an enormous problem caused by inadequate societal structures and locates it at the same time in all countries around the world but especially in developing countries, chain AC constructs a different form of societal organisation as better able to deal with this threat and therefore as superior. These (linguistic) articulations not only convey that existing societal systems all over the world and particularly those in developing countries need to be changed in order to conform to the social logic set out in chapter 4 (which would orient them towards a new Universal), but in fact are already working towards doing so. Thus, the (partly more ‘material’) articulations of particular reform strategies and ‘instruments’ for the fight against corruption investigated in this chapter simply extend these political and in fact hegemonic articulations (in the sense of further expanding a chain of equivalence and thus the antagonistic division of the discursive space) that attempt to change existing social structures identified as inadequate. These articulations very likely involve the negation of identity in the societal systems to be reformed, both in the sense of the negation of social practices and the negation of those subjects who identify with these practices and structures. At the same time, chain AC constructs these particular reform strategies and ‘instruments’ as the correct methods of dealing with corruption, which is quite important for the IAC project, as we will see in the second part of this chapter.

The three main reform strategies through which corruption is to be fought are legal reform, institutional reform, and civil society reform. Although IAC discourse does not directly articulate these three categories as such, they can be distinguished as major nodal points in chain AC. Changing laws, institutions and civil society is co-

herently articulated as vital for the fight against corruption and thus for the realisation of the uncorrupted society as set out in chapter 4.

Legal reform

The reform of legal frameworks is an important ‘instrumental claim’ in IAC discourse² and directly linked to the importance of clear rules of the game in the uncorrupted society (see chapter 4). According to IAC discourse, legal frameworks in the target countries need to be revised, amended and refined in order to minimise discretion and suit the aim of corruption prevention in both the public and private spheres. The most important guidelines for the right design of laws are international legal frameworks designed to prevent corruption.³ The most prominent of them is UNCAC, the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, which the UNDP calls a “major landmark in the fight against corruption”,⁴ followed by the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions, also called the OECD anti-bribery convention.⁵ Such universal legal frameworks include quite wide-ranging provisions for the restructuring of adopting countries. UNCAC for example recommends the promotion, facilitation and support of “integrity, accountability and proper management of public affairs and public property” as well as “international cooperation and technical assistance in the prevention of and fight against corruption, including in asset recovery”.⁶ These recommendations are in line with the specifications of the Universal discussed in the last chapter as well as with the ‘instruments’ articulated in IAC discourse. The rules to be implemented not only refer to the instituting of integrity and accountability, drawn out in chapter 4 as two key concepts in the incentives logic of the uncorrupted society, they also include international co-operation and assistance, which is the principal activity of IAC actors, as this chapter will demonstrate. Such and other similar recommendations are interpreted and amended by IAC organisations in order to be instituted in the legal catalogue of target countries.

² TI (2000); TI (d); TI (2009h: 4); TI (b); TI (f); TI (a); WB (v); UNDP (2008c: 27); OECD (1997)

³ See e.g. UNDP (2008a: 3, 3, 5, 9); UNDP (2008c: 6); TI (v)

⁴ UNDP (2008c: 27); see also WB (2007: 73)

⁵ TI also lists a large number of other conventions and instruments which it regards useful in the fight against corruption, see TI (v).

⁶ United Nations (2005), Chapter 1, General Provisions, Article 1, Statement of Purpose (a-c)

Institutional reform

In addition to legal reform, institutional reform is articulated as another important reform strategy for the realisation of the Universal in IAC discourse.⁷ As TI knows, “corruption continues to lurk where opacity rules, where institutions still need strengthening and where governments have not implemented anti-corruption legal frameworks”.⁸ There is agreement in the discourse that economic institutions (including markets and their regulatory institutions such as the banking system) as well as public institutions (including state agencies and political institutions) need to be reformed according to the incentives logic set out in the last chapter, in order to bring the interests of egoistic individuals in line with the rules.

Developing “capable and accountable states and institutions” is particularly important.⁹ For example, WB staff argues that public sector reforms should “involve changing government structures and procedures, placing greater emphasis on competition and incentives”.¹⁰ Similarly, the UNDP articulates the institution of electoral competitiveness and balance of power in the political institutional structure as “likely to determine the incentives for those in office to be honest as well as to punish the misbehaviour of those who are not”.¹¹ However, companies must also make “efforts to reinforce the right incentives and practices”, which makes private sector reform necessary.¹² Thus, through institutional reform, the incentives logic discerned in chapter 4 is to be translated into rational institutional designs in order to change existing, corruption-prone structures in both private and public realms.

The right institutional structures to be brought about by this kind of institutional reform require the existence of a public-private divide. The realm of society needs to consist of a public sphere of the state which is separate from a private sphere of economic relations and other ‘private’ activities; it contains different state institutions that are separate from market and civil society institutions. The fact that such a distinction is commonly accepted and in fact is more or less prevalent in many countries

⁷ WB (2007 mentions institutions on almost every page; see also TI (2009i: 2); TI (2008a: 3); TI (2009c); TI (2009g); TI (f); UNDP (2008b: 23)

⁸ TI (y)

⁹ WB (2007: ii)

¹⁰ Kaufmann/Gray (1998: 4)

¹¹ UNDP (2008c: 21)

¹² TI (2009h: 2)

around the globe means that IAC discourse need not explicitly mention it as part of its institutional reform strategy. The public-private divide is instead articulated indirectly through frequent mention of both spheres or related concepts (such as ‘public servant’, ‘public office’, ‘private sector’), thus reifying them as normal or even ‘natural’ areas within nation states.

One consequence of this division into spheres is that the tasks and rules of organisation for the two spheres differ, at least in part. As we will see, IAC discourse articulates the application of the institutional incentives in public and private sector institutions necessary to enable individuals to work for the public interest, rather than endangering the welfare and lives of their fellow citizens, as the main task of the state. Furthermore, the incentives to be set within the respective spheres are weighted differently, as will be shown. Yet, in spite of these differences between the two realms, at the same time the division between the two spheres as conceived in IAC discourse is blurred, as we will see more clearly in chapter 6. This blurring happens, first, through the articulation of the incentives logic as the universal principle for the organisation of both spheres, and, second, through the articulation of similar mechanisms for setting these incentives.

Civil society reform

The third important reform strategy that chain AC articulates to realise the uncorrupted society concerns making civil society actors in the ‘private’ sphere actively participate in the abatement of corruption. What is needed is the participatory involvement of politically active, constantly vigilant and informed citizens who responsibly use *and* safeguard their freedoms. All three IAC organisations never grow tired of emphasising the “key role” of civil society and the media for the fight against corruption both in the public and in the private sector.¹³ As we have seen in chapter 3, “[f]rustration and general apathy among a disillusioned public” and a consequently “weak civil society”¹⁴ is regarded as fatal for the security of societies –

¹³ TI (2009b); see also TI (n); TI (2009i: 4); TI (v); TI (s); TI-S official 2; TI-S official 5; TI (2000: xxv); TI (2008b: 4, 5); TI (2009l: 6); TI (a); TI (2009f); TI (2009k); TI (n); UNDP (2008b: 10, 20); UNDP (2008a: 5, 9); UNDP (2008c: 29); UNDP (2004: 5, 16); WB (2007: iv, vii, 9, 17, 18, 20); Shah (2007: 242); WB (2009a: 23)

¹⁴ TI (o)

instead, civil society needs to be “active, inventive, determined and decisive”.¹⁵ The founder of TI, Peter Eigen, even conceives civil society and private sector action as the decisive components of anticorruption reform:

TI believes that for too long the role of civil society and the private sector has been understated, and it will be working with its national chapters towards achieving progress in this area. When today’s developed economies were themselves in the stage of evolving, and had features that resembled those of many of today’s third world economies and economies in transition, it was just such action by civil society and the private sector that confronted and successfully contained the corruption that was then threatening their economic development. We believe that history can, and must, repeat itself in this regard.¹⁶

Apart from articulating the evolution of the Western developed economies rather clearly as the universally right path to a good society, this statement reifies other articulations by TI that demand that “those affected by corruption become involved”¹⁷ in order to “ensure that real change is put into effect”.¹⁸ Similarly, the UNDP is convinced that the “fight against corruption in developing countries requires an engaged and informed public and an increased demand for good governance”¹⁹ and accountability;²⁰ and it demands that civil society groups engage in advocacy work²¹ in order to raise “public awareness about the seriousness of the corruption problem”.²² Both the UNDP and TI support their claims by citing UNCAC, which lists “inclusive participation” as a factor to be enhanced for the sake of increasing the “demand for anti-corruption efforts”.²³ Yet also the WB holds that “more proactive engagement of society is (...) vital”; the fight against corruption requires “[e]ngaged local communities” and a “proactive” and “vibrant civil society” which “support poverty reduction by helping to hold governments accountable for delivering better services, creating jobs, and improving living standards”. Especially

¹⁵ TI (2000: 1)

¹⁶ TI (2000: xvi); see also WB (m) for a similar statement

¹⁷ TI (2008b: 5)

¹⁸ TI (n)

¹⁹ UNDP (2004: 11)

²⁰ UNDP (2008c: 42)

²¹ UNDP (2008b: 3)

²² UNDP (2004: 11)

²³ UNDP (2008a: 9); see also UNDP (2008b: 10); TI-S official 2

in countries with deep-seated corruption, “traditional public sector management interventions need to be supplemented with transparency and related reforms as well as wider engagement with multinationals, the domestic private sector, the financial sector, and civil society”.²⁴

This construction of participatory processes as important elements of an anticorruption reform strategy in chain AC may seem surprising given the specification of the Universal as a society which is structured by incentives to self-interested individuals in order to ensure the rule of law as the only legitimate form of coercion. It becomes less surprising on closer inspection (as provided by next chapter) of the articulations of civil society involvement in the discourse and by the realisation that it is mainly constructed as a mechanism to enhance transparency, accountability and integrity of actors in the public and private sector – and not so much as a means to introduce public deliberation or to increase the formal decision-making rights of citizens in the public or private arena.

Thus, legal reform, institutional reform and the enhancement of a very particular form of civil society participation are the main reform strategies articulated in chain AC for the creation of an uncorrupted society. The next chapter will shed more light on how the incentives logic, these reform strategies and the ‘instruments’ discussed below play out in the concrete policy measures that are advocated in IAC discourse to ensure the right design of institutions and rules, the right kind of participation to safeguard these rules, and how this gives rise to a very particular kind of society. However, before we can come to the discussion of the ‘instruments’, one final aspect regarding IAC reform strategies still requires consideration, and that is the scope of these reform interventions.

Scope of reform

As chapter 3 has demonstrated, corruption is coherently constructed as a problem that is present in all societies around the globe, and yet that is particularly prevalent in developing countries. Nonetheless, while TI’s national chapters are active in the fight against corruption in countries of both the Global North and the South, the WB

²⁴ WB (2007: iv)

and the UNDP are development institutions that focus their IAC efforts on countries of the Global South. TI constructs most country systems as “in need of repair” and advances a “holistic approach to any anticorruption reform programme”, in form of the NIS,²⁵ which includes elements that should be “common to every society”.²⁶ The UNDP and the WB in turn articulate their IAC efforts most of all as part of their mandates to reduce poverty and advance development in developing countries, as the discussion of aims in chapter 4 revealed. This means an incoherent articulation of the basic stratagem of ‘super-differential demarcation’ (IV); while the discourses of the UNDP and the WB draw a line between developed and developing countries and claim to fight corruption i.e. divide the discursive space only in the former, TI’s reform or hegemonic claim is global.

This appears as a rather striking divergence between the discourses of the three organisations. Yet when we evaluate this divergence in the light of the question of hegemonic expansion or dislocation, it actually seems rather unproblematic for the expansion of the hegemonic project for different reasons. The most important reason is that according to all three discourses developing countries are most in need of reform (see chapter 3) and thus should form the central targets of reform. In addition, neither the UNDP nor the WB explicitly contests TI’s activities in Western countries but rather backs them up, which means that TI’s discourse is not actually being dislocated (discussed further below). Moreover, all three discourses articulate the fight against corruption as requiring global reform efforts in terms of common legal frameworks²⁷ and the harmonisation of anticorruption policies of different anticorruption actors²⁸ – which automatically also widens the scope of the discourses of the WB and the UNDP. So while the scope of reform efforts in IAC discourse is still somewhat incoherently demarcated, there is great coherence on the logics that are to structure uncorrupted societies and on the ways in which they are to be advanced. The remaining part of this chapter focuses on the ways in which the reform strategies discussed above are advanced in IAC discourse through the articulation of particular ‘instruments’.

²⁵ TI (2000: vii)

²⁶ TI (2000: xx)

²⁷ TI (2009i: 4); WB (2007: vii-ix, 73); WB (v); UNDP (2008c: 27)

²⁸ WB (2007: vii-ix)

Anticorruption support through global intervention

On what could be regarded as a second level of instrumental claims, several major ‘instruments’ are equivalised in chain AC as advancing the fight against corruption by expediting the reform strategies above. The first and most prominent ‘instrument’ consists of the three IAC organisations themselves, as prominent subject positions in chain AC. Closely related to this, in turn, are articulations of the ‘instruments’ monetary and technical support; advocacy, awareness raising and civil society capacity building; and the creation and provision of expertise for the design of IAC measures.

The construction of these interventions by international organisations as necessary for the fight against corruption in target countries reiterates and amends previously discussed constructions in chain C of developing countries as particularly plagued by corruption and as less able to deal with corrupt human nature. The articulations of ‘instruments’ in chain AC convey now that developing countries will not be able to shake off their corruption alone, which is why they need help. Implicitly, the people in the target countries are articulated as lacking the theoretical expertise, technical knowledge and/or monetary resources needed to carry out the necessary societal reforms (in the case of governments), but also the necessary awareness and capacity (in the case of civil society organisations and other private sector actors). They are articulated as requiring help from organisations like TI, UNDP and the WB (but also other actors), who are at the same time presented as the appropriate ones to undertake these interventions. As the WB explains, “[g]overnments around the world are trying to improve governance and tackle corruption, and they are seeking support and learning from international experience to craft and implement complex programs of reform, build supporting coalitions, and monitor their impact. Development institutions have the opportunity and responsibility to help them”.²⁹

Thus, IAC discourse is not only a discourse about the threat of corruption, the inadequacy of societal systems in the developing world, about what good, uncorrupted societies are like, and how they should be brought about; it is also a discourse about the important role of international organisations in helping countries all over the world to bring about this Universal and become uncorrupted societies.

²⁹ WB (2007: ii)

The following sections will discuss the different ‘instruments’ regarding the international interventions against corruption; in particular, they will draw out how these articulations of international anticorruption intervention in IAC discourse contribute in important ways to the reform strategies set out earlier. As we will see, these articulations of ‘instruments’ in chain AC not only comprise textual statements but also other, non-linguistic articulations such as co-operations of IAC organisations with each other or with other actors; the acquisition, lending and spending of resources; the provision of technical expertise; the use of particular kinds of knowledge etc. Additionally, this chapter will focus on an overarching logic in form of a particular super-differential demarcation that characterises the articulation of these ‘instruments’, which serves to shield IAC interventions from controversy and dislocation.

Subject positions – international supporters of the fight against corruption

The analysis of chain C has shown that IAC discourse separates all subject positions from their potentially corrupt human nature and articulates them as (potential) victims of corruption and thus as stakeholders in the fight against corruption. Moreover, chapter 4 has revealed that people in all areas of society can be made to serve the public interest, and thus to work towards the Universal if only the right incentives are in place. Both these discursive moves serve to institute a huge number of subject positions for social actors in chain AC, such as public officials, politicians, governments, business people, the ‘poor’, people from developing countries, citizens, civil society and so on. Chain AC however, also includes other subject positions that form particularly prominent nodal points, namely subject positions for IAC organisations as well as for other socio-political forces. The following sections reveal the logics in which these subject positions become instituted in chain AC and discuss what this means for IAC as a hegemonic project.

Following Nonhoff, the antagonistic divide of IAC discourse as a hegemonic project is constituted ‘from one side’ of the divide, namely from the side of the ‘hegemonic chain’ AC. In the case of IAC discourse, this entails the construction of important subject positions for IAC actors in the advancement of this hegemonic project, through both linguistic and non-linguistic articulations. These articulations not only

secure a ‘place’ for the three organisations in the expanding hegemonic project; they also work towards advancing that hegemonic project through equivalising three organisations which form particularly powerful nodal points as subject positions in chain AC. A closer look at these articulations of subject positions not only enables us to distinguish the hegemonic stratagem ‘institution/ perpetuation of subject positions for socio-political forces’ (VI), but also allows us to discuss the existence of the stratagem of the ‘actual advocate’ (VIII) and the question of consensus among the discourses of the three IAC actors.

Subject positions for IAC organisations

TI portrays itself as “the global civil society organisation leading the global fight against corruption”,³⁰ through awareness raising and the work with “partners in government, business and civil society”.³¹ It points out its “remarkable success at the international level”, its role in making “the issue of corruption” an internationally important topic,³² and the fact that it has “managed to generate political pressures for substantive reforms around the globe”.³³ It articulates itself as a key actor in advancing the Universal through emphasising its cracking of the “taboo against discussing corruption in international gatherings” and especially at the WB, and by stressing its successful support of the OECD anti-bribery convention “which when it was signed was described by the New York Times and the Washington Post as being a triumph for Transparency International”. Overall, it constructs itself as “a serious player in the anti-corruption struggle”, whose CPI is “is quoted throughout the world on a daily basis”.³⁴

The NGO also makes sure to frequently stress the importance of the growing number of national chapters of which the “TI-network” consists.³⁵ They play an important role in carrying out the fight against corruption in that they regularly facilitate country-internal discussions in order to promote the finding of problem-specific solu-

³⁰ TI (z)

³¹ TI (2009i)

³² TI (p)

³³ TI (n)

³⁴ TI (p); see also TI (n)

³⁵ TI (a)

tions,³⁶ for example through National Integrity Workshops.³⁷ Moreover, they play “an important role in promoting conventions from the negotiation phase through to monitoring their transformation into law and their application in practice”.³⁸ The growing number of chapters is articulated as a “clear signal of the importance the issue of corruption has gained”.³⁹

TI’s 2011 donor income of around €20 million,⁴⁰ which originates largely from Western European governments/aid agencies and transnational companies, is not only a sign of the success of its institution as an important subject position in the IAC hegemonic project; it also allows TI to continue building up that position by expanding chain AC through incorporating more actors and co-operation partners, and thus works towards advancing the hegemonic project.

Similarly, the UNDP articulates itself as an experienced and well-established actor in the field of IAC, as “a leading provider of anti-corruption technical assistance”⁴¹ for whom the fight against corruption is “a major priority”.⁴² While anticorruption measures are articulated as a “long-standing component of UNDP country Programmes”⁴³ at least since the mid-1990s, the UNDP highlights its “holistic approach to fighting corruption”, which engages a “range of national stakeholders” – most importantly government institutions and civil society organisations.⁴⁴ Reifying its prominent position as an IAC actor, the UNDP allocates great parts of its budget to IAC measures; in 2010, for example, the total amount of money spent by UNDP on anti-corruption interventions was US\$80 million.⁴⁵ At the time of my interviews in late 2010, the UNDP had “more than 112 projects going on currently at the country level” in the area of anticorruption.⁴⁶

The WB equally highlights its role as an important player in the area of governance and anticorruption reform, mainly by emphasising the role of IAC work in its overall

³⁶ TI (p)

³⁷ TI (p)

³⁸ TI (v)

³⁹ TI (p)

⁴⁰ TI (2011: 39)

⁴¹ UNDP (2008b: 7)

⁴² UNDP (2008b: 7)

⁴³ UNDP (2008a: 5)

⁴⁴ UNDP (2008c: 30)

⁴⁵ UNDP (2012a)

⁴⁶ UNDP official 1

portfolio. The adoption of a new Governance and Anticorruption (GAC) strategy in 2007, which was updated in 2012, has “made GAC an integral part of Bank operations across sectors and countries”.⁴⁷ The organisation articulates “governance reform including anti-corruption strategies” as a “priority in its work”⁴⁸ and points to its “[h]undreds of governance and anti-corruption activities” taking place “throughout the World Bank”.⁴⁹ Besides regulating bank-internal conduct, these efforts target corruption in WB funded projects and corruption in the target countries and also include work at the global level, namely “partnerships with multilateral and bilateral development institutions, civil society, the private sector, and other actors in joint initiatives to address corruption”.⁵⁰ According to the WB, “[t]he question is not *whether* but *how* the WBG can be a useful partner for GAC reform under different circumstances”.⁵¹

Co-operations between IAC organisations

In addition to these articulations of TI, the UNDP and the WB as important socio-political forces for advancing the fight against corruption we also find in the discourses of these three organisations mutual articulations of the respective other organisations as important forces in the fight against corruption. Such articulations not only strengthen the important subject positions constructed for the three IAC actors but also demonstrate the consensus between them.

On TI’s homepage and in its documents we find countless links and references to the WB and the UNDP, in the form of suggestions for ‘further reading’ on different topics,⁵² citations of sources of knowledge⁵³ or they are mentioned as partners in the fight against corruption. For example, both are mentioned as displaying “Best practice in anti-corruption strategies for development programmes”.⁵⁴ TI co-operations with the other two IAC organisations also take the form of using WB data in the

⁴⁷ WB (2009b)

⁴⁸ WB (g)

⁴⁹ WB (h)

⁵⁰ WB (h)

⁵¹ WB (2007: 1, e.i.o.)

⁵² See for example: TI (G); TI (H); TI (J)

⁵³ TI (2008c: 3, 7); TI (2008a: 5); TI (2008b: 2, 3, 23); TI (p); TI (K); TI (x); TI (m); TI (L); TI (M);

TI (N); TI (O);

⁵⁴ TI (P)

preparation of the famous CPI,⁵⁵ of mutual commenting on papers between TI and the WB,⁵⁶ executive training workshops held jointly by TI and the WB Institute,⁵⁷ the inclusion of TI in various UN and WB forums on anticorruption⁵⁸ such as “advisory committees on their governance and anticorruption strategies”⁵⁹ and other kinds of co-operations with the WB institute.⁶⁰

Similarly, TI and the WB are mentioned as UNDP’s partners.⁶¹ For example, the UNDP discourse refers to a wide range of WB research⁶² to demonstrate extent,⁶³ causes and consequences of corruption⁶⁴ as well as for other indicators.⁶⁵ It also articulates TI as “the leading NGO in the area of anti-corruption” and the UNDP quotes from CPI documents,⁶⁶ TI Global Corruption Report results⁶⁷ and from TI press releases.⁶⁸ The overlap in ‘knowledge’ even goes as far as that the UNDP copies whole passages from the TI Source Book into its own documents.⁶⁹ While the UNDP already undertakes harmonisation efforts with the WB,⁷⁰ UNDP staff would like to see the co-operation go even further; given that the co-operation with the WB and TI is “more about knowledge sharing” a UNDP interviewee told me that “at the country level, you know, I wish that we had more collaboration among different organisations there”.⁷¹

Also the WB discourse articulates TI and the UNDP as important actors in the IAC project.⁷² It cites UNDP documents⁷³ and calls the organisation an ‘external partner’ in its governance programme,⁷⁴ stating that “if possible we try to collaborate – either

⁵⁵ TI-S official 8

⁵⁶ TI-S official 1

⁵⁷ TI (h)

⁵⁸ Sampson (2010: 274); see also TI-S official 5

⁵⁹ TI-S official 4; see also TI-S official 5

⁶⁰ TI-S official 1; TI-S official 5

⁶¹ UNDP (2008c: 41); see also UNDP (2008d)

⁶² UNDP (2008c: 10, 11, 14, 15, 17, 21)

⁶³ UNDP (2008a: 7)

⁶⁴ UNDP (a)

⁶⁵ UNDP (2008a: 8)

⁶⁶ UNDP (2008c: 10, 16, 25)

⁶⁷ UNDP (2008c: 19)

⁶⁸ UNDP (2008c: 13, 24)

⁶⁹ UNDP (2004: 11); cf. TI (2000: xxiv)

⁷⁰ UNDP official 1

⁷¹ UNDP official 1

⁷² See e.g. WB (w)

⁷³ See e.g. WB (d); WB (q)

⁷⁴ WB (x)

by implementing jointly some of this work, or to bring support”.⁷⁵ For example, this involves joint data collection enterprises in target countries.⁷⁶ The WB also recognises “the important role played by international NGOs such as Transparency International” and declares that the “Bank and TI have collaborated in many ways”, for example through the WBI’s input to TI’s Source Book,⁷⁷ WB funding of activities carried out by TI national chapters⁷⁸ or through the contribution to WB working papers by TI’s Director of Research. Another example of mutual articulation of subject positions is TI’s collaboration with the WB Institute “in the design and delivery of workshops and seminars that bring together civil society representatives, often with government officials, to help develop and monitor national anti-corruption strategies and programs”.⁷⁹ Such co-operation is to be expanded in the future; the WB GAC strategy entails “forging stronger alliances with global civil society organizations such as Transparency International (particularly their country-based chapters)”.⁸⁰ However the WB already uses Transparency International’s National Integrity System Country Studies to design the WB’s country assistance strategies⁸¹ and countries’ CPI ranking to decide on whether “more sophisticated” projects can or cannot be done in a particular country.⁸² Apart from that, the WB also presents TI’s Integrity Pacts as a good method to curb corruption in procurement,⁸³ references its Bribe Payers and Corruption Perception Indices,⁸⁴ and lists numerous other TI publications on its anticorruption publication list.⁸⁵

In addition to these intense co-operations and linguistic articulations that reify each other’s subject positions as important corruption fighters there is a high level of interchange of staff between TI, UNDP and WB personnel.⁸⁶ This not only means that the three organisations articulate the respective staff of the others as qualified per-

⁷⁵ WB official 4

⁷⁶ WB official 4

⁷⁷ WB (z)

⁷⁸ See e.g. WB (y) regarding the WB funding of the Zambian TI chapter

⁷⁹ WB (z)

⁸⁰ WB (2007: 30)

⁸¹ WB (2007: 15)

⁸² WB official 6. According to this interviewee, the CPI ranking helps country strategists to “get a better feeling of the environment” for a particular project.

⁸³ WB (e); see also WB (A)

⁸⁴ WB (B)

⁸⁵ WB (q)

⁸⁶ This was obvious from the staff profiles on the TI website, access via TI (Q), which however have now been removed.

sonnel; this ‘rotation’ of capacity and the concomitant exchange of knowledge about how to best fight corruption can also be interpreted as enhancing the consensus between the three actors on the ‘right’ anticorruption approaches and thus the nature of the uncorrupted society.

The articulations of subject positions discussed here certainly allow distinguishing the stratagem of the ‘institution/ perpetuation of subject positions for socio-political forces’ (VI). Although some of the self-praise may be exaggerated, it is still clear that all three are world-renowned social actors endowed with a considerable amount of monetary resources, expert authority and a large network with other socio-political forces. Equivalising these prominent positions in the discursive structure into chain AC considerably enhances the hegemonic potential of IAC discourse i.e. its ability to expand further.

It is particularly noticeable that although all three organisations praise themselves as important subject positions in the fight against corruption, there seem to be no conflicts about the ‘actual advocate’ (which would be the eighth hegemonic stratagem but cannot be distinguished here). No one organisation is attempting to elevate itself to the position of the only right and ‘actual advocate’ of the fight against corruption. Rather, an impressive extent of consensus and co-operation could be detected in the analysis, which strengthens the positions of IAC actors as key actors (or ‘instruments’) in the fight against corruption.

According to Nonhoff, the stratagem of the ‘actual advocate’ is a secondary stratagem which can only be detected when the hegemonic project has expanded considerably and acquired relative stability.⁸⁷ In light of this, the absence of the stratagem would mean that IAC discourse is still in the process of acquiring strength – before the time comes when one or more organisations will try to articulate themselves as the ‘actual advocate’ of this project and attempt to establish the ‘actual meaning’.⁸⁸ Maybe at some point TI will attempt to outstrip the powerful WB in its anticorruption engagement and claim to be the only real corruption fighter? However, given that according to IAC discourse the fight against corruption can never be won, and given that the prominent role of the corruption fighters actually depends on the con-

⁸⁷ Nonhoff (2006: 234)

⁸⁸ See Nonhoff (2006: 234)

tinued presence of corruption, this interpretation does not seem very convincing. It rather seems that articulations of consensus and mutual co-operation of IAC organisations work as a strategy to secure the long-term institution of important (even if not solely prominent) subject positions of IAC actors in the great global coalition against corruption.

Subject positions for other political-societal forces

However, besides instituting subject positions for our three IAC actors, chain AC also includes manifold subject positions for other important socio-political actors, articulating them as having a role in the fight against corruption and thus attempting to expand the hegemonic project even further.

In line with TI's coalition building approach, an enormous number of co-operation partners and external sources of knowledge are articulated in its discourse, of which only some illustrations can be given here. For example, TI works with "leading international organisations in articulating anti-corruption policies", lobbies the "governments of industrialised countries",⁸⁹ pursues "policy dialogues with individual donors and multilateral institutions" and has links to the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD.⁹⁰ Other partners include the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre,⁹¹ Action Aid, the Revenue Watch Institute, the International Budget Partnership and the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), to mention but a few.⁹² Its Business Principles are "the product of a collaborative effort involving companies, academia, trade unions and non-governmental bodies"⁹³ and TI also co-operates with the government development agencies of Canada, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom (in the U4 anticorruption resource centre),⁹⁴ as well as with a number of universities and research institutes in the anti-corruption research network platform ACRN.⁹⁵ Apart from those co-operations it also positively mentions numerous important national and international organisations

⁸⁹ TI (p)

⁹⁰ TI (I)

⁹¹ TI (I)

⁹² TI-S official 7

⁹³ TI (2009h: 8)

⁹⁴ TI (R)

⁹⁵ ACRN

for their engagement in the fight against corruption⁹⁶ and web sources for anticorruption knowledge.⁹⁷ Similarly, the UNDP and the WB co-operate with many other important partners in the fight against corruption. UNDP's "key partners in the area of anticorruption" include UNODC⁹⁸ and numerous other UN agencies, the OECD, international finance institutions such as the Asia Development Bank, academic institutions such as the Basel Centre, the Raoul Wallenberg Institute and the U4 Anti-corruption Resource Centre,⁹⁹ international organisations such as the WHO,¹⁰⁰ and bilateral aid agencies such as GIZ.¹⁰¹ The WB states in its GAC strategy that "[t]he WBG will work with donors, international institutions, and other actors at the country and global levels to ensure a harmonized approach and coordination".¹⁰² Such actors include for example the UNODC with which the WB co-operates in the StAR Initiative for the recovery of stolen assets.¹⁰³ However, co-operations are also in place with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), the IMF, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Australian Government Overseas Aid Program (AUSAID), the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the OECD-DAC Governance Network, the Global Integrity Alliance, Publish What You Pay, the Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption, The Access Initiative, the UN, other donors, regional development banks as well as export credit agencies.¹⁰⁴

One does not have to go into any more detail to recognise the power that IAC discourse acquires via the three IAC actors and their immense network of influential societal actors that support their IAC efforts. All these and many more prominent political-societal actors are articulated into chain AC by the three organisations in question, as part of the fight against corruption and the enterprise of realising the incentive-structured Universal. The fact that the co-operation partners of the three

⁹⁶ See TI (f), TI (2009g)

⁹⁷ TI (G); TI (m)

⁹⁸ UNDP (2008c: 41)

⁹⁹ UNDP (2008c: 41)

¹⁰⁰ UNDP official 1

¹⁰¹ UNDP (2008b: 2), see also UNDP official 1

¹⁰² WB (2007: iii)

¹⁰³ WB (v); UNODC (2007)

¹⁰⁴ WB (2007)

organisations seem to differ, at least in part, does not pose a problem for the coherence of chain AC. Rather, it facilitates its expansion via an immense network of socio-political forces many of which are themselves networks which again consist of a number of actors. The fact that co-operations are in place with many means that these subject positions have not just been offered by IAC discourse but actually taken up by the respective actors. According to the Nonhoffian framework, this again indicates that IAC discourse has already been rather successful in expanding as a hegemonic project and is enhancing its ability to expand even further via the manifold discursive links that these socio-political forces concentrate.¹⁰⁵

Given this concentration of powerful nodal points (in the form of subject positions of societal forces) in IAC discourse, it is immensely important to investigate, in the next section, the exact instruments through which the fight against corruption is pursued in the target countries, where it is likely to have an impact. The articulation of subject positions for IAC actors (as the most important ‘instrument’ for instituting the Universal) has given rise to the application of more specific ‘instruments’ linked to the discourses of the three organisations, and the following analysis will reveal the particular logics that structure them.

Expertise – the provision of the ‘right’ knowledge

The main ways in which IAC interventions in IAC discourse take place are through the provision of knowledge about corruption and anticorruption, through monetary and technical aid, and through advocacy and awareness raising activities by the three IAC actors. All these kinds of ‘instruments’ work (to differing degrees) towards the implementation of the three reform strategies discussed above (legal reform, institutional reform, and civil society reform) and thus towards the restructuring of societies in the target countries according to the incentive-based Universal.

¹⁰⁵ Given the operationalisation of IAC discourse for the purposes of this thesis, the analysis can only reveal institutions of subject positions on the strategic policy level. Furthermore, nothing can be said about how ‘smooth’ the institution of subject positions works in IAC discourse, and about whether or not there is resistance from different actors such as governments of Third World countries but also other actors against being articulated into chain AC.

Due to the different history, legal form and different organisational structures of the three organisations, their discourses emphasise different ‘instruments’. While WB discourse centres on lending and technical assistance, UNDP discourse emphasises technical assistance and to a lesser extent civil society capacity building, and the focus of TI discourse is on advocacy and awareness raising. The provision of knowledge however, is an important ‘instrument’ in all three discourses. This means that they advance the Universal in differing but also common ways and we will see how these combine.

The identification and provision of the ‘right’ knowledge about how to fight corruption is central to IAC discourse. This knowledge is not only integral to the design of the more material IAC ‘instruments’ such as lending and technical assistance and civil society capacity building but is also much more widely disseminated through IAC policy documents, advocacy campaigns, awareness raising events, trainings and diverse other knowledge sharing and awareness raising practices.

The ‘right’ knowledge consists of academic studies and of research conducted by IAC organisations themselves. While both TI and the WB are quite active in the production *and* dissemination of knowledge in the area of anticorruption, the UNDP’s focus is more on dissemination and knowledge exchange. However, there is striking consensus on the kinds of knowledge used and produced. As a WB interviewee told me, “we [WB, TI and UNDP] have a similar approach in methodology, we share indices” and also collaborate with regards to publications “on methodology to evaluate corruption”.¹⁰⁶

This shared knowledge is a very particular kind of knowledge. The most prominent example of academic literature *used* in IAC discourse has already been mentioned in the previous two chapters – Klitgaard’s study about the causes of corruption, summarised in the corruption formula, and based on the definition of corruption as ‘the misuse of office for unofficial ends’.¹⁰⁷

Klitgaard summarises the assumptions and main argument of his approach in an article written for the IMF:

¹⁰⁶ WB official 4

¹⁰⁷ Klitgaard (1998)

Corruption equals monopoly *plus* discretion *minus* accountability. Whether the activity is public, private, or nonprofit, and whether it is carried on in Ouagadougou or Washington, one will tend to find corruption when an organization or person has monopoly power over a good or service, has the discretion to decide who will receive it and how much that person will get, and is not accountable. Second, corruption is a crime of calculation, not passion. True, there are both saints who resist all temptations and honest officials who resist most. But when bribes are large, the chances of being caught small, and the penalties if caught meager, many officials will succumb. Combating corruption, therefore, begins with designing better systems. Monopolies must be reduced or carefully regulated. Official discretion must be clarified. Transparency must be enhanced. The probability of being caught, as well as the penalties for corruption (for both givers and takers), must increase.¹⁰⁸

This quote reflects quite accurately the articulations of corruption, its causes and human nature in chain C and the incentives logic revealed in the specifications of corruption in chain AC, which in turn translates into the three reform strategies mentioned above which will be pursued with the help of particular ‘instruments’. Klitgaard’s approach relies on a universal conception of corruption which is replicated everywhere and responds to the same remedies everywhere. Rather than involving the violation of social norms and values, corruption is based on rational calculation in the name of self-interest, independent of the social context. Honest officials exist but this is not of any interest to the strategies to be applied to combat corruption. It is assumed that it is more useful to sketch human behaviour in a mathematically inspired formula. Those in focus are the potentially corrupt, and those need to be restrained through the design of ‘better systems’ which set the right incentives.¹⁰⁹ Accordingly, his recipe against corruption consists of the reduction of monopoly and discretion as well as the increase of transparency, oversight and punishment.

This clearly exposes the immensely strong influence that the rational choice inspired corruption research discussed in chapter 1 (which continues to dominate the research landscape on corruption) has had on the structures of IAC discourse discerned so far.

¹⁰⁸ Klitgaard (1998: 4), drawing on his research on corruption from 1991

¹⁰⁹ Klitgaard (1998: 6)

It shapes the constructions of corruption, of human nature, of the specifications of the uncorrupted society, and of the ways in which it is pursued. This shared knowledge that IAC discourse coherently equalises as an ‘instrument’ to help construct the ways in which corruption should be combated in fact comes to determine the meaning of the uncorrupted society, the Universal, itself.

The trained economist Klitgaard, whose works are cited by the UNDP and even published by the WB and TI,¹¹⁰ is in good company in IAC discourse, which is replete with references to institutional economics literature¹¹¹ and similar studies that replicate the pre-social, rational actor logic and partly also undertake assessments of corruption and its causes and consequences through quantitative statistical analysis.¹¹² There is great overlap between the authors of positivist, rational choice based publications on corruption in academic journals mentioned in chapter 1 and those of publications in journals, research papers and edited volumes published by IAC organisations, reflecting manifold co-operations between IAC actors and positivist scholars since the very inception of IAC discourse.¹¹³

For its anticorruption corporate governance strategy, the UNDP uses pertinent studies by Treisman,¹¹⁴ Lederman et al.,¹¹⁵ Mauro,¹¹⁶ Le Billon,¹¹⁷ and Svensson (a Senior Economist at the WB in 2005),¹¹⁸ which are all incentive-based corruption explanations and quantitative assessments.¹¹⁹ Lederman and others use “a cross-country panel to examine the determinants of corruption, paying particular attention

¹¹⁰ UNDP (2008c: 9); Klitgaard (1998)

¹¹¹ In IAC discourse this institutional economics literature is also called political economics or political economy literature (see e.g. WB C). However, it should be clear that the present positivist approach taken, for example, by studies of Rose-Ackerman reflects only one of many different theoretical perspectives one can assume in order to analyse the political economic nature of a particular research object.

¹¹² See WB (q); WB (D)

¹¹³ The authors who have published specifically for the WB or the IMF include for example Coolidge/Rose-Ackerman (1997); Rose-Ackerman (1996); Rose-Ackerman (1996a); Klitgaard (1995); Klitgaard et al (2000); McLaren et al (2003); La Porta et al (1997); Lederman et al (2001), to mention but a few. Mauro published several papers for the IMF (where he worked as an economist), such as Mauro (2004); Mauro (1997). In the foreword to the TI Source Book, the author Jeremy Pope thanks Daniel Kaufmann from the WB for his help and also records his “gratitude to Susan Rose-Ackerman, the founder of the recent political-economic literature on corruption, who with infinite patience helped see the original edition through from vague outline to finality” (TI 2000: 8).

¹¹⁴ Treisman (2007)

¹¹⁵ Lederman et al (2005)

¹¹⁶ Mauro (1998)

¹¹⁷ Le Billon (2008)

¹¹⁸ Svensson (2005)

¹¹⁹ UNDP (2008c)

to political institutions that increase accountability”. They conclude that their results “confirm the role of political institutions in determining the prevalence of corruption. Democracies, parliamentary systems, political stability, and freedom of press are all associated with lower corruption”.¹²⁰ Svensson in turn provides a table which lists “the bottom 10 percent most corrupt countries” from four different data sets.¹²¹ From these examples we can see how this kind of research is reflected in IAC discourse both in terms of its focus on institutions, stability and incentives but also in terms of the emphasis that is placed on quantitative assessments of corruption.

The most famous quantitative dataset used for such studies is even produced by an IAC organisation itself: TI’s CPI.¹²² TI is quite active in both the production and the use of statistics for articulating corruption problems, thus enhancing the dominance of positivist research in IAC discourse. While the organisation explains that “[t]here simply are no hard-and-fast figures about corruption”, that existing figures “tend to be grossly misleading” and that it is impossible to calculate the amount of and the damage done by corruption,¹²³ it currently publishes three different indices on corruption on a regular basis: The Corruption Perceptions Index, the Bribe Payers Index, and the Global Corruption Barometer. They are articulated as tools to raise awareness especially within civil society and to inspire reforms¹²⁴ but at the same time reinforce constructions of corruption as something that can be objectively assessed. Through the articulation of statistical figures TI renders its arguments more persuasive, drawing on the authoritative status of quantitative research,¹²⁵ and at the same time facilitates the kind of quantitative, rational choice inspired corruption research that then again informs IAC reform strategies and ‘instruments’ and reinforces the incentives logic in IAC discourse.

Apart from these indices, TI also produces a wide range of ‘tools’ that are to serve better the assessment and consequent address of corruption problems both by its national chapters but also other actors active in the fight against corruption. These in-

¹²⁰ Lederman et al (2005)

¹²¹ Svensson (2005)

¹²² See also chapter 1

¹²³ TI (p)

¹²⁴ TI-S official 7; TI-S official 8

¹²⁵ See also TI-S official 8. A look into its FAQs indicates that the NGO indeed gets frequently asked for “hard figures” on corruption, demonstrating the widespread belief in numbers as an incorporation of reliable scientific knowledge (TI p).

clude National Integrity Assessments, in which a country's institutional structure is evaluated against TI's ideal blueprint of the National Integrity System (NIS). Other examples include the production of risk maps for corruption risks in particular sectors of a given country (e.g. the water sector, the industry sector,¹²⁶ the area of aid delivery or of basic service delivery¹²⁷) which are primarily about assessing opportunities for corruption and control mechanisms against them.¹²⁸ These articulations rely on and at the same time serve to advance constructions of mechanistic human nature on the one hand and on the other institutional incentives and civil society activity as the adequate remedy against corruption. Additionally, TI produces a series of reports, research and policy papers analysing corruption problems and giving further policy recommendations for the design and implementation of anticorruption measures.

WB discourse also includes the production of a wide range of positivist, economic research of corruption and anticorruption measures, which is disseminated via the WB website and WB publication series. The most prominent and productive subject positions related to the articulation of the 'right' knowledge at the WB are Kaufmann, Kraay, Lederman, Shah and Keefer.¹²⁹ As a WBI director, Daniel Kaufmann led the research agenda on governance and corruption for many years, guiding the WB's anticorruption approach. During this time he developed several quantitative governance indicators, published countless studies and spoke and advised on the fight against corruption in innumerable fora.¹³⁰ The following is an example of his articulations of causes of corruption in developing countries:

“First, the motivation to earn income is extremely strong, exacerbated by poverty and by low and declining civil service salaries and the absence of risk-spreading mechanisms (including insurance and a well-developed labor market). Second, opportunities to engage in corruption are numerous. Monopoly rents can be very large in highly regulated economies—and in transition economies, where property is essentially up for grabs. The discretion of many

¹²⁶ See e.g. TI (i)

¹²⁷ TI-S official 7

¹²⁸ I have myself participated in the production of such a risk map for Panamanian public institutions during an internship at the TI chapter in Panama.

¹²⁹ WB (q)

¹³⁰ The Brookings Institution

public officials is broad in developing and transition economies, and this systemic weakness is exacerbated by poorly defined, ever-changing, and poorly disseminated rules and regulations. Third, accountability is typically weak. Political competition and civil liberties are often restricted.”¹³¹

Based on the rational actor logic, Kaufmann’s knowledge guided and still guides the WB’s constructions of corruption, specifications of the Universal, reform strategies and anticorruption ‘instruments’. Also for Anwar Shah, Lead Economist and Program Leader of the Governance Program at the World Bank Institute, only positivist research counts as valuable for designing the WB’s anticorruption instruments. For him, “interesting ideas” for understanding corruption “can be broadly grouped into three categories: principal-agent models, New Public Management perspectives, and neoinstitutional economics frameworks”.¹³² All three approaches work with a rational choice conception of people as rational and narrowly self-interested actors, the only difference being that they have different conceptions of who should be regarded as the ‘principal’, of how lack of information might limit their rationality, and of the kind of accountability relations principal and agent should be implicated in to prevent corruption. These kinds of knowledge inform the more ‘material’ IAC interventions of all three IAC actors while their dissemination at the same time serves to advance conceptions of corruption as a mechanistic act that must be dealt with through the setting of the right incentives.

Examples of other kinds of research exist in WB discourse but are very rare and so far have no influence on IAC ‘instruments’, reform strategies or specifications of uncorrupted societies – which is also related to the dominance of economists compared to staff from other disciplines in the WB.¹³³ In this respect, one WB interviewee told me about an innovative corruption-related project called ‘Justice for the Poor’, which entails 50 researchers conducting anthropological (amongst other) research in different countries in Africa and Asia.¹³⁴ The programme states to be “[g]rounded in evidence-based approaches focused on the perspective of the poor and marginalized” and aims to “improve the delivery of justice services and to sup-

¹³¹ Kaufmann/Gray (1998: no page)

¹³² Shah (2007: 236)

¹³³ WB official 5; WB official 6

¹³⁴ WB official 5

port sustainable and equitable development processes” by taking into account the values and norms of the local population.¹³⁵ Yet so far this programme consists only as a single and rather extraordinary research programme at the WB and has not yet been translated into concrete project work.¹³⁶ This difficulty in equivalising different kinds of knowledge into chain AC is likely to be due to the exclusionary prominence of positivist research, which is closely related to the WB’s overall social engineering approach which “rewards easily measurable things”.¹³⁷ As the WB interviewee pointed out, the lack of linearity and predictability and the long duration of projects involving country-specific anthropological research and taking local social norms into account in the project design pose a problem; it consists in selling this “to the vice President of the World Bank” who evaluates its accordance with the question of “how can you make this function in a way that people can see that their resources poured into this channel produce results coming out that end?”.¹³⁸ Under its new GAC strategy, the WB declares that it will “continue to support research on causes and effects of governance and corruption and their links to growth and development”.¹³⁹ This is most likely to continue reinforcing the exclusive articulation of positivist, quantitative, institutional economics research on corruption as an ‘instrument’ for the fight against corruption, while other approaches are marginalised.¹⁴⁰

Chapter 1 explained the positivist claim that models need to simplify the world in order to enable research, and that positivist research functions on the ‘as-if’ proposition. We can now see, however, how the kind of research that results from this proposition structures IAC discourse. Although a WB interviewee conceded that “we know that some of the stuff that we consider as corruption going on in some countries is not considered as corruption in those very countries”, s/he explained that “it’s unhelpful for the World Bank to think about corruption as a moral issue itself”;¹⁴¹ the WB thus repeats the positivist stress on usefulness, with respect to its own social engineering approach. Based on the rational actor model of human nature and on incentive-based research on the causes, consequences and remedies of corruption,

¹³⁵ WB (E)

¹³⁶ WB official 5

¹³⁷ WB official 5

¹³⁸ WB official 5

¹³⁹ WB (2007: x)

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Bukovansky (2006: 183)

¹⁴¹ WB official 3

IAC discourse on a whole very coherently and comprehensively specifies the good, uncorrupted society, as we have seen in chapter 4, and articulates reform strategies and ‘instruments’ to change target societies accordingly. Positivist research as the ‘right’ knowledge in chain AC thus defines the political logic of IAC discourse, the way in which it divides the discursive space, in crucial ways.

This extraordinarily prominent structuring function of positivist research on corruption as a nodal point in IAC discourse also explains why contestations of the rational actor logic or the incentives logic were only minor in IAC discourse and did not affect the overall structures of the discourse – via the ‘scientific’ knowledge used and produced in IAC discourse as an ‘instrument’ in the fight against corruption, these logics have been established as the only way to conceive corruption and the uncorrupted society.

Advocacy, awareness raising and civil society capacity building

Advocacy and awareness raising activities and civil society capacity building are articulated as other ‘instruments’ for the reform of corrupt target societies.

While the UNDP is also active in the areas of advocacy and capacity building¹⁴² and while in the last number of years the WB made civil society a more important topic in its anticorruption work¹⁴³ (see also chapter 6), advocacy and civil society work is most prominently articulated as an ‘instrument’ in TI’s discursive ‘territory’. TI does not have the financial resources and the status to run big programmes for institutional incentive-setting and thus confines itself to advocating them, raising awareness about their importance and building the capacity of other civil society organisations not only to do the same but also to play their role in the incentives framework.

TI discourse articulates two main ‘instruments’ through which to advance IAC reforms: The first regards “assisting developing nations and countries in transition in mobilising efforts to confront their corruption problems”, mainly by engaging civil society and feeding knowledge and experience from elsewhere “into national discussions”. The second consists of working “with leading international organisations in

¹⁴² UNDP official 1

¹⁴³ WB (2007: 52)

articulating anti-corruption policies and also lobby the governments of industrialised countries so that they prevent their corporations from paying bribes around the world”.¹⁴⁴ TI’s ‘instrumental’ approach thus consists mainly of advocacy regarding the ‘right’ ways of fighting corruption and of civil society mobilisation for this purpose and in doing so contributes to all three reform strategies. The kind of knowledge about how to fight corruption that is used in these activities has been discussed above. TI’s explicitly non-confrontational approach, aimed at building “coalitions with stakeholders from all sectors of society”,¹⁴⁵ is particularly important for this strategy to succeed and facilitates the advancement of the ‘right’ knowledge about incentive structures across wide segments of the more than 100 countries that currently have active TI chapters.¹⁴⁶

The TI Secretariat in Berlin (which, as TI emphasises, does not function as a headquarters of this allegedly decentralised organisation) occupies a particularly important position in this regard since it is here where knowledge production is concentrated. The production of country-specific knowledge for national advocacy and civil society work happens in research projects funded sometimes by the Secretariat but mostly by its national chapters which acquire their funds independently.¹⁴⁷ However, the Secretariat often coordinates data collection and knowledge production activities for the purposes of the quantitative indices mentioned above, provides guidance regarding approach and methodology in the form of the strategic policy documents used in this thesis and facilitates the creation of ‘best practice’ documents and the exchange of knowledge among the chapters.¹⁴⁸ The Secretariat also widely disseminates TI’s concentrated knowledge via its website, the media, and again via the national chapters to governments, companies, international organisations, and civil society members and organisations.¹⁴⁹

Despite this nodal point function of the Secretariat in chain AC, the work of the national chapters is crucial for advancing the ‘instruments’ for fighting corruption. While TI discourse stresses the independence of TI chapters (from the Secretariat as

¹⁴⁴ TI (p)

¹⁴⁵ TI (S)

¹⁴⁶ TI (A)

¹⁴⁷ TI-S official 7

¹⁴⁸ TI-S official 7; TI-S official 6

¹⁴⁹ See also Larmour (2005: 7)

well as from any political strands), the accreditation requirements and procedures for chapters¹⁵⁰ make sure that only organisations with a particular understanding of the right way to combat corruption get the chance to become part of the global TI movement against corruption.¹⁵¹ If for example a branch of EZLN, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, applied as the Mexican national chapter of TI and promoted for example a conception of corruption as the subversion of socialist values of social solidarity, it would most likely not succeed to be accredited. For accreditation purposes, organisations that wish to become a TI chapter have to conduct a self-evaluation, answering questions about how they will help to fulfil TI's mission, what their activities have been so far to help draft or monitor the enforcement of anticorruption laws and regulations in their country, to raise awareness about corruption, to work with the media, to lobby in order to influence public policy, as well as questions about the kinds of projects that they aim to implement in the coming years.¹⁵² If a chapter manages to answer these questions in line with TI's overall strategy and to be accredited, it then gets further socialised into TI's organisational as well as knowledge structures.

Therefore, by tying both knowledge production and accreditation procedures of TI national chapters to the nodal point Secretariat, the construction and application of the right 'instruments' to fight corruption in TI discourse is defined in crucial ways which also define constructions of the uncorrupted society, as we have seen above. Through advocacy, awareness raising and civil society work TI's discourse works towards expanding chain AC mainly via acquiring new subject positions that in turn perpetuate and advance the conceptions of corruption, specifications of the uncorrupted society and reform strategies articulated in the discourse.

Lending

Besides advocacy and civil society work, the lending of financial resources for anti-corruption reforms and the provision of technical assistance to target countries are the two remaining major 'instruments' for IAC reform in chain AC.

¹⁵⁰ See TI (T)

¹⁵¹ See also De Sousa (2005)

¹⁵² TI (2009a)

Being a bank, the lending of money is the WB's main activity. Its concrete ways of engagement against corruption in the target countries vary according to the respective country assistance strategy,¹⁵³ but they consist for the biggest part of project-related or conditional lending to country governments mainly for institutional and legal reform. WB loans are particularly attractive for countries that have difficulties securing loans from private Banks because the WB has lower requirements regarding the financial standing of the borrowing country and also lends with better conditions. As for the UNDP, a "country's government remains the principal counterpart for the WBG".¹⁵⁴ Country-specific anticorruption measures are usually not implemented as self-contained projects. The WB's country assistance involves improving governance through mainstreaming governance and anticorruption measures into its lending conditions. Thus, anticorruption measures usually form part of other projects and their implementation (project level),¹⁵⁵ or of country assistance strategies (country level)¹⁵⁶.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, they also form part of the work done in co-operations at the international level.¹⁵⁸

Most of the WB loans directly support the purchase of material or expertise related to concrete development projects, (the so-called 'investment operations',) while others are given out as financial loans, credits and grants supporting the target country's budget for the carrying out of particular development policies (the so-called 'development policy operations'). Both however come with 'strings attached'.¹⁵⁹ This means that the money is never untied, for the country's free disposition, as it would be if lent by a private bank; rather, it is disbursed only conditionally, either for policies or other expenses that the WB deems necessary or useful for development, poverty reduction or to fight corruption. As the WB explains, "[a]ll Bank strategies link levels of financial assistance and modes of engagement to progress on key obstacles to development effectiveness, which frequently include weak governance and corruption".¹⁶⁰

¹⁵³ WB (2007: iii)

¹⁵⁴ WB (2007: 4)

¹⁵⁵ WB official 3

¹⁵⁶ WB official 1; WB (2007: 4)

¹⁵⁷ WB (2007: 4); WB official 6

¹⁵⁸ WB official 1

¹⁵⁹ See for example WB (p)

¹⁶⁰ WB (2007: 15)

Through different mechanisms, the WB ensures that money intended for governance and anticorruption is actually used for these purposes. For example for IDA-eligible countries, “good governance is rewarded through the performance-based allocation system (PBA), which is based on (a) the Bank’s Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA), where heavy weight is given to governance, and (b) portfolio performance”.¹⁶¹ So in the logic of the WB’s conditional lending,¹⁶² those countries’ performance in the area of governance and anticorruption is actually a condition for the attainment of further funds for other development projects.¹⁶³ Development policy operations are “predominantly used in stronger governance systems”,¹⁶⁴ while investment loans (which are also used for institution building)¹⁶⁵ are obviously easier to secure for ‘more corrupt’ countries. However, even in settings with stronger governance, the WB makes sure to disburse funds only annually and “against a mutually agreed set of policy and institutional actions”.¹⁶⁶ Thus, WB lending provides governments with the financial power to transform country systems, but this power is always tied to particular ways of doing the transforming or to particular preconditions for it. These preconditions in the form of governance and anticorruption measures entail mainly legal and institutional reform, which in turn are constructed according to the kinds of knowledge discussed above, thus instituting the incentives logic mainly via these two reform strategies. In 2010, the WB spent “10 percent of its lending or approximately US\$6.0 billion to help countries improve the performance and accountability of their core public sector institutions and rule of law”.¹⁶⁷ This legal and institutional reform lending however is only a part of the money spent on anticorruption efforts since due to their mainstreaming they also fall in the areas of other WB sections like for example the Social Development Group or the WB Institute. While the latter, as we have seen above, produces the rational choice inspired knowledge, the former uses it for the design of social development programmes, which also includes civil society work and thus contributes to the third reform strategy.¹⁶⁸ Thus WB discourse contributes to the expansion of chain AC

¹⁶¹ WB (2007: 15)

¹⁶² WB (2007: 16)

¹⁶³ See also WB (2007: 16)

¹⁶⁴ WB (2007: 16)

¹⁶⁵ WB (p)

¹⁶⁶ WB (p)

¹⁶⁷ WB (b)

¹⁶⁸ WB (j)

(and thus of the antagonistic divide) mainly by advancing particular institutional and legal designs in the target countries, and to a lesser extent through acquiring new subject positions for the fight against corruption.

Technical support

The principal ‘instruments’ articulated in the UNDP’s discourse are technical assistance for legal and institutional reform and to a lesser extent civil society capacity building; all three reform strategies are thus pursued in UNDP’s discourse. As a multilateral development organisation founded by the member countries of the UNO, UNDP works via country offices in many UN member states and all its activities within a country require approval by that country’s government.¹⁶⁹ Unlike the WB’s lending, “UNDP support is not conditional”.¹⁷⁰ Its anticorruption work, which is based on the implementation of UNCAC, takes place in the country offices and in its head office in New York. The UNDP explains that, overall, its activities in the IAC area have evolved from mainly “awareness-raising activities” to include the provision of “technical advisory services to national governments, coupled with the development of internally developed tools and methodologies”.¹⁷¹

The UNDP’s anticorruption work has a decentralised character in the sense that the country offices raise their own funding for anticorruption projects from bilateral and sometimes multilateral donors, but also in the sense that “cross-cutting” anticorruption measures are “mainstreamed into other service areas (governance, environment, poverty reduction) at the country level”.¹⁷² Currently, the main activities of country offices in the area of anticorruption involve technical support for institution-building and policy-reform in order to increase states’ capacity to respond to UNCAC and to improve governance and to a lesser degree also for increasing the involvement of civil society into anticorruption activities.¹⁷³ Yet while the UNDP country offices operate relatively independently in terms of funding, the head office exerts an important kind of influence. In order to ensure coherence among the ‘technical’ anticorruption

¹⁶⁹ UNDP official 1

¹⁷⁰ UNDP (2004: 5)

¹⁷¹ UNDP (2008b: 7)

¹⁷² UNDP (2012a)

¹⁷³ UNDP official 1; see also UNDP (2008b); UNDP (c)

tion efforts of the country offices, the anticorruption unit in the head office leads and supports their activities under the name of the ‘UNDP Global Thematic Programme on Anti-Corruption for Development Effectiveness’ (PADCE),¹⁷⁴ which has replaced the 1997 “Programme for Accountability and Transparency (PACT)”.¹⁷⁵ In particular, it provides the country offices with a corporate policy, ‘knowledge products’ and ‘tools’ on which their technical interventions should be based. Also, there are mechanisms in place for the concentration and assimilation of this knowledge across UNDP offices in different countries, such as the exchange of ideas, ‘best practices’ and “lessons learned” between the country offices.¹⁷⁶ Thus, similar to the case of TI discourse, the construction and application of the ‘instruments’ of technical assistance by the country offices is defined in crucial ways by its tying to the head-office as a nodal point, and to the strategic policy documents centring on the rational choice research discussed above. Apart from that, the UNDP head office itself also engages in “global advocacy (...) and awareness raising” on corruption and anticorruption¹⁷⁷ and also in the “coordination and harmonisation of the global anticorruption interventions”.¹⁷⁸ Such activities advance the incentive-based anticorruption knowledge globally via the immense network of influential subject positions discussed earlier in this chapter. Overall, UNDP discourse works towards expanding chain AC and advancing the IAC hegemonic project by instituting the incentives logic via technical support for institutional and legal reform and to a lesser extent by acquiring new subject positions as multipliers for its knowledge about the uncorrupted society.

While one aspect of the articulation of ‘instruments’ still merits discussion, we can already conclude here that there are major divergences between the discourses of the three organisations with regards to the articulations of the main ‘instrument’ for how to advance the reform strategies and thus the fight against corruption. While the WB operates most of all (though not exclusively, see also chapter 6) via the conditional lending of financial resources to governments, the UNDP mainly applies the strategies of providing governments with technical support and expertise and the strategy

¹⁷⁴ UNDP official 1

¹⁷⁵ UNDP (2008c: 30)

¹⁷⁶ UNDP official 1

¹⁷⁷ UNDP official 1

¹⁷⁸ UNDP official 1

of global advocacy, while TI's work towards the Universal occurs principally through advocacy and awareness raising activities. Now, are these differences in strategies between the three organisations to be understood as dislocations of the hegemonic project? Given that these 'instruments' are all structured very coherently according to the shared rational choice knowledge discussed previously, and that they all contribute to the same reform strategies (albeit in different ways), the answer is no. Moreover, we have seen earlier in this chapter that IAC organisations articulate each others' work as very important and valuable. For example, TI, while not providing countries with substantive monetary or technical support itself, still deems development and anticorruption aid from organisations like the WB and the UNDP necessary.¹⁷⁹ A UNDP interviewee pointed out that there are work areas in which TI and the WB are better than his/her own organisation.¹⁸⁰ And the WB suggests coordinated action and "a division of labor among donors (...) with others taking a lead in areas that are outside the Bank's mandate or comparative advantage".¹⁸¹ Thus, these differences in 'instruments' are to be interpreted as a division of labour in a rather coherent fight against corruption; theoretically speaking, the different instruments combine to an overall 'instrumental logic' that rather consistently advances the 'reform logic' outlined at the beginning of this chapter, thus contributing to the overall political logic of advancing the antagonistic division of the discursive space. Given the function of rational choice research as a crucial nodal point for the construction of the 'instruments', the political logic of IAC discourse is heavily defined by this knowledge.

Avoiding dislocation – articulations of IAC interventions as unpolitical, context-sensitive, and consensual

One important logic is integral to the articulation of reform strategies and 'instruments' in chain AC. IAC discourse articulates them not only as the right reform strategies and instruments; it also articulates them (in linguistic ways) as sensitive to other cultural contexts, as unpolitical and as otherwise uncontroversial or consensual,

¹⁷⁹ See e.g. TI (1)

¹⁸⁰ See e.g. UNDP official 1

¹⁸¹ WB (2007: ix)

thus aiming to shield the discourse against political and cultural controversy in what can be interpreted as ‘superdifferential demarcations’ (IV). While this can contribute to explaining the uncontroversial nature of IAC discourse it also has the potential to contribute considerably to the expansion of IAC as a hegemonic project.

Context-sensitivity

In chapter 3 we have seen that TI discourse draws a super-differential demarcation between the discourse and claims about Western moral superiority. This demarcation is reiterated in the WB and the UNDP but also TI discourse through assertions of the importance to take local circumstances into account when designing anticorruption instruments and reform strategies. For example, Shaw and Schacter from the WB suggest self-critically that the lack of significant progress in eradicating corruption could be “attributed to the fact that many programs are simply folk remedies or one-size-fits-all approaches”.¹⁸² Accordingly, the WB’s GAC strategy states that the “form of WBG engagement on GAC will vary from country to country, depending on specific circumstances”; we learn that “there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’”¹⁸³ and that reforms should be ‘tailored’ to the country context.¹⁸⁴ Furthermore it suggests that “the Bank should be open to involvement with a broad range of domestic institutions taking into account the specificities of each country”.¹⁸⁵ Articulations that stress the importance of “supporting a country’s own priorities”,¹⁸⁶ of local ownership and leadership with regards to the implementation of anticorruption projects also contribute to articulating this demarcation.¹⁸⁷ They are replicated in UNDP articulations that “localisation and contextualisation is important” and the “country-specific context” needs to be taken into account.¹⁸⁸ Also TI discourse stresses that anticorruption reforms “must be geared to the particular needs and problems of each individual nation state”¹⁸⁹ and can neither be “off-the-shelf solutions”¹⁹⁰ nor “forced upon them

¹⁸² Shah/Schacter (2004: 40); see also Shah (2007: 236)

¹⁸³ WB (2007: 5, 17)

¹⁸⁴ See e.g. WB (2007: 7)

¹⁸⁵ WB (2007: 20)

¹⁸⁶ WB (2007: 4)

¹⁸⁷ See e.g. Shah (2007: 236); WB (2007: 4, v)

¹⁸⁸ UNDP official 1

¹⁸⁹ TI (2000: xx)

¹⁹⁰ TI (p)

[the countries] from the outside”.¹⁹¹ IAC discourse is thus demarcated against discourses advocating one-size-fits-all measures without considering local contexts. While such linguistic articulations stand in stark contradiction to Eigen’s quote about the necessity to repeat Western history, they still have the potential to shield IAC discourse against dislocation by anthropological or ethnographic research that points to the differences in conceptions of corruption world-wide as well as to the inapplicability of Western societal models to non-Western contexts.¹⁹²

Insinuations of a consensus – or ‘corruption is the same everywhere’

Simultaneously, however, and in stark contradiction to claims about context-sensitivity of IAC measures, IAC discourse is also defended against such dislocation through articulations that there *is* a global consensus with regards to corruption which actually makes context-relativisation of IAC instruments unnecessary.

According to TI discourse, corruption involves “a moral element – one which cuts across all major religions and societies throughout the world”¹⁹³ and argues that people the world over are demanding absolute probity of their political leaders”, reflecting a “world-wide concern” with corruption¹⁹⁴ but also a “growing global consensus” over how to combat it.¹⁹⁵ It defends itself against accusations of “trying to inflict a “first world” view of corruption on the rest of the world” by arguing that “every country in the world has laws which criminalise corruption” and that “there is no culture, anywhere and at any time in history, that anyone has been able to point to, where it has been accepted by society as a whole that their leaders are entitled as of right to make decisions in their own favour and against the group interest”. Even if it is “true that in different cultures the lines between the acceptable and the unacceptable are drawn differently”, these differences are “marginal rather than fundamental”.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ TI (p)

¹⁹² See e.g. Harrison (2006); Sissener (2001); Ruud (2000); Price (1999); Szeftel (1998); Gupta (1995); De Sardan (1999)

¹⁹³ TI (2000: 1)

¹⁹⁴ TI (a); see also TI (l); see also UNDP official 1

¹⁹⁵ TI (k); see also TI (2000: 1, xv, xvii); TI (p), WB (2007: 4)

¹⁹⁶ TI (p)

Also the existence of UNCAC is – in particular in UNDP discourse – articulated as a reflection of the “growing global consensus on how corruption impedes development”.¹⁹⁷ A UNDP interviewee explained to this end that “every culture has a capacity to distinguish what is gift and what is bribing” and gave the example of a chocolate and a Rolex watch which would be rightly distinguished in every society.¹⁹⁸ Similarly, a TI interviewee explained with regards to the NIS that “there is a bit of a universalist¹⁹⁹ set of standards of (...) what an organisation with integrity is, an organisation with transparency and accountability”.²⁰⁰ A WB interviewee conceded that things are a bit different in every country but that, having worked on the issue of corruption for a long time, one knows what it is all about and can thus easily work on it in any country.²⁰¹

Thus, these articulations reiterate the super-differential demarcation between TI discourse and claims of Western moral superiority, conveying that IAC discourse does not impose any Western values. However it relies on an argument that stands in contradiction to the former, claiming that such imposition does not happen because there are hardly any differences in values and norms regarding corruption around the world. Such contradictions need not necessarily pose a problem but may combine to strengthen the super-differential demarcation, if IAC discourse is able to ‘hold them together’. In doing so, it applies still another, and very important, super-differential demarcation, which articulates IAC discourse as unpolitical and thus uncontroversial in nature.

The ‘unpolitical’ nature of anticorruption interventions

TI discourse presents TI as “politically non-partisan”, having as its “primary function” the “raising of awareness about corruption on a global level”,²⁰² and is therefore articulated as unpolitical. Different TI officials reiterated this articulation, stating for example that “we are not a political organisation with a political posture in

¹⁹⁷ TI (2008a: 2); see also UNDP (2008a: 9); TI (2009h: 4); TI (k)

¹⁹⁸ UNDP official 1; see WB official 1 for a similar example

¹⁹⁹ From the context it was clear that what was meant here instead of ‘universalist’ was ‘universal’.

²⁰⁰ TI-S official 6

²⁰¹ WB official 1 (unrecorded conversation before interview)

²⁰² TI (n)

anything really. We would never, I guess, go and tell [the TI chapter in] Venezuela if they should or should not take a position vis-a-vis the Chavez government”.²⁰³ Apart from reifying the construction of TI as an unpolitical actor, statements like this also construct politics as necessarily involving parties and governments. TI discourse makes rather clear that the alleged ‘unpoliticalness’ of its IAC activities, and thus the dissociation from any particular societal system, allows it to incorporate a diverse range of subject positions in chain AC; its alleged non-partisan viewpoint is praised for allowing for “constructive dialogue with both governments and big corporations” while maintaining the freedom to criticise those institutions publicly.²⁰⁴ Closely related to this is its ‘coalition-building approach’, which consists of “proceeding incrementally, and remaining non-confrontational”,²⁰⁵ and is able to “get all relevant parties around the table”,²⁰⁶ thus serving the expansion of chain AC via these actors.

Similarly, the UNDP portrays itself as being politically impartial,²⁰⁷ a construction that may well facilitate its engagement with different governments. A UNDP interviewee explained that the UNDP is “neutral but not value-neutral”, thus dissociating values from politics. According to him, “politically impartial means we do not associate with one political party”; this, again, refers politicalness to the support of political parties. Moreover, the UNDP interviewee also claimed that through the focus on “democratic governance, not democracy per se” in its IAC measures the UNDP avoids having to decide between different systems: “We do not bother with a particular form of democracy”. At the same time, the range of potential democratic options in UNDP discourse is very restricted, “you know, whether it is parliamentary democracy, or presidential system, or hybrid, or whatever”.²⁰⁸

The WB constructs all its activities, including IAC efforts, as unpolitical via its Articles of Agreement, which state that the WB is not allowed to interfere in the internal political affairs of the countries in which it operates. Interestingly, while both UNDP and TI interviewees emphasised the ‘unpolitical’ character of their IAC work, WB interviewees conceded that “the idea that development isn’t political is a fiction”.

²⁰³ TI-S official 5

²⁰⁴ TI (n)

²⁰⁵ TI (p)

²⁰⁶ TI (o), see also TI (p); TI (n)

²⁰⁷ UNDP (2008a: 10)

²⁰⁸ UNDP official 1

One interviewee made clear that “when you are thinking about accountability measures you are actually interfering into the internal political affairs of the country in one way or another”.²⁰⁹ S/he explained however that “in some ways it’s a convenient fiction under which to operate”.²¹⁰

Whether out of conviction or strategic considerations, IAC discourse is defended against potential dislocations through criticisms of its political nature by drawing a ‘super-differential demarcation’ between the discourse and any discourses that include what is constructed as politics in IAC discourse. The demarcation between the territory of politics and political relations on the one hand and IAC discourse on the other hand suggests that IAC discourse has nothing to do with struggles about advancing a particular societal vision that usually take place in political institutions. Such articulations have the potential to secure the persuasiveness of the fight against corruption for supporters of all sorts of different political camps.

They are very much in line with the overall good governance discourse which typically presents reforms as merely technical adjustments (thereby also resembling the structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s). According to Abrahamsen, good governance defines itself as “both politically and culturally neutral, calling simply for the efficient and optimal management of a nation’s resources and not prescribing a particular system of rule”.²¹¹

This super-differential articulation in IAC discourse is surely enhanced by the prominent role that the positivist, rational choice inspired research discussed earlier plays in structuring the discourse. Through being equalised in chain AC and structuring IAC discourse in important ways, the seemingly ‘technical’, objective and thus uncontroversial character of this kind of research endows the discourse with an equally ‘technical’ character. At the same time, the positivist approach to fighting corruption is in turn defended with the need for value-neutrality and abstinence from Western hyperbole in the same way as the focus on incentives instead of values was defended by a TI interviewee (see chapter 4). As a WB interviewee explained, “it’s unhelpful for the World Bank to think about corruption as a moral issue itself”, be-

²⁰⁹ WB official 3

²¹⁰ WB official 3, see also WB official 5; WB official 7

²¹¹ Abrahamsen (2000: 11)

cause the WB has very limited legitimacy to “try and change people’s perceptions of how bad corruption is or what corruption is”.²¹² Thus, while ‘normative’ research considering people’s values is articulated as problematic, ‘objective’ positivist research methods are constructed as legitimate.²¹³ This way, the different ‘super-differential demarcations’ just outlined come to enhance each other in IAC discourse; they defend the discourse against dislocations by constructing it as uncontroversial and self-evidently positive. This camouflaging of the political nature of IAC discourse works towards its expansion by facilitating the acquisition of subject positions with diverse expectations as to societal organisation and cultural sensitivity.

Conclusion

This chapter has investigated the ‘instrumental claims’ in IAC discourse, both on the levels of ‘reform strategies’ and ‘instruments’.

Apart from demonstrating the further expansion of chain AC in form of the ‘equivalisation of differential claims which are oriented against the universal’ (I) with signifiers such as legal and institutional reform, civil society reform, advocacy, project lending, technical co-operation, scientific knowledge etc., this second part of the analysis of chain AC, the anticorruption chain of IAC discourse, has rendered different findings on further hegemonic stratagems and political logics.

It has shown that IAC discourse articulates three main reform strategies, namely legal reform, institutional reform and civil society reform. While the next chapter will reveal how exactly these reform strategies play out in the construction of the Universal, the chapter has shown that they aim at quite deep political interventions into the ‘corrupt’ target countries; through three different modes of reform, the respective societies are to be transformed according to the Universal as specified in chapter 4, featuring the ‘right’ incentives for rational actors. Divergences were discovered among the three IAC discourses of TI, the UNDP and the WB with regard to the

²¹² WB official 3

²¹³ WB official 3; This happens despite the interviewee’s conviction that “some of the most effective tools of dealing with corruption are methods to change perceptions”, and that “a huge amount of donors’ technical assistance and other stuff is wasted because we deal 99 percent with the de jure, and ignore the de facto which is 99 percent of what goes on”.

‘super-differential demarcation’ that demarcates the geographical scope of IAC reform. However, this was not identified as a dislocation of the hegemonic project and was in fact contrasted by the consensus revealed by the analysis of ‘instrumental claims’ conducted in the rest of the chapter.

It showed how the articulation of ‘instruments’ in chain AC relies on articulations in chain C about societal actors in developing countries as unable to deal with self-interested human nature and implement reforms on their own and at the same time constructs IAC organisations as the bearers of the right knowledge and the adequate resources and tools to help those developing countries in their fight against corruption. Revealing the stratagem of ‘institution/perpetuation of subject positions for socio-political forces’ (VI), the chapter traced the ways in which IAC discourse institutes important subject positions for the three IAC actors as implementers of the fight against corruption and showed how these were mutually enhanced by the three actors; but it also showed the institution of subject positions for a wide range of other societal-political forces as important anticorruption stakeholders or activists. As was demonstrated, the fact that co-operations already take place between IAC actors and most of those influential subject positions means that IAC discourse is already rather successful in expanding chain AC via these subject positions. Therefore, this stratagem (VI) is particularly salient.

Moreover, the chapter revealed the crucial function of rational choice inspired positivist research on corruption, an ‘instrument’ in chain AC, for the structuring of IAC discourse. It showed how by drawing on, producing and disseminating such research, IAC discourse ties its articulations of corruption, specifications of the Universal, reform strategies and instruments to the rational actor and incentives logics arising from this research, thus forming a particular kind of instrumental logic.

The investigation of the ‘instruments’ of advocacy, awareness raising and civil society capacity building; lending; and technical support showed how the articulations of all three ‘instruments’ are closely tied to the rational choice based (anti)corruption knowledge and work towards the institution of the ‘right’ incentives in ‘corrupt’ target countries via the three reform strategies. Considerable differences were revealed between the discourses of the three IAC actors as to the main ‘instrument’ applied for pursuing the ‘reform strategies’; while TI works mainly in the area of advocacy

and civil society awareness raising, the WB is more active in the provision of monetary resources, and the UNDP mainly provides technical support and raises awareness. However, the chapter argued that there is a division of labour between the discourses of the three IAC actors on the way toward the uncorrupted society rather than a divergence that could be problematic for the expansion of the IAC project.

In the course of the investigation of 'instruments' it also became quite evident that the stratagem of the actual advocate does not exist within IAC discourse. The discourses of all three IAC organisations emphasise co-operations between the actors, abstain from critique and undertake no attempts to articulate specific actors as 'actual advocates' and others as 'non-actual' ones. However, the chapter argued that this stratagem may not actually benefit the hegemonic success of any of the three discourses anyway, given the division of labour among IAC organisations for the attainment of the Universal and the articulation of the fight against corruption as a never-ending one.

Important super-differential demarcations (IV) were also distinguished with regards to the ways in which IAC discourse shields itself against (potential) dislocations by criticism regarding its imposition of Western values on developing countries. The chapter showed how, in a contradictory logic, IAC reform strategies and 'instruments' are articulated as context-sensitive and flexible, consensual and unpolitical, thus camouflaging the political nature of IAC discourse. By emphasising its sensitivity and adaption to local contexts, the discourse is able to address (potential) criticisms about its neo-imperial agenda, while at the same time to justify its universalist measures through allegations of a global consensus and claims about its unpoliticalness. The chapter argued that this camouflaging and shielding effect is enhanced by the prominent structuring function of rational choice based knowledge in the discourse, which renders an aura of objectivity to the discourse and endows it with scientific authority. These articulations can in turn serve the persuasion of a broad range of actors from different political camps as supporters of IAC discourse.

Overall, the analysis of instrumental claims conducted in this chapter confirmed the great consensus distinguished by the previous two chapters in interesting ways. It showed how, based on the division of labour between the three IAC discourses, reform logic and instrumental logic combine to form a particular political logic which

coherently further advances the ‘antagonistic division of the discursive space’ (II) that adumbrated over the course of the previous two chapters. It demonstrated that IAC discourse is a very powerful attempt for a substantive political intervention into a wide range of target countries, mainly in the Global South, to restructure their societies through instruments that are defined in important ways by the findings of rational choice inspired research on corruption.

What is left to be answered is exactly how the instrumental claims analysed translate into concrete socio-politico-economic policy demands and policies, and how this shapes the fight against corruption and the ideal of a good, uncorrupted society that is advanced by IAC discourse. Who is supposed to incentivise whom and how, and how do the ‘instruments’ discussed above implement these concrete measures? The last chapter of this thesis will reveal how the specifications of the Universal, reform strategies and instruments play out in the construction of a Universal that follows very particular social logics.

6 Concrete socio-politico-economic claims: the nature of the uncorrupted society

Through the examination in the previous two chapters of values and aims, their specifications, and instrumental claims contained in chain AC we have come closer to an understanding of how IAC discourse advances a particular Universal. This happens through international intervention by powerful organisations in the target countries according to the specification of the uncorrupted society as one in which the ‘right’ incentives are set for self-interested, rational individuals. It is the aim of the present chapter to investigate how the specifications of the Universal, the reform strategies and the instrumental logics combine in concrete socio-politico-economic claims in chain AC of IAC discourse, thus forming a particular social logic and articulating a very particular societal ideal.¹

In doing so, the chapter will further investigate the ‘equivalisation of differential claims oriented toward the Universal’ (I), confirm the coherence of this stratagem and further specify its logics. At the same time, this allows the final confirmation of the coherent ‘antagonistic division of the discursive space’ (II), given that chain C, on the ‘other side’ of this divide, has already been distinguished and examined (see chapter 3). Together with the other stratagems that have been discerned in the discourse so far (in particular the stratagem of ‘representation’ [III] in form of the ‘fight against corruption’) this allows the chapter to confirm the interpretation of IAC discourse as a hegemonic project in the Nonhoffian sense.

However, the emphasis in this chapter is on the particular socio-politico-economic ideal of the good, uncorrupted society that is put in place and the concrete shape and social logics that this already specified Universal acquires in being advanced by the ‘instruments’ of IAC discourse. While a superficial look at the detailed measures per se might not reveal too much about the kind of society advocated, the analysis conducted in the previous chapters now helps us to trace the ways in which these measures bring about a particular societal ideal.

¹ Again, I must emphasise that the term ‘social logic’ here refers to the ways in which the *envisioned* uncorrupted society is structured and does not necessarily mean that this society is already in place somewhere.

This chapter restricts its focus to what the discourse constructs as the main constitutive areas of the uncorrupted society.² Thus, the present analysis of IAC measures will concentrate on the (re)organisation of the public sphere or the ‘state’, consisting of the public sector and the realm of politics, and the (re)organisation of the private sphere, comprising economic actors and civil society actors more generally, in that order. These categories are internal to the discourse i.e. my analysis follows this division because the discourse itself constructs these two spheres and their subcategories as important societal realms. Having drawn out the incentives logic as the ruling principle for social relations in general, in chapter 4 we will see that the division into these spheres arises not so much from the articulation of different organising principles but from the different weighting of incentives and from articulations of different subject positions with different incentivising tasks in each sphere.

In the course of this analysis, the Universal that IAC discourse works towards shows itself more and more clearly in the net of claims, allowing for a comprehensive interpretation of the political nature of IAC discourse against the background of the previous chapters. The social logics structuring the Universal, as we will see, turn out to be reflective of many of the characteristics of advanced liberal regimes as distinguished by Dean.³ It thus proves helpful to draw on his work and, to a more limited extent, also on that of Hindess for a further interpretation of these logics.⁴

The conclusion at the end of the chapter will summarise the findings on the social logics but also refer them back to the findings of the previous chapters, in particular about the aims of the fight against corruption and the claims of context-sensitivity. It will also discuss their implications with regards to other societal systems that are being negated by this Universal and summarise their implications regarding the political nature of IAC discourse.

² It should however be noted that IAC discourse also deals with the concrete organisation of discursive areas such as the environment, natural resources, human rights, gender, health, water and education and so on.

³ Dean (2010). While Dean’s work forms part of the so-called ‘governmentality literature’, which works with or on an analytical approach for drawing out governing mechanisms broadly based on the work of Foucault, this thesis uses Dean’s work (and to a more limited extent also Hindess’ work) not so much as a methodological tool but rather as a theoretical interpretation of contemporary forms of neoliberalism.

⁴ Hindess (2004)

Sphere of the state / public sphere

Taxing as the basis for a functioning state

Let us first examine the ideal form of the state envisioned in IAC discourse.

It builds to a considerable extent on articulations of the damaging consequences of corruption on taxation. The preoccupation with taxing in IAC discourse relies on its conception of the public-private divide which entails a state that relies on its endowment with funds from the individuals it is supposed to protect; these funds are to be raised via customs and the taxing of individuals who otherwise pursue their economic self-interests in the private sphere. Reflecting liberal contract theories, this divide is based on the assumption that the existence and survival of the state is in the self-interest of these individuals and that therefore they agree to cede their right to a certain limited part of their income.

Yet if not properly incentivised, individual self-interests cause problems according to IAC discourse. As we have seen in chapter 3, inefficiencies in the public sector and bad functioning of the economy, both due to corruption, are the biggest hindrances for the state's task to protect and provide for its citizens. Corruption "reduces the amount of public money in state coffers by decreasing state revenue (through losses in tax and customs income)",⁵ thus "limiting the state's capability of investing in education, health, infrastructure, harming the country's social and economic development"⁶ and ultimately leading to the worst of consequences.

IAC discourse envisions two important sets of measures to be taken by the state in order to deal with these problems. First, it needs to keep taxing and the mechanisms of public service provision effective and efficient by acting upon its own constitution. Second, it must regulate the economy, namely in ways which guarantee that the "tax base"⁷ is broad and strong, guaranteeing the generation of economic growth in the private sector. In line with the incentives logic and the logic of institutional reform drawn out in the past chapter, both tasks are to be achieved through the setting of the right institutional incentives in the public and the private sector.

⁵ WB (d); see also WB (f); see also Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 1)

⁶ WB (f)

⁷ WB (d)

A state structured according to incentives

IAC measures advocated for and applied in order to improve the organisation of the public sector so as to ensure the “reasonably efficient and effective provision of public services”⁸ are designed in a way as to minimise discretion, eliminate monopoly and increase transparency and accountability.⁹ As the UNDP argues, what is most important to institute in the public sector are “institutions/legal/policy frameworks to promote and enforce accountability, transparency and integrity in public service”.¹⁰ Similarly TI advocates a “strategic coordination of legislative and institutional anti-corruption measures”¹¹ for the public sector. Thus, public sector reform is a combination of rule-making, legislation and enforcement in addition to the insertion of competition and control into social interactions. Yet the WB sees public sector reform as “a combination of voice and participation,¹² competition, and internal rules and restraints”¹³ and thus already points to the element of civil society participation that also comes to play an important role in the incentivisation framework, as we will see in the second half of this chapter.

Legal reform and the minimising of discretion

As demonstrated in chapter 4, IAC discourse advocates the minimisation of discretion and clear rules of the game in order to reduce opportunities for corruption and at the same time institute the right incentives.

The “comprehensive anti-corruption legislation”¹⁴ which is demanded by IAC discourse thus consists of rules that introduce “basic principles for decision-making in public administration (objectivity, impartiality, equality, obligation to justification, right to appeal)”.¹⁵ Objectivity and impartiality can only be achieved through proper incentivisation (for example through the obligation to justification and the right to

⁸ WB (2007: 3)

⁹ UNDP (2008c: 21)

¹⁰ UNDP (2008a: 14)

¹¹ TI (2009e)

¹² This aspect will be discussed further on in the chapter.

¹³ WB (2007: 38)

¹⁴ TI (2000: xx-xxi)

¹⁵ UNDP (2004: 27)

appeal) and lack of opportunity for corruption. With regards to the minimisation IAC documents recommend, for example, codes of conduct that “tell parliamentarians in clear terms what is expected of them and what constitutes a violation of public ethics”.¹⁶ But also bureaucratic discretion needs to be minimised, despite the recognition that such discretion “may continue to be necessary for effective administration”.¹⁷ The recommendations include for example, so-called ‘bright-line rules’; such rules are “easy to understand and apply but come at the cost of reduced flexibility”.¹⁸ Examples include recommendations to drop “extensive nonsalary benefits that provide broad scope for discretion and corruption”¹⁹ or to “minimis[e] face-to-face contact by introducing random elements (such as staff rotation) so that users cannot predict the officials with whom they may be dealing”.²⁰ The introduction of e-procurement²¹ reflects a similar direction. Apart from this, IAC discourse suggests lobbying regulations,²² regulations about gifts and hospitality, conflict of interest laws and regulations,²³ political finance regulations²⁴, legal restrictions on post-public employment in the private sector,²⁵ and legislation against international bribery and for the repatriation (or recovery) of stolen assets and the co-operation of the respective countries.²⁶ But also economic liberalisation can help to reduce the discretionary power of politicians and bureaucrats²⁷ – namely by taking away their decision-making powers and transferring them to the market.

Thus, all sorts of acts in the public sector and the realm of politics need to be illegalised in order to be able to deal properly with human nature; flexibility and personal assistance in dealing with the cases of citizens as well as non-monetary benefits, in turn, are aspects that need to be compromised on.

¹⁶ TI (f); see also See e.g. TI (y); TI (2009j: 11)

¹⁷ TI (2000: xix)

¹⁸ “Examples include a ban on hiring of relatives or friends regardless of qualification; a ban on receiving any gift in excess of a small set value or a mandatory declaration of assets” (WB g); see also WB (2001)

¹⁹ WB (n)

²⁰ TI (2000: xxiii)

²¹ WB (2007: 42)

²² TI (c)

²³ TI (y); WB official 1; UNDP (2008c: 31)

²⁴ TI (b)

²⁵ TI (2000: xxii-xxiv); TI (a); see for example TI (2010b) for TI’s work on the ‘revolving door’ between business and politics

²⁶ TI (d); OECD (1997); United Nations (2005); TI (2009h: 4); UNODC (2007); WB (v); WB official 1; see also WB (2007: vi); UNDP (2008a: 9, 14) for more general calls for legal reform

²⁷ WB (i)

Capacity building

These measures need to be accompanied by capacity building so as to enable public officials to actually understand these new and concise rules and to act accordingly. The WB argues that “[i]mproving governance requires interventions to strengthen capacity”.²⁸ For example, this consists in the building of “skills and organizational capabilities”²⁹ of public officials in areas such as procurement, so as to enable them to “effectively provide public goods.”³⁰ For this purpose, the Democratic Governance group in the UNDP cooperates with the UNDP Capacity Development Group in the area of “Procurement capacity development related to service delivery and public private partnership” in order to provide such capacity building to respective state institutions in target countries.³¹ Also “the capacity of accountability institutions to monitor the actions, decisions, and private interests of public officials” is particularly important³² and a target for reform in IAC discourse, which already points to the next point, the setting of the right incentives. Capacity building within civil society is also advocated, but this point will be discussed later in the chapter.

Control - negative incentives

While legal reform measures have the longest standing in IAC interventions, the embedding of people especially in the public sector in “skilfully designed”³³ institutions which fulfil control and incentivising tasks has become a major focus of IAC efforts, in addition to civil society reforms. In line with the nodal points distinguished in chapter 4, skilful institutional design means that these institutions need to make as much information regarding as many activities in the public sector available as possible to provide for transparency,³⁴ they need to feature control and sanction mechanisms to guarantee accountability, and they need to feature positive, competition-related incentives.

²⁸ WB (2007: 40)

²⁹ WB (2007: 18)

³⁰ WB (2007: 40); see also WB (2007: iv, 18, 20)

³¹ UNDP (2008a: 12)

³² WB (m)

³³ WB (2007: 42)

³⁴ As we will see further on in the chapter, transparency is even more important for another and rather recent form of external control articulated by IAC discourse, namely civil society control.

Transparency

In the uncorrupted society, the state in general must become “more transparent”³⁵ and make “most official information accessible to the public” and to the press.³⁶ According to the WB, transparency is a “key cross-cutting priority that has increasingly been emphasized in Bank work over the past decade”.³⁷ IAC measures for the public sector include; regulations to make campaign financing,³⁸ public policymaking and service provision³⁹ and public budgets, aid flows⁴⁰ and elections⁴¹ more transparent; freedom of (or right to) information laws;⁴² measures for financial transparency i.e. transparency of “the intended and actual use of the resources or of the designated office”;⁴³ publicly monitorable systems of public procurement,⁴⁴ measures for “access to state records and reports, and the state’s active dissemination of information on its operations and performance including through e-government”;⁴⁵ in addition to regulations regarding income and asset disclosure of public officials⁴⁶ in which the WB is “helping countries to establish programs to require senior officials to disclose either to the anticorruption agency or to the public generally their income and assets so that people can see whether they’re in conflict of interest or whether they’re getting wealthy in suspicious ways”.⁴⁷ Similarly, TI demands that high-level government officials, for example, “disclose on a public website their financial and property holdings, as well as positions they hold in associations and businesses, any paid professional activities and their investments in companies”.⁴⁸ The UNDP stresses that transparency measures should not only include making “processes, institutions and

³⁵ WB (2007: 17)

³⁶ TI (2000: xxii-xxiv), see also UNDP (2008a: 9); UNDP (2008b: 10, 12); WB (2007: v, 1, 6); UNDP (2008b: 37); UNDP (2008c: 26)

³⁷ WB (2007: 18)

³⁸ TI (b)

³⁹ WB (2007: 18)

⁴⁰ TI (y)

⁴¹ UNDP (2008b: 37)

⁴² WB official 1; WB (2007: 42)

⁴³ UNDP (2008b: 37)

⁴⁴ TI (2000)

⁴⁵ WB (2007: 18)

⁴⁶ WB (2007: v, 18, 42)

⁴⁷ WB official 1

⁴⁸ TI (2009j: 44)

information (...) directly accessible to those concerned”, but also providing “enough information (...) to understand and monitor them”.⁴⁹

Yet, as we know, transparency alone is not enough. It is simply the precondition for control in a system that relies heavily on the institution of actual oversight activities and mechanisms to ensure accountability in self-interested individuals.

Oversight

According to IAC discourse, globally and nationally, institutions of oversight are necessary to ensure lower levels of corruption by actually monitoring all the transparent information⁵⁰ such as the “assets, incomes, and liabilities of officials with decision-making powers”.⁵¹ For example, the WB reports that the institution of monitoring public financial management systems in HIPC countries has been “a powerful spur to improving these systems in at least some countries”.⁵² Oversight mechanisms can and should be instituted within institutions but also externally to them, thus instituting “internal and external checks and balances”.⁵³

Self-monitoring

The work on accountable institutions forms part of the UNDP’s focus on the ‘supply side’ of governance,⁵⁴ meaning on the actors and institutions that are supposed to work for the public good; on the other side it envisions the ‘demand side’ of governance, which consists of civil society or businesses, the receivers of the services of the state. Internal mechanisms for administrative accountability tackle the ‘supply side’ of governance and mean putting “critical systems of control internal to the government”⁵⁵ in place; they for example include internal mechanisms for “oversight over

⁴⁹ UNDP (2008b: 37)

⁵⁰ (CPI PR 2009)

⁵¹ TI (2000: xxii-xxiv); UNDP (2008b: 12)

⁵² WB (2007: 42)

⁵³ Kaufmann/Gray (1998: 4); see also UNDP (2008b: 37)

⁵⁴ UNDP (2008c: 29); see also UNDP official 1

⁵⁵ UNDP (2008b: 37)

the use of budgetary resources”⁵⁶ and for the “speedy and effective review of contentious decisions”. Supervision of staff by their superiors is to be increased and made more effective through surprise checks by superiors and increased responsibility for their inferiors’ actions.⁵⁷

One might think that measures that focus on hierarchisation and control are not exactly suited to the task of generating co-operation and trust in a working environment. Indeed, Power has argued in reference to audit measures more generally that, by presupposing a general lack of trust and risk of abuse of trust in institutions, “they themselves will contribute to, produce and intensify” that mistrust.⁵⁸ Yet in a society already full of self-interested individuals, as IAC discourse articulates it, increasing oversight is the only way to enhance trust.⁵⁹

External monitoring

Like the internal mechanisms of control, external mechanisms are also part of what TI calls ‘horizontal accountability’, it “subjects public officials to restraint and oversight, or ‘checks and balances’ by other government agencies (i.e. courts, ombudsman, auditing agencies, central banks) that can call into question, and eventually punish, an official for improper conduct”.⁶⁰ Among such external oversight institutions that are recommended to be strengthened or set up in the course of anticorruption reform in order to contribute to transparency, accountability and integrity are: Financial Audit Departments, independent watchdog/investigative agencies, special anticorruption institutions, supreme audit institutions,⁶¹ parliamentary oversight committees, electoral management boards, human rights commissions,⁶² ombudsman institutions, elections commissions, public accounts committees, the judiciary⁶³ and law enforcement agencies, parties, elections, and independent regulatory agen-

⁵⁶ WB (2007: 19)

⁵⁷ TI (2000: xxii-xxiv); see also UNDP (2008b: 12)

⁵⁸ Power (1994), cited in Dean (2010:229)

⁵⁹ See e.g. TI (y)

⁶⁰ TI (2009j: 2)

⁶¹ WB (2007: 42); UNDP (2004: 15)

⁶² UNDP (2004: 15)

⁶³ WB (2007: 42); TI (2000: xxii-xxiv); UNDP (2008b: 12)

cies.⁶⁴ Apart from this, “the proper functioning of checks and balance”⁶⁵ or the “balance of powers”⁶⁶ between state institutions is an important mechanism in order to curb corruption.⁶⁷ According to the incentives logic, setting self-interested and thus equally corruptible actors in different institutions in relations of mutual oversight places them in competition with each other. In the pursuit of their own professional interests they will then hold the respective others accountable while at the same time being held accountable themselves.

The WB and the UNDP particularly emphasise their experience and successes in the building of such institutions and also stress that this includes not just putting them in place but also “building the capacity of formal oversight institutions”.⁶⁸ For example, such “Capacity building of accountability, transparency and integrity (ATI) bodies and national integrity institutions”⁶⁹ is a major focus of the anticorruption work of the UNDP’s Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States of the former Soviet Union (CIS).⁷⁰ Next to the establishment of a “Forum for Anti-Corruption Agencies” and an “Anti-Corruption Practitioners Network (ACPN)”, the office in Bratislava provides “knowledge sharing and capacity development services to anticorruption agencies and practitioners”; for example, these services have taken the form of “the development of a Methodology for Assessing the Capacities of Anti-Corruption Agencies (ACAs) to perform preventive functions; the administration of capacity assessments of ACAs; guidance and advice to COs [country offices] on programming in support of ACAs; and the organization of regional specialized trainings for the ACAs and CO staff”.⁷¹ In these efforts, the UNDP co-operates with UNODC, the OECD, regional initiatives like RAI (Western Balkans), and the Oslo Governance Centre.⁷²

⁶⁴ TI (y); TI (e); TI (2000); UNDP (2008b); UNDP (2008a: 9); WB (2007: 17, 18, 10)

⁶⁵ UNDP (2008b: 37)

⁶⁶ UNDP (2008c: 21)

⁶⁷ WB (2007: 42)

⁶⁸ WB (2007: 6); see also UNDP (2004: 15)

⁶⁹ UNDP (2004: 15)

⁷⁰ For an overview see UNDP (c)

⁷¹ UNDP (d: 2)

⁷² UNDP (d: 3)

External control is also exerted by civil society, for example in so-called integrity pacts and other mechanisms instituted by IAC actors; this will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Competition within public sector and in public-private contracts

As the analysis of specifications of the uncorrupted society has shown, negative incentives set through transparency and oversight are not enough to prevent self-interested actors from becoming corrupt. The market principle ‘competition’ must be introduced into the public realm in order to eliminate monopoly powers (and thus the risk of corruption), encourage adherence to the rules and increase efficiency.⁷³ Such competition for integrity among “peers” in the public sector needs to be “managed well”, but if done so, it can be “healthy”.⁷⁴ For example, the respective institutional engineering in the public sector consists of providing “rival sources of supply” of public services and creating “overlapping jurisdictions”.⁷⁵ These measures do away with monopoly and are aimed at instituting mutual control and increasing the risk of detection for self-interested rational public officials but are also aimed at generating competition among officials with similar responsibilities for doing a better job than the others.

Meritocracy

The incentives logic however tells us that self-interested individuals in the public sector will only be willing to compete if they can be sure that their efforts will actually lead to respective outcomes in the form of monetary rewards. In the private sector, where economic efforts are expected to directly yield fruits in the form of profits for the best competitors, this is assumed to be working automatically. Yet in the realm of politics and the public sector it requires the establishment of meritocratic structures⁷⁶ for the incentive mechanisms to work – whoever does a better job than

⁷³ See e.g. WB (2007: 17) on the need for “competitive pressures”

⁷⁴ UNDP (2008a: 19)

⁷⁵ TI (2000: xxii)

⁷⁶ TI (2000); UNDP (2008c); WB (2007); UNDP (2008a); WB (g); UNDP (2004: 20)

others in playing by the rules of the game should get more money and power than others, just as in the market.

Of course, even following the incentives logic one could argue that the more public officials stick to the rules and work for the public interest, the more they will benefit themselves since their individual interest is part of the public interest. Yet, according to the model of human nature on which IAC discourse bases its policy recommendations, people seem to be rather short-sighted with regards to their interests and lack that kind of long-term vision. Much like actors in the private realm, public officials need immediate and direct rewards for their efforts to outstrip their peers; otherwise they will lack motivation to do their job well. Given these incurable egoistic and short-sighted competitive inclinations, introducing market principles into the public sector is articulated as a good way to get people working for the public interest.

While paying “a living wage to civil servants and politicians” is important – since otherwise “an honest career in government” would not be a “reasonable choice for qualified people”⁷⁷ – it is insufficient in order to establish a good, corruption-free public administration and to “reform public servants’ behaviour” towards less corruption.⁷⁸

As IAC documents tell us, wages also need to be competitive and meritocratic. A good, “meritoric civil service with monetized, adequate pay” features meritocratic systems for “appointment, promotion and performance evaluation”⁷⁹ – something that is also stipulated in UNCAC.⁸⁰

It also ensures “that salaries of civil servants and political leaders adequately reflect the responsibilities of their posts”⁸¹ as well as their skills.⁸² Salaries in the public sector must be “as comparable as possible with those in the private sector” in order to enable an honest career in the public sector.⁸³ Adequate pay is thus not a matter of social justice but of preventing corruption. However, the WB adds that salary struc-

⁷⁷ TI (2000: xxii-xxiii)

⁷⁸ WB (2007: 49)

⁷⁹ WB (n); see also WB (2007: 32); TI (2000: xxii-xxiv)

⁸⁰ UNDP (2008a: 9); UNDP (2008c: 8)

⁸¹ TI (2000: xxi)

⁸² WB (n)

⁸³ TI (2000: xxi)

tures need not only be competitive, but *progressively* competitive,⁸⁴ meaning that the higher the “skill requirements and levels of responsibility”, the higher remuneration should be in comparison with lower posts.⁸⁵ The logic here is that inveterately self-interested public officials who already hold a lot of power will only abstain from abusing this power if they see the possibility to gain considerably more money than most of their colleagues by sticking to the rules. Apparently the problem mentioned by Lord Acton that ‘power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely’ is to be solved by IAC discourse through increasing competition even more than power is being increased.

The WB argues that such incentive-based “meritocratic human resource management practices” should come as a “package to reform public servants’ behaviour” in target countries.⁸⁶ Presenting them as scientifically proven “key human resource management determinants of lower bureaucratic corruption”, the implementation of such measures is not so much articulated as a deeply political (re-)organisation of social structures, but rather as a merely technical and politically neutral adjustment to technically designed institutional systems.

IAC discourse advocates meritocracy not only for the public sector but also international aid relations should be managed accordingly; while the WB is eager to stress that ‘the poor’ should not be punished twice (first by the corruption in their own countries and second by the lack of aid), overall it holds that “less aid should be given to countries with high levels of corruption”. In turn, “countries with good governance, where aid is more effective” should be given more aid as a “reward”.⁸⁷ This reflects Klitgaardian visions of an ‘international anticorruption contest’ for aid by developing countries in order to incentivise them away from corruption.⁸⁸

But IAC discourse also advances the institution of competition in the public sphere in other ways. Decentralisation, i.e. the “shifting [of] resources and accountability

⁸⁴ WB (2007: 49)

⁸⁵ The WB talks here about “careful, multivariate statistical analysis” (however without citing any literature) which has shown that competitiveness of salaries is statistically significant with bribe-taking, while average salaries are not (WB 2007: 49).

⁸⁶ WB (2007: 49)

⁸⁷ WB (g)

⁸⁸ Klitgaard (1998)

downwards to local governments and their constituents”,⁸⁹ can also be included in this incentives category. The logic behind it is not so much that power-holders or decision-makers are moved closer to those whose interests they are supposed to serve (rather this would have to be judged as dangerous), but that power is distributed downwards because this will reduce monopoly, increase competition and thus remove opportunities for corruption. In addition, it puts the diverse power-holders into a position of (at least potential) mutual control. In line with the rational actor logic, if people can, they will monitor others closely and ‘ring the alarm’ if they feel that their interests are being hurt or that others are violating the rules of competition. Overall, such measures are to create interdependence structures that are similar to those of the markets.

Similarly, also the relations between the public and the private sector require the insertion of competition. Procurement needs to be “open, genuinely competitive and transparent”,⁹⁰ ensuring that contracts are awarded only through “competitive tendering”.⁹¹ Inserting competition into the public sector can even mean the privatization of government services,⁹² thus handing public services over to the regime of the market in order to make them more efficient.

In the realm of politics, “electoral competitiveness” is demanded as a determining factor for the right external incentives in the “political structure”.⁹³ While political competition can be regarded as providing positive incentives that encourages politicians to adhere to the rules, elections also embody a constraining element. The ideal of an electoral democracy as articulated in IAC discourse provides people with “a regular, open method for sanctioning or rewarding those who hold positions of public trust”.⁹⁴ This works best through broad-based political parties that expose each others’ corrupt behaviour, “influence voters’ decisions considerably” and thus func-

⁸⁹ WB (2007: 42)

⁹⁰ TI (2000: xxii-xxiv); see also WB (n)

⁹¹ WB (e)

⁹² TI (2000: xxii)

⁹³ UNDP (2008c: 21); see also WB (m)

⁹⁴ UNDP (2008b: 37); see also WB (m)

tion as an “effective deterrent to corrupt behaviour” by politicians⁹⁵ – which is why IAC measures work to enhance party competition.⁹⁶

Given that according to IAC discourse people are ‘naturally’ corrupt anyway and unable to act more co-operatively or show solidarity out of reasons other than self-interest, the further encouragement of these interests through enhancing competition is not regarded as problematic. The task is instead to manage these self-interests and the related corruption risks well by setting the *right* incentives.

Integrity measures – ethics programmes

As discussed in chapter 4, integrity is conceived mainly as the compliance of self-interested individuals with the rules, and is a result of the successful institution of the ‘right’ incentives. What an interviewee called the “ethical foundation” necessary for the public and private sectors was conceived in terms of “an incentive element” for motivating people “to be performing better to their constituency, to your customers, to your citizens’”.⁹⁷ The measures advocated by IAC discourse for improving ethics and integrity (which are not particularly numerous) are designed to support the institutional incentive structures discussed above. They consist mainly of transparency and oversight measures but also of training for risk-avoidance and better rule-observance as well as punishments in the case of non-observance. This forms a mixture of enforcement elements and responsabilisation practices, both of which reinforce the incentive-based conceptions of ethics and integrity as discussed in chapter 4.

The required “firm ethical basis for public administration” is to be achieved through the promotion and ‘enforcement’⁹⁸ of “ethics programmes”;⁹⁹ through “training programmes to create positive behavioural change of civil servants”;¹⁰⁰ the promotion

⁹⁵ WB (m)

⁹⁶ WB (2007: 40, 47)

⁹⁷ TI-S official 2

⁹⁸ UNDP (2008a: 2)

⁹⁹ TI (2000: xxii-xxiv)

¹⁰⁰ UNDP (2004: 7); see also WB official 2 who mentioned “courses about ethics”

of “civil service standards and incentives, ethics codes,”¹⁰¹ capacity building,¹⁰² and conflict of interest regulations.¹⁰³ In line with the incentives logic, such measures need to be combined with proper control elements. According to TI, tools for integrity enhancement, “for instance codes of conduct, need to be enforced and well publicised” if they are to “improve the accountability of Members of Parliament (MPs) to parliament and to the general public”.¹⁰⁴ Similar enforcement of the integrity of administrative public officials can happen through measures such as “integrity testing”.¹⁰⁵

The UNDP declares that public sector managers at all levels need to adhere to “Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Transparency, Honesty and Leadership excellence through leading by example”; in this regard it points to UNPAN, the UN Public administration programme, which brings these things back to the incentives logic. It suggests “putting into place an “ethics infrastructure” that not only provides guidance for good conduct but also administratively and legally punishes misconduct”, for example through “access to information that promotes transparency and accountability, and oversight by independent institutions and the public at large”.¹⁰⁶ In a similar line, the WB aims to enhance “ethical behavior by government, private sector, and civil society actors” by scaling up “its work with interested governments to strengthen transparency in public policymaking and service provision”.¹⁰⁷ Ultimately, integrity is a stability factor in the uncorrupted society. If public officials do not act with integrity, this can actually lead “to cynicism and apathy on the part of citizens. At worst, it leads to a questioning of the entire political system”. Thus, it is “crucial (...) that elected members of government act, and are seen to act, in an ethical manner”,¹⁰⁸ making the visibility of ‘integrity’ clearly more important than people’s internal values. Citizens’ trust in the government, which IAC discourse values very highly for a good society, comes about exclusively through checking upon the visible actions of public officials.

¹⁰¹ UNDP (2004: 19)

¹⁰² UNDP (2008a: 2)

¹⁰³ TI (f)

¹⁰⁴ TI (f)

¹⁰⁵ TI (2000: v)

¹⁰⁶ UNPAN

¹⁰⁷ WB (2007: 18)

¹⁰⁸ TI (f)

In the uncorrupted society, ethics and integrity in the public sector are an outcome of successful efforts to “make corruption a ‘high risk’ and ‘low return’ undertaking”.¹⁰⁹ They are not the outcome of public or private deliberation and individual or social norm formation but rather of external incentives to individual self-interest. While these incentives for ‘integrity’ are mainly set by institutional transparency and accountability measures, there is also an element of cultural responsabilisation at work, which will be further discussed below; for example in ethics courses and trainings which induce public servants of the responsibility to be informed about the rules (‘ethics’), the controls and the punishments and so render them responsible for managing their own corruption risk. This element is enhanced by civil society action which includes “putting values upfront in (...) the demand of accountability (...) from the authorities”.¹¹⁰

Quite aside from practical problems such as the impossibility of full transparency and complete control, such reforms can obviously have a heavy impact on the social relations of the actors involved. The building of values like mutual trust, willingness to work and care for others, equality, solidarity with fellow citizens, good character, civic virtue, altruism, truthfulness to ones convictions, independence of judgment, convictions of social justice, love for your neighbour and so on does not play a role in the organisation of the public sector; at least not in a form that is not mediated by self-interest and thus presupposes the re-articulation of these concepts according to the incentives logic. Rather, for the sake of corruption eradication, effectiveness and efficiency the public sector is to be dominated by hierarchy, constant control, competition, outrivaling, wage inequalities, and everyone’s individual self-interest.

This introduction of market principles and other incentives into the state is in line with contemporary neoliberal politico-economic ideals according to which “the task of national government is less to govern social and economic processes external to itself and more to secure the institutions and mechanisms of social and economic government themselves”.¹¹¹ As Dean notes, this entails ensuring that such mechanisms “take a form which is consistent with the objectives of government and which

¹⁰⁹ TI (2000: vii)

¹¹⁰ TI-S official 1

¹¹¹ Dean (2010: 201)

promotes individual and institutional conduct that is consistent with those objectives”¹¹² which Dean calls ‘reflexive government’.¹¹³ This is clearly the case insofar as transparency, accountability and integrity are advocated (both through institutional as well as cultural-behavioural reform) as ultimate governing principles for the whole of society including the state apparatus itself.¹¹⁴

A state that effectively and efficiently provides basic public services

This restructuring of the state according to incentives is supposed to facilitate a major task that the state needs to fulfil, next to the safeguarding of the rule of law, in the realisation of the Universal: the provision of public services. Although the provision of state services does not directly incentivise rational individuals, it is in line with the overall logic of ruling people via their self-interest in order to ensure the stable pursuit of wealth; by providing them with particular services it ensures the conditions under which people can pursue their interests in the first place.

While this task is constructed as dangerously hindered by corruption, it is to be facilitated mainly by the restructuring of state institutions according to the ‘right’ incentives discussed above.

As we have already seen in the analysis of chain C, IAC discourse is particularly concerned about the damaging effect of corruption on the capacity of the state to provide services to its citizens but particularly ‘the poor’, who are “more dependent upon public services than the rich. The poor simply cannot afford using private hospitals or private schools”.¹¹⁵ IAC discourse takes a strong stance that the effective and efficient provision of public services needs to be ensured for the good, uncorrupted society to be realised, and that corruption in service provision should not force poor people to pay more for state services of lower quality.¹¹⁶

Yet with regards to the extent of social services that the state needs to provide in IAC discourse, it is striking that mainly ‘basic’ services are demanded which consist in

¹¹² Dean (2010: 201)

¹¹³ See particularly Dean (2010: 205-227)

¹¹⁴ Dean (2010: 201)

¹¹⁵ WB (d)

¹¹⁶ TI (o); TI (p); UNDP (2008b: 24); WB (c); WB (2007: 4, 20)

satisfying ‘basic needs’. Governments are called to “deliver basic social services”,¹¹⁷ run programmes related to the poor’s “basic needs” like sanitation, education, healthcare and water,¹¹⁸ create the respective infrastructures such as power supply, schools and roads¹¹⁹ and secure the poor’s access to those “basic goods and services – many of which may be ‘free’ by law”.¹²⁰ IAC discourse clearly aims at the provision of limited social services covering ‘basic needs’ rather than at a comprehensive redistribution of wealth within societies, leaving the uncorrupted society far from an equality of opportunities, not to mention the achievement of equality of outcomes.¹²¹ The economic and consequently also social inequalities that the competitive economy must create (as we will see in the next section) are to be balanced only very sparsely with redistribution measures for social service provision. The acceptance of economic and social inequalities by IAC discourse is also demonstrated by the fact that the unequal dependence on public services by poor and rich people in a society is not regarded as a problem but rather as a simple fact.¹²²

Limited state services can be justified by the argument that the high redistribution that more comprehensive state services would entail runs the risk of depriving competing self-interested actors in the market of their earnings to such an extent that will render them unproductive and aggressive. Yet, we must note that the liberal rational actor logic does not necessarily have to lead to such minimal social services. Despite great differences, contemporary neoliberal regimes, which IAC discourse seems otherwise reflective of, feature for the most part social systems that exceed the conceptions of public service provision articulated in IAC discourse – in part very much so – while still being eager to remain below the Rawlsian equilibrium line above which redistribution is expected to seriously distort the productivity of economic actors.

Hindess’ intervention into the analysis of liberalism and his case for an understanding of liberalism as both a political theory and a concrete programme of government, not only in domestic but also international contexts, may be enlightening with re-

¹¹⁷ UNDP (2008c: 19, 20); see also TI (2009f); WB (2007: 67); TI (2008b); Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 1); UNDP (2004: 11)

¹¹⁸ TI (k); see also UNDP (2008a: 6); UNDP (2008c: 8); TI (2009f); WB (2007: 67); TI (2008b)

¹¹⁹ TI (o)

¹²⁰ TI (2008b: 3); TI (k)

¹²¹ See also WB official 5

¹²² See e.g. WB (d)

gards to the limited conception of public service provision in IAC discourse.¹²³ The first of two important points he makes is that liberalism is not just about governing via freedom, but has always been linked to concrete governmental decisions in which liberals distinguished between areas where governing autonomous individuals via freedom (according to the logic of incentives) made sense and others where it did not; the second point is that liberalism has conceived and continues to conceive non-Western people as less able to be governed (and consequently also to govern) via freedom (or rational self-interest). With regards to post-colonial international liberal rule Hindess observes that “where liberal theory once openly acknowledged that the greater part of humanity was not yet able to cope with the demands of self-government”, the focus of contemporary liberal governmental projects of improvement now lies on the “less obviously offensive problem of dealing with troublesome structural factors: transforming cultures and values, creating infrastructures, promoting civil society, removing political obstacles to development, combating corruption, etc”.¹²⁴ This shift towards “more politically congenial discourses” entails what Hindess calls the “Western version of liberalism’s civilising mission [that] now has to treat those who it sees as most in need of improvement as if they were in fact autonomous agents”, insisting that “given suitably conducive external conditions, we are all of us capable of autonomous conduct”.¹²⁵

The analysis of chain C of IAC discourse has shown that while the discourse insists that all people are equally rational and prone to corruption, at the same time it indeed articulates developing countries as more prone to corruption and less able to deal with human nature. Western liberal rule has advanced from Benthamian conceptions of fairness towards neoliberal regimes that provide more than just basic poverty relief and that are assumed to be able to handle and deal with the concomitant risks to efficiency and market functioning by setting the right incentives for their rational citizens; yet this cannot be expected from either the governments or the citizens of developing countries.¹²⁶ Given that public service provision in IAC discourse is con-

¹²³ Hindess (2004); see also Hindess (2001)

¹²⁴ Hindess (2004: 12)

¹²⁵ Hindess (2004: 13)

¹²⁶ Rose-Ackerman’s account of corruption in African and other countries of the South is highly suggestive of this view (Rose-Ackerman 1999). See also Hindess’ account of liberal conceptions of people in developing countries as being ‘behind in history’ (Hindess 2007).

structured as the number one source of temptations for corruption, developing countries must take advice from the experts of liberal government and confine themselves to basic service provision.¹²⁷ While IAC discourse claims to reform institutions and culture in non-Western countries according to a Universal conception of human nature (as shown in chapter 4), it seems that the “patronising liberal view that the people of these domains cannot yet be trusted to govern themselves”¹²⁸ is still perpetuated in the advocacy of merely basic social service provision.¹²⁹

Patronising views are also expressed in the articulations of the basic needs of the target population. Despite the UNDP’s emphasis that policy advice of IAC organisations should be provided in a way that is “responsive to the needs of the poor”,¹³⁰ IAC discourse defines basic needs as consisting in water, sanitation, healthcare, education and housing and argues that these services should be provided by the state, thus precluding the possibility for the people concerned to determine their own basic needs and the way in which and by whom they should be provided.¹³¹

Overall, it is notable that IAC discourse is actually much more concerned with improving the ‘effectiveness’ and ‘efficiency’ of state services¹³² than with the question of how these services could be used to create equality and inclusion, which are the declared aims of the discourse (as shown in chapter 4). This focus on the functioning of state mechanisms (rather than on their social impact) can be attributed to the fact that the discourse is about corruption conceived as a distortion of these mechanisms. In turn, it is precisely this conception of corruption that makes the ideal of the uncorrupted society be more about securing these mechanisms of governing, rather than about the achievement of a comprehensive social ideal with a predetermined and final shape (such as, for example, a world in which people are equal with regards to material wealth); and to this end all it needs is a limited conception of public service provision.

¹²⁷ See also Weaver (2008: 96) who states with regards to development interventions that the basic needs approach of the 1970s demonstrated an “object gap between the two worlds”.

¹²⁸ Hindess (2004: 13)

¹²⁹ See also Harrison (2006: 17), who notes that “[f]or Africa especially, where the state has been seen as the greatest force for corruption”, there is still a concern to “reduce state power”.

¹³⁰ UNDP (2004: 14)

¹³¹ As we will see, however, local communities are called to participate and take responsibility for managing the corruption risks inherent in state service provision.

¹³² See for example TI (2009f); WB (2007: 1, 3); UNDP (2004: 3, 9, 19)

This concentration on mechanisms causes the discourse to display several characteristics that Hindess distinguishes as typical for “many late twentieth century projects of neoliberal reform, both within particular states and in the international arena”. These concern the introduction of “market and quasi-market arrangements into areas of social life which had hitherto been organised in other ways – the corporatisation and privatisation of state agencies, the promotion of competition and individual choice in health, education and other areas of what Western states once regarded as the proper sphere of social policy, the use of financial markets (and credit-rating agencies) to regulate the conduct of states, etc”.¹³³ While IAC discourse does not advocate the corporatisation of state agencies as a principal tool to improve governing mechanisms and service provision in the public sector,¹³⁴ the recently updated version of the WB’s GAC strategy however recommends “Pro-competition initiatives which foster institutionally pluralistic arrangements for service provision (via, for example, contracting-out and other arrangements for private participation, or community provision)”. It praises such initiatives for “providing users with choice, and pressuring poor performers to improve or exit”,¹³⁵ thus pointing to their beneficial effects for the enhancement of service quality through competition and the power of informed consumers. Furthermore, the UNDP suggests with reference to its technical anticorruption support in the water sectors of different countries that “[p]ro-market reforms (...) might curb corruption” and could include “privatization of service provision, subcontracting of services, public-private partnerships, and tendering of concessions, operation and water use licenses”.¹³⁶

Apart from market-like arrangements in state service provision, we have seen in an earlier section that the discourse advocates privatisations of state services and their competitive restructuring as one possible anticorruption measure next to the incentive-restructuring of state agencies. Given that “the public sector doesn’t tend to be good at producing things”,¹³⁷ it is suggested that corrupt or otherwise inefficient state-owned enterprises or public services can be privatised in order to expose them

¹³³ Hindess (2004: 14); see also Dean (2010: 201) who conceives this as a feature of ‘advanced liberal government’

¹³⁴ The question whether it does so on local levels remains to be investigated elsewhere.

¹³⁵ WB (2012: 71)

¹³⁶ UNDP (2011a: 7)

¹³⁷ WB official 2

to the market logic of (foreign) competition and thus “reduce the power of insiders”, cut down on opportunities for corruption, and make those institutions more efficient.¹³⁸ Thus, competition and efficiency, the values of the market, are deemed beneficial for the improvement of service provision in both the public and private sectors, instituting the market-like arrangements mentioned by Hindess. As Dean puts it, “[i]f the market is the embodiment of rules of conduct that guarantee freedom, then the reconfiguration of the social must take the form of markets”.¹³⁹

Associated with the aforementioned privatisations is the private sector’s “increasing role in providing essential goods and services”, which led the UNDP to call for “improved corporate governance and private sector transparency” as a “powerful tool in fighting corruption”.¹⁴⁰ The concrete claims of IAC discourse for the organisation of the private sector will be discussed in the following sections.

A state that regulates the economy

According to the logic of the public-private divide the private sphere is where individuals can freely follow their private interests (or make use of their ‘natural rights’) which in the case of the liberal conception of human nature consist of material wealth and power. In striving for these goals, they need to be restricted by the state via the ‘rule of law’ in order to prevent them from harming each other.

However, according to IAC discourse, the task of the state does not end with guarding the rule of law in the public and private spheres; it also needs to regulate economic relations in the private sphere. Given that the private sector is the space where people pursue their natural interests and given that the state, their protector, is financed through taxing economic transactions, the private sector assumes a huge importance in IAC discourse, especially for the generation of economic growth. TI even reasons that after “[g]overnment-led efforts have largely failed”, there is an expectation “in many developing countries”, that “the private sector, through the market-place, may be able to achieve that which governments have not”, namely devel-

¹³⁸ WB (2007: ii, 50); see also TI (2000: xxii)

¹³⁹ Dean (2010: 201)

¹⁴⁰ UNDP (2004: 11)

opment.¹⁴¹ However, if left alone and without the ‘right’ incentives, the private sector is unable to work properly towards these aims, is not immune to corruption¹⁴² and thus unable to serve “the best interests of all”.¹⁴³

This is why the ideal state not only functions according to the ‘right’ incentives itself and protects the rule of law; it also takes care of the proper functioning of the economy. In the context of institutional reforms in both sectors, IAC discourse articulates regulation, i.e. state intervention in the economy, as important for the creation of a good society. The WB lauds regulatory reform for being “a successful instrument for reducing opportunities for corruption”,¹⁴⁴ and TI explains that a “comprehensive regulatory framework for the private sector is a prerequisite for a transparent, honest and just society”, and that governments have a “responsibility to ensure the effective regulation of markets, protection of citizens and enforcement of laws”.¹⁴⁵ Unsurprisingly, the logic according to which economic relations are to be reformed is the incentives logic.

Enhancing competition in the private sector

While we have seen that the market principle competition is an important structuring principle for social relations in the public realm, it is even more important in the private sector and in fact is constructed as the main ruling principle here.¹⁴⁶ In a relationship of direct contrariety, corruption is articulated as undermining competition, whereas more competition is needed to eliminate corruption in the form of monopoly, collusion, bribery and cartels in the economy.¹⁴⁷ TI sees competition policy as “an essential tool to protect and promote economic activity, and to ensure and to underwrite the integrity of private sector activities”,¹⁴⁸ and the WB is convinced that a “thriving, open and competitive private sector” can even be a “strong source of sup-

¹⁴¹ TI (2000: xxvi)

¹⁴² TI (2000: xviii); TI (2009i: 1)

¹⁴³ TI (2000: 260)

¹⁴⁴ WB (2007: 41, 3)

¹⁴⁵ TI (2009i: 1)

¹⁴⁶ WB (2007: 9)

¹⁴⁷ TI (y); TI (r); WB (2007: 40)

¹⁴⁸ TI (2000: 260); the TI Source Book even dedicates a whole chapter (26) to competition policy TI (2000: 259-268)

port for better governance” and improved service delivery¹⁴⁹ – that is, if helped by the state.

The main measure to enhance competition and to decrease monopoly¹⁵⁰ is economic liberalisation.¹⁵¹ TI claims that an “open and well-regulated economy” is necessary “for the benefit of all the people in a given country”.¹⁵² Markets need to be “thriving, open and competitive”¹⁵³ because “[e]xcessive regulation” is seen to provide opportunities for corruption and inefficiencies. A market should be “ruled by the arms-length pricing of goods and services”.¹⁵⁴ Proper regulation means most of all that state intervention in the economy needs to be rather cautious, concentrating on the enhancement of competition and leaving it mainly to this market principle to make the economy work efficiently. In this spirit, the WB calls for regulatory “reforms that clarify the role of the state, reduce excessive regulatory burden, and promote competition” in order to strengthen the private sector.¹⁵⁵ Instead of creating “obstacles to business” and thus “invitations for corrupt behavior by both government officials and private sector individuals”, the state should take measures “lowering barriers to entry, requiring competitive restructuring, and clarifying ownership structures”.¹⁵⁶ It should create “[c]ompetent agencies to administer law on competition policy, anti-monopoly laws, and unfair trade practices”.¹⁵⁷ Prices and production decisions should be “systemically liberalized”¹⁵⁸ or ‘deregulated’¹⁵⁹ and state subsidies should be “eliminated or significantly reduced (...) in a uniform, transparent manner”,¹⁶⁰ thus minimising opportunities for corruption.¹⁶¹

Only this kind of restructuring of the economy provides for “opportunities to make money honestly” and thus “commensurately reduces the pressure on individuals to

¹⁴⁹ WB (2007: 9)

¹⁵⁰ Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 1); TI (2000: 260)

¹⁵¹ WB (2007: 40, 56); WB (e); WB (i); Broadman/Recanatini (2000)

¹⁵² TI (2000: 260)

¹⁵³ WB (2007: 9); WB (i)

¹⁵⁴ TI (2000: xxvi, 260)

¹⁵⁵ WB (2007: ii); see also TI (2000: 260)

¹⁵⁶ WB (i)

¹⁵⁷ WB (i); TI (2000: 260)

¹⁵⁸ Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 3); see also WB (e)

¹⁵⁹ WB (i); see also Broadman/Recanatini (2000) and WB (2007: 56)

¹⁶⁰ Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 3); see also WB (e); WB (i); WB (2007: 56)

¹⁶¹ WB (e)

seek corrupt avenues”.¹⁶² These recommendations are evidently grounded in the logic of the self-interested rational individuals, according to which economic actors will inevitably pursue their self-interest, either corruptly or honestly, depending on their institutional and legal environment; the only thing that can be done in the face of this natural self-interest is to let them pursue it in a free market with no ‘obstacles’ which could render them corrupt.

Differences between IAC organisation exist insofar as the WB sees bad and uncompetitive market structuring as due solely to too much, wrong or corrupt state intervention in the economy; consequently, it argues for the enhancement of competition *because* it is necessary *against* corruption caused by state intervention, arguing that a thriving private sector will be a supporter of good governance by the public sector. TI, on the other hand, regards “price-fixing, predatory pricing designed to drive a competitor out of business, fraudulent advertising, [and] the formation of cartels”¹⁶³ as part of what it calls ‘private sector corruption’ and thus locates the blame for corruption in the private sector itself. Yet, as we have seen, the policy measures advocated are the same: the state needs to enhance competition in the economy in order to do away with these hindrances to the Universal. While the UNDP does not give very concrete policy recommendations for private sector regulation by the state, nevertheless in more general statements it also constructs open, competitive markets as a useful mechanism against corruption. For example, it reasons that “the ability of an official to provide a private partner profitable protection in some domestic market will depend upon how open the market is to external competition from imports”.¹⁶⁴ It also cites “evidence that highly developed, long established liberal democracies, with a free and widely read press, a high share of women in government, and a history of openness to trade are perceived as less corrupt (Treisman 2007)”.¹⁶⁵ Consequently, it also recommends an “[e]ffective competition policy” as part of “[e]conomic regulation” measures against corruption.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² WB (2007: 54)

¹⁶³ TI (2000: 260)

¹⁶⁴ UNDP (2004: 3)

¹⁶⁵ UNDP (2008c: 21); see also UNDP (2004: 3); TI (2000: 260)

¹⁶⁶ UNDP (2004: 34). Also in documents not directly related to anticorruption, it states that it works to “[p]rovide policy advice to governments that wish to establish legal and regulatory frameworks for rule based and non-discriminatory markets” (UNDP (2008e)).

Thus, competition is seen as the main principle to rule economic relations between actors in the private sector, and as the best remedy against the inefficiencies, the loss of money, and the insecurity caused by corruption. Thus, in the uncorrupted society, the state needs to do away with all the hindrances to free international competition that it might have created, in order to let self-interested individuals run free. Yet while competition lies in the nature of rational actors, nonetheless they are seen as unable to uphold the mutually beneficial competition in the state of nature that is the market by themselves. In order to unfold its full beneficial potential in enhancing the productivity of self-interested individuals, competition needs to be guaranteed in the market by anchoring it in competition policy and antimonopoly law, and instituting agencies to safeguard the compliance of businesses. The regulatory role of the state, as we will see in the next section, is then restricted to facilitating the work of these agencies.

Transparency, rule of law and stability in the private sector

Negative incentives also play a role in the regulation the state needs to undertake in the private sector in order for the economy to function well and without corruption.

One claim made in this regard is that the state also needs to introduce transparency, oversight and other restrictive regulatory mechanisms into the private sector, or at least parts of it, and most particularly in the realm of finances. Through what the WB calls financial sector governance, financial markets are to be made “sound and transparent”.¹⁶⁷ The organisation demands that a financial system be free from “obscure insider lending practices and improper financial schemes”¹⁶⁸ and instead “reach out to the underserved (and not only to a few insiders)”.¹⁶⁹ This is why it helps to develop “tools for assessing and improving Bank governance and transparency practices, including financial reporting and disclosure” and co-operates with the UNDP’s ‘sister organisation’ UNODC in StAR, the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative¹⁷⁰ which supports countries in the implementation of anti-money laundering and asset restitu-

¹⁶⁷ WB (2007: 23)

¹⁶⁸ Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 1)

¹⁶⁹ WB (2007: 23)

¹⁷⁰ UNODC (2007)

tion policies.¹⁷¹ Responding to current preoccupations resulting from the financial crisis, the WB hopes that through measures such as this, financial systems can be regulated in such a way that they function as “a source of discipline on public and private agents”.¹⁷² This is despite the fact that the measures are most of all about the creation of transparency and the state is given no enforcement rights other than for the restitution of stolen assets. Moreover, the WB argues that transparency will also support “greater competition if introduced in ownership structure and operations of firms” more generally, for example in the form of requirements on “financial disclosure and arm’s-length relationships, efficient registries, and better supervision of their operations by independent regulatory bodies”.¹⁷³ Similarly, the UNDP recommends the “[p]romotion of transparency in the private water sector and performance benchmarking”.¹⁷⁴ According to the incentives logic, if they are sure their data will be made public, firms and banks will compete in order to have better records and end up being less corrupt and more efficient than they would otherwise be – even without any other form of state regulation apart from competition and transparency policy.

TI discourse is particularly strict against the secrecy in the financial sector. Especially “off-shore financial centres” which do not comply with “international standards of supervision, transparency and assistance in investigations”¹⁷⁵ should be excluded from the international financial system. It claims that “about a third of the wealth of the world’s wealthiest is held offshore” instead of being taxed by the respective state authorities.¹⁷⁶ TI demands that, in order to protect citizens from the negative consequences of market failure, states must provide “protection (through regulating the activities of financial institutions and pension funds)”.¹⁷⁷ This kind of engagement is particularly emphasised with regards to the global financial crisis. Constructing the crisis as an effect of both a “lack of transparency” and an “overemphasis on profit maximisation” with a concomitant neglect of the “centrality of ethics”,¹⁷⁸ TI stresses that “[e]very technical answer to such a crisis has to be built on

¹⁷¹ WB (2007: 23)

¹⁷² WB (2007: 23)

¹⁷³ WB (i)

¹⁷⁴ UNDP (2011a: 34)

¹⁷⁵ TI (p)

¹⁷⁶ TI (p)

¹⁷⁷ TI (2000: 261)

¹⁷⁸ TI (2009l: 2)

strong ethical principles, so that all action will be founded in transparency, accountability and integrity from the start”.¹⁷⁹

While this sounds more radical than the discourses of UNDP and the WB, TI’s critique of the “[u]nbridled support for free markets” and the false “belief that markets will curb excesses on their own”¹⁸⁰ however does not lead to the advocacy of heavy restrictions of financial markets through the state. Instead, this “moral crisis”¹⁸¹ needs to be addressed through “prudent risk management”¹⁸² including a great deal of transparency (within corporations, in markets, in rescue packages, and in international cooperation against the crisis), efficient government oversight and governmental participation of developing countries in the governance of the international financial institutions.¹⁸³ Specifically, governments’ role is to ensure that the budgets of investigative and judiciary authorities engaged in the prevention of financial crime and of “regulatory bodies of financial institutions and financial markets” are adequate; that those bodies report regularly on “complaints – including corruption cases – brought to their attention” and to “explain how they have dealt with these”; and to sentence companies in a way that ensures “corporations would be incentivised to adopt strong anticorruption systems”.

There is clearly no advocacy for a particularly strong role of the state as a response to the crisis. Rather, TI sticks to the well-known ‘rules of the game’; all the emphasis is placed on transparency measures, such as creating opportunities for whistle-blowers, publishing full compensation packages of the most highly compensated executives, adequate disclosure of funds and financial institutions registered at offshore financial centres, publication of companies’ key financial and legal data, reporting of the beneficiaries of rescue packages on their anticorruption systems, and including international NGOs into the Financial Stability Board, to mention but a few. Such IAC measures for institutional reform are reflective of the withdrawal of contemporary neoliberal states from the actual government of economic processes and the

¹⁷⁹ TI (2009I: 1)

¹⁸⁰ TI (2009I: 2)

¹⁸¹ TI (2009I: 1)

¹⁸² TI (2009I: 2)

¹⁸³ TI (2009I: 6-8)

concomitant shift of their field of activity towards the government of incentive-setting governmental mechanisms.¹⁸⁴

It fits this role that next to enhancing competition and ensuring transparency in markets and especially the financial sector, the state is also responsible for safeguarding stability and investment security in the private sector. As the WB explains, the “business environment among others is a function of the rule of law, in particular the stability of rules and regulations governing business transactions, political stability and transparency”.¹⁸⁵ Foreign direct investments count as “most beneficial” for economic growth,¹⁸⁶ but as we have seen, corruption tends to scare away foreign investors because it distorts competition and market structures, thus putting the security of their investments at risk.¹⁸⁷ In addition it creates “uncertainty in the market through discretion and continuous change of rules”.¹⁸⁸ Yet, in line with the rational actor logic, “companies are likely only to invest where the returns are extremely high and very reliable in being realised”;¹⁸⁹ this is why a “sound investment climate” is a main aim of the state’s task of “sound macroeconomic policy-making”.¹⁹⁰

Investor confidence is to be secured most of all through the safeguarding of the rule of law¹⁹¹ including (intellectual) property rights¹⁹² which creates the stability of rules and security of property that is necessary for long-term investments. In addition, transparency in the markets helps companies invest and also reassures them. And strict competition policies combined with the state’s self-structuring according to incentives reassure businesses that other companies will not win a contract due to their contacts with public officials but rather that the contest is solely concerned with economic efficiency and the quality of the offer. By applying these measures, states are to “secure investor confidence, enhance access to capital markets, promote growth and strengthen economies” as well as “to lower company costs (for capital

¹⁸⁴ Dean (2010: 198-200)

¹⁸⁵ WB (f)

¹⁸⁶ TI (p); TI (2009g)

¹⁸⁷ TI (p); TI (o); TI (p); WB (1997: 5); WB (f)

¹⁸⁸ UNDP (2008a: 8); see also Broadman/Recanatini (2000: 1); WB (e); TI (2009i: 1)

¹⁸⁹ TI (p); see also TI (2009h: 2)

¹⁹⁰ WB (2007: iv, vii, 10)

¹⁹¹ UNDP (2008a: 8); TI (o); WB (f)

¹⁹² TI (2009g); TI (2000: 260)

and production) and increase economic output”.¹⁹³ This is perfectly in line with the characteristics of national governments in the neoliberal global economy whose task it is to “reform those kinds of individual and institutional conduct that are considered likely to affect economic performance compared with that of the members of other national and even regional populations”.¹⁹⁴ Through these measures, governments not only combat corruption – they also enhance “country competitiveness”.¹⁹⁵

From this analysis of the kind of state regulation of the economy called for by IAC discourse it should be clear that the discourse envisions only limited regulation of the economy. Market facilitation is clearly emphasised over market restriction, and both are to be carried out for the sole purpose of guaranteeing the stable running of open and competitive markets. In line with the liberal tradition, the private sector remains the realm where individuals compete rather freely in order to directly satisfy their economic interests, with the only restraint being that competition is not subverted. As is particularly conspicuous with regards to TI’s suggestions for dealing with the financial crisis, state regulation here is not so much about the governing of macro-economic processes, but rather about the securing of governmental mechanisms. As Dean notes, economic security in contemporary neoliberalism becomes “more about the security of tax-raising measures, of national budgets, of systems and styles of public management, of privatization plans, and of the implementation of micro-economic reform”, the latter comprising the reform of “uncompetitive public sectors”.¹⁹⁶ Crucially, to this role of the state in the governing of mechanisms, IAC discourse adds an element of citizen participation, as will be discussed in one of the following sections.

Private sector – responsible economic actors

¹⁹³ TI (2009h: 2)

¹⁹⁴ Dean (2010: 224), drawing on Hindess (1998b)

¹⁹⁵ WB (2007: iv)

¹⁹⁶ Dean (2010: 242)

State institutions and legal regulations have been the main target of anticorruption reform by IAC organisations for quite some time before the governance of the private sector also became an object of their interest.¹⁹⁷

According to IAC discourse, this new interest has arisen partly because, as a result of the increasing privatization of public assets, there is now a “growing public expectation of accountability and probity in the corporate sector”.¹⁹⁸ Thus, apart from the responsibility of the state to regulate the market, the private sector also has a responsibility to regulate itself and manage its own corruption risks in the uncorrupted society, ensuring that the right incentives are set to themselves. This responsibility is linked to concepts like good corporate governance, corporate social responsibility (CSR), corporate citizenship and private sector integrity. While the state is also involved in good corporate governance in that it sets the legal framework for how businesses should ‘behave’ (in IAC discourse mainly through competition and transparency requirements, as we have seen), businesses contribute to good corporate governance by translating these rule of the game into more specific rules and guidelines that guide the conduct and define the roles of managers, staff and shareholders / stakeholders. However, they can also design and adopt voluntary measures that exceed the compliance with these legally binding rules and which partly go under the name of ‘corporate social responsibility’ or corporate citizenship. Overall, corporate governance measures are “necessary, beneficial and useful for all sectors and types of companies whether they are multinationals, state-owned enterprises, domestic firms, small businesses or family-owned operations”.¹⁹⁹

Corporate governance

The UNDP explains that the private sector is part of “what is called the ‘supply side’ of corruption” and that “Article 12 of UNCAC calls on State Parties to strengthen measures to prevent corruption in the private sector”;²⁰⁰ this is why the organisation

¹⁹⁷ TI (s)

¹⁹⁸ TI (i); see also TI (2000: xxvi)

¹⁹⁹ TI (2009h: 2)

²⁰⁰ UNDP (2008b: 22)

came to occupy itself more with the private sector.²⁰¹ While the WB is clearly more concerned than the UNDP with the topic of private sector integrity, TI is the most active of the three in this area, linking its engagement directly to its concept of private sector corruption.²⁰² It explains that poor corporate governance – conceived as compromising transparency, accountability and integrity in the private sector – results in abuses like corporate mismanagement and employee misconduct going unchecked, and is one of the forces to blame for the collapse of the global financial markets in 2008.²⁰³ Good corporate governance measures in turn “define clearly the rights, responsibilities and behaviours that are required of a company’s owners (the ‘principals’) and managers (the ‘agents’) for the business to operate successfully”.²⁰⁴ They are expected to “manage and reduce financial and operational risks by building the integrity, transparency and accountability of a company’s management toward different actors at varying levels within a company”. These actors comprise “board members, managers, employees and shareholders” but also stakeholders in general, who have extended their consent to companies “to operate in their communities” and who comprise also customers, suppliers, communities, government and society at large.²⁰⁵ Building integrity, transparency and accountability is therefore a form of risk management that responsible companies need to undertake and where they receive guidance from the state but also importantly from IAC organisations.

Next to being instrumental for the management of financial and operational risks, the concept of private sector integrity itself is conceived in a mechanistic way – despite statements that might lead one to think otherwise, such as those about corporate responsibility meaning that “companies (...) articulate and live up to more ethical business practices”,²⁰⁶ or declarations that “[r]esponsible business leaders believe that there is a moral imperative to support policies and governance practices that will help to alleviate world poverty”.²⁰⁷ The “practical business reasons for supporting good governance reforms”²⁰⁸ clearly have primacy in defining the conception of in-

²⁰¹ UNDP (2004: 11)

²⁰² See e.g. TI (s)

²⁰³ TI (2009h)

²⁰⁴ TI (2009h: 2)

²⁰⁵ TI (2009h: 2)

²⁰⁶ TI (i); see also WB (2007: 54)

²⁰⁷ WB (2007: 31); see also WB (2007: 23)

²⁰⁸ WB (2007: 31)

tegrity. In line with the conception of integrity as discussed in chapter 4, corporate or private sector integrity indicates compliance with a set of rules or standards (sometimes called ‘ethics’) which is defined partly by law and partly by the company’s board or other institutions in the private sector such as audit and remuneration committees.²⁰⁹ This compliance is in turn induced by different negative incentives including legal regulations, transparency and accountability measures and by positive incentives in the form of rewards.

Although TI’s definition makes it appear as if corruption would automatically result in financial risks and thus negative economic incentives to companies, we know that Western businesses are able to make huge profits from bribing foreign public officials for contracts (especially while the bribes were still tax-exempted by their governments, as was the case in the OECD before 1997). The beneficial effects of not bribing (that are expected to arise for businesses via enhanced competition and a generally more thriving economy) thus reach businesses only very indirectly and are not able to function as a positive incentive to short-sighted rational actors in business. Therefore, just as in the public sector, the ‘right’ incentives to companies need to be set by other actors (as listed in the definition above) and also consist in a mix of legal regulations, transparency, sector-internal oversight as well as, very importantly, civil society involvement. Claims for direct control by state agencies are absent.

Incentives for good corporate governance

In the last section we have already seen that what the state needs to introduce most of all into the private sector is competition and transparency, and it also needs to safeguard the rule of law. While corporate governance is not an official denotation of any legal content, the kind of law that IAC discourse advocates in this area comprises for example the provisions of UNCAC and the OECD anti-bribery convention that states should ratify in order to ‘help’ their businesses manage their corruption risks.²¹⁰ With regards to the private sector, UNCAC recommends to “disallow the

²⁰⁹ TI (2009i)

²¹⁰ See e.g. UNDP (2008b: 22), TI (i)

tax deductibility of expenses that constitute bribes”,²¹¹ prohibit the “establishment of off-the-books accounts”, promote “transparency among private entities”; it also stipulates the promotion of “codes of conduct for the correct, honourable and proper performance of the activities of business and all relevant professions and the prevention of conflicts of interest”, and ensuring “that private enterprises (...) have sufficient internal auditing controls”.²¹²

Yet in addition to achieving merely compliance with the legal regulations, responsible companies are called to do more in order to manage their corruption risk; after all, “integrity in business practices is reinforced not only by written regulations, but also by moral standards of business ethics and by responsible corporate behaviour”. However, these moral standards and behaviours are conceived perfectly mechanistically and are to be achieved through transparency and internal “training, monitoring, and enforcement activities”²¹³ which companies are to undertake under the name of ‘integrity standards’. These standards serve to implement but also go beyond legal requirements²¹⁴ and are articulated by IAC discourse as a “vital component of company efforts to reinforce the right incentives and practices”.²¹⁵ Those measures include disclosure requirements,²¹⁶ auditing standards,²¹⁷ ‘ethical policies’,²¹⁸ and “‘zero tolerance for corruption’ codes of conduct”²¹⁹ as well as “effective, verifiable internal programs of implementation and compliance”.²²⁰ They are almost exclusively concerned with minimising corruption risks (and most of all with the risk of engaging in “the specific issue of bribery, which is one of the most significant corruption-related risks facing business today”²²¹) through internal control mechanisms and increases in transparency. Some measures are also about ensuring the stability of businesses, their investments and their economic growth in general by preventing risky behaviour, for example through obligatory internal participatory mechanisms

²¹¹ This is also the most important provision of the OECD antibribery convention.

²¹² United Nations (2005) (Article 12)

²¹³ UNDP (2004: 11)

²¹⁴ See e.g. TI (2009h: 2)

²¹⁵ TI (2009h: 2)

²¹⁶ TI (2009h)

²¹⁷ TI (2009h)

²¹⁸ TI (2009h)

²¹⁹ WB (2007: 22); see also UNDP (2004: 11); UNDP (2008b: 22); UNDP (2008b: 10)

²²⁰ WB (2007: 22); see also TI (2009i: 3)

²²¹ TI (U)

such as shareholder ballots for nomination, approval and compensation of members of boards of directors.²²² Next to these more institutional reform measures, the cultural reform logic, which will be further discussed below, also demands a “supportive corporate culture” for whistle-blowing in corruption cases²²³ so that the mutual control of employees in companies can actually result in punishment of the corrupt.

In the name of advocacy and knowledge provision, TI is particularly prolific in the area of company-internal anticorruption restructuring and has produced a range of guidelines and tools that are supposed to help companies improve their “level of business integrity”,²²⁴ partly by implementing legal regulations, and partly by surpassing them. For example in 2003, the NGO published the Business Principles for Countering Bribery which according to TI have already been used “by many leading companies around the world to benchmark their own anti-bribery policies and procedures” and have also “served as a solid basis for the development of other anti-bribery codes and voluntary initiatives”.²²⁵ The UN Global Compact, “the world’s largest voluntary corporate citizenship initiative”²²⁶ recommends the TI Business Principles as a tool for implementing its 10th principle which addresses anticorruption in businesses.²²⁷ TI has also drafted a “Framework for Voluntary Independent Assurance of Corporate Anti-Bribery Programmes” which advises companies on how to prepare for independent assurance and “[m]ost importantly (...) proposes benchmarks, in the form of control objectives” to be used by entities and their assurance providers “in evaluating and assuring an entity’s anti-bribery programme”.²²⁸ Furthermore, there is “Transparency International’s Self-Evaluation Tool (TI SET)”, a checklist for companies to monitor and improve the design and effectiveness of their anti-bribery programme,²²⁹ and “RESIST (Resisting Extortions and Solicitations in International Transactions)”, which is advertised as a “training tool to help employees counter solicitation and extortion demands in the most efficient and ethical manner” and has been created in collaboration with different companies and in-

²²² TI (2009l: 6)

²²³ TI (2009i)

²²⁴ TI (2009h)

²²⁵ TI (i)

²²⁶ TI (i)

²²⁷ TI (U)

²²⁸ TI (2010c)

²²⁹ TI (i)

ternational organisations like the World Economic Forum Partnering Against Corruption Initiative (PACI) and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC).²³⁰ In addition to these tools for companies, TI also publishes TRAC, a report on the reporting of “close to 500 leading listed companies” about the “strategies, policies and management systems they have in place for combating bribery and corruption”.²³¹ Thus, these ‘tools’ are to help companies set the right incentives internally to manage their bribery risk, through transparency and mainly internal oversight measures. At the same time, TI itself operates as a provider of such incentives in that it uses the information made transparent to report on the quality of companies’ incentive-setting – which is already part of the second set of anticorruption measures that companies need to adopt.

Following the rational actor logic, such internal incentive-setting mechanisms can only work properly if they are being supervised and enforced externally; enforcement in this case can occur either by law or by the market, while the crucial preconditions are, again, transparency and consequent oversight. Therefore, more steps are necessary for responsible companies to manage their corruption risk, which consists in joining a public-private or a private sector initiative against corruption. Examples of such voluntary sector-internal control and enforcement mechanisms are the “Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), Publish What You Pay, and the regional Forest Law Enforcement and Governance regional Ministerial initiatives (FLEG)”²³² and also the UN Global Compact²³³ – initiatives in which the signatories or members commit to anticorruption principles (among other things) and simultaneously obligate themselves to publish all sorts of data and to report on exactly what they have done to reach those principles. For example, the UNDP “facilitates Global Compact local networks in 52 developing countries and countries with transitional economies” and in these voluntary networks brings together “the local private sector, civil society groups, labour organizations and academia to discuss corporate concerns about human rights, labour standards, the environment and anticorruption is-

²³⁰ TI (i)

²³¹ TI (i)

²³² WB (2007: 54)

²³³ TI (i); UNDP (2008b: 22)

sues”.²³⁴ Next to transparency and reporting requirements, these initiatives also feature explicit mutual enforcement measures such as ‘ethical blacklisting’, in the event that “companies do not ‘play by the rules’”.²³⁵

While one might wonder why companies need to join initiatives in which they sign up to commitments that are at least partly already established as legal stipulations in their countries and internationally, it is now clear that the purpose is to create greater transparency and mutual control of competing private entities;²³⁶ this is particularly necessary given that, due to its limited role in the economy, the oversight functions of the state are very limited here. Yet, given that companies cannot be trusted to do the work of controlling each other on their own, given that they also cannot exert power over each other by any other means but reporting other companies to legal agencies in the case of actual legal breaches, and given that the possibility to control other businesses is not enough of an incentive to join these initiatives in the first place, the additional participation of the general public or civil society is crucial for these IAC measures to work.²³⁷

The incentives to be set by civil society for companies’ transparency, accountability and integrity appeal directly to companies’ economic interests and make their economic success depend on whether and how well they comply with the anticorruption standards stipulated in legal and voluntary frameworks for corporate integrity.²³⁸ This way of holding businesses accountable works via “growing stakeholder expectations that enterprises should be open and transparent about the ways in which they manage a range of non-financial issues, including bribery and corruption.”²³⁹ Civil society is to use its market power as consumers to force businesses to stick to the rules of transparency, fair competition and abstinence from bribery. While corporate governance measures help businesses “operate in an honest and transparent man-

²³⁴ UNDP (2008e)

²³⁵ TI (2009i)

²³⁶ TI (2009i: 3)

²³⁷ See e.g. WB (2007: 18)

²³⁸ Apart from civil society, even legal entities can set positive incentives to businesses. TI tries to persuade companies to increase transparency and reporting by suggesting that “[e]xemplary reporting and a credible track record of compliance can be linked to more lenient treatment by regulators if corruption incidences occur” TI (2009i).

²³⁹ TI (i); see also UNDP (2008e)

ner”,²⁴⁰ a “weak compliance programme that leads to a bribery incident can have major financial and reputational consequences” and endanger a company’s sustainability, thus posing “serious and costly risks”.²⁴¹ Thus, while failing to adopt and comply with these measures plays out as negative economic incentives for businesses, the chance to present oneself as a particularly ‘honest’ enterprise and the consequent prospect to increase economic profit conversely functions as a positive incentive for companies to join corporate governance initiatives and stick to the rules.

Economic interest is to function as an “incentive (...) for private firms to avoid corruption” in the uncorrupted society.²⁴² This is why the WB’s work on “ethical corporate practices” includes “advocating that integrity is ‘good for business’”.²⁴³ The International Finance Corporation, which is a member of the World Bank Group, has for example the mandate to build “the ‘business case’ for private sector engagement on environmental and social issues”,²⁴⁴ and the UNDP constructs corporate social responsibility as opening up “new business opportunities for the private sector” and praises this in its work on “multi-stakeholder partnerships which engage the private sector in support of the MDGs”.²⁴⁵ It reasons that such incentivisation can even bring the private sector to monitor and provide “counterweight to government by helping to resist corrupt practices” or by “lobbying in coalition for legislative and other reforms”.²⁴⁶ Of course, in order for the incentivisation of companies by civil society to be possible, transparency and access to information is key and partly ensured through the organisations’ membership in respective private sector initiatives. Companies must “report on key aspects of compliance and adherence to laws and regulations in a transparent and publicly available manner”,²⁴⁷ so that civil society members can monitor their anticorruption efforts and help enforce them via their power as consumers. In fact, transparency becomes the way to send “a strong signal to employees, investors and consumers, that a company is serious about clean busi-

²⁴⁰ TI (c)

²⁴¹ TI (i)

²⁴² WB (2007: 54)

²⁴³ WB (2007: 22, viii, 42, 54); see also TI (2009h: 2)

²⁴⁴ WB (2007: 54)

²⁴⁵ UNDP (2008e)

²⁴⁶ UNDP (2008b: 36); see also WB (2007: 9)

²⁴⁷ TI (2009i: 3); see also WB (2007: 22); TI (c); TI (2009h: 3-4)

ness”,²⁴⁸ making the visibility of ‘ethical behaviour’ the currency of economic success.

Overall, the case for corporate governance mechanisms is consensually made in IAC discourse via appeals and incentives to economic interests, thus following the specification of the Universal as outlined in chapter 4. Ethical standards are constructed as regulations and mechanisms against bribery and for fair competition while corporate integrity is conceived as compliance with these standards which is in turn induced by economic incentive-setting via the market. Integrity itself needs to be visible in the form of transparency and reporting and is in turn instrumental for the achievement of profit in the private sector. The demanded responsibility of businesses to undertake active corruption ‘risk management’ is thus due solely to the allegedly natural pursuit of their economic interest according to the incentives set by other actors. An active civil society is a particularly important condition in order for this private sector integrity to work.

Given that many of the large corporations which are the main targets of these kinds of IAC measures operate on a global scale, this construction of civil society involvement as a corruption control factor for the private sector adds the need for a globally active civil society that feels responsible for managing the corruption risks of globally active private entities to the need for global legal frameworks. This automatically expands the scope of IAC reform globally, even if the UNDP and the WB explicitly restrict their mandates to the developing world, as we have seen in chapter 5. While some time back it was considered generally legitimate that Western corporations used opportunities for corruption in developing countries in order to raise their short-term profits, IAC discourse now envisions a globally responsible civil society that punishes such illegitimate distortions of proper global economic processes that endanger the global economic system over the longer term. This necessitates that these “targeted populations”, which in this case are all citizens, recognise their linked self-interests and engage in joint political mobilisation and management of corruption risks.²⁴⁹ This presupposes a culture in which a company’s adherence to the rules of complete transparency, active provision of information and

²⁴⁸ TI (i); see also WB (2007: 23)

²⁴⁹ See Dean (2010: 221)

fair competition in liberal markets is highly regarded, and in which citizens feel responsible to actively safeguard these values via consciously employing their power as consumers. As befits contemporary neoliberal government, IAC discourse aids these formations of interest groups, as we will see in the next section.

Again we can note that this kind of involvement requires constant monitoring efforts and conscious consumer behaviour by civil society members, while simultaneously limiting their opportunities to participate in companies' decisions to naming and shaming activities and the influence of their economic decisions. Instead of an increase in direct democracy, IAC discourse fosters a transferral of 'ethical' decision-making to the market. Yet, while Philp recognises in IAC discourse a "shift from politics to the market, so as to make fewer demands on self-restraint",²⁵⁰ we see more clearly now that this market is equipped with all sorts of restraints (and also positive incentives); namely by laws and regulations, sector-internal control initiatives, in addition to an active civil society which exercises its consumer-power to enforce businesses' self-restructuring according to transparency, efficiency, control and competition. At the same time the market itself works as a restraint or an incentive for the conduct of governments (who need to carefully ensure its smooth and corruption-free running) and citizens (who need to adapt their behaviour to manage its corruption risks), a characteristic that leads Hindess to term it "that fundamental liberal instrument of civilization" and to suggest that it is a major mechanism of the indirect rule of Western liberal states over post-colonial countries.²⁵¹ These insights indicate an important revision of the arguments of the critical IAC literature in that they show that far from being neglected and untouched by IAC discourse the market is both an important target and instrument in the construction of the good, uncorrupted society.

Although in IAC discourse both the market and the public sector feature restraints, there are also differences between the kinds of incentivisation evident in the public and private sectors. In the public sector incentivisation works mainly via institutional structures that reward or punish, with civil society being a mere additional control element; whereas incentivisation in the private sector (despite also working via insti-

²⁵⁰ Philp (1997: 447)

²⁵¹ Hindess (2004: 14); see also Dean (2010: 189)

tutions, namely legal regulations and private sector initiatives) casts a more decisive role for civil society. We have also seen in one of the previous sections that actors in the public sector, next to being incentivised via their public interest, are also responsabilised via ethics training where they learn about their responsibility to be informed about the rules and accountability structures with the purpose of being better incentivised by them. This kind of responsabilisation via social norms (or culture, as Dean prefers to call it), which is a main claim for the organisation of civil society, as will be shown, is hardly found in the claims for the organisation of the private sector. Here the logic works almost solely via incentives set to the assumed 'natural' self-interest of economic actors striving for profit.

With regards to differences between the organisations, we have seen that TI puts particular emphasis in its work on the institution of (partly voluntary) regulations and initiatives that restrain companies' inclination to corruption, while the WB emphasises the opportunity to make profit out of behaving 'with integrity' somewhat more; yet, both organisations stress the need for both kinds of measures to include the role of civil society here. We can also see that the WB's definition of corruption as necessarily involving the public sector (see chapter 3) does not prevent it from engaging in private sector work in the context of its IAC efforts. The UNDP seems to be active only with regards to the Global Compact but joins in with calls for the rest of the measures. So again, we can recognise a consensus on the kind of Universal constructed, combined with a form of labour division between the three organisations.

While we have discussed here the mechanisms through which civil society is supposed to hold private sector actors accountable for managing their corruption risks, the means through which civil society is to be induced to carry out these tasks will be discussed in the next section.

Responsible civil society

The previous chapter has already shown the importance that IAC discourse attributes to the active involvement of civil society in the fight against corruption, in the form of civil society reform. The following section will inquire into the kind of participation that is advocated by IAC discourse. It will also look in greater detail at the par-

ticipatory activities that are expected from civil society by IAC discourse in order to set the right incentives and at the ways in which they are supposed to be facilitated and ensured.

The kind of engagement that the WB expects from civil society is very specific. The organisation calls for “participation and oversight by civil society, media, and communities”²⁵² as well as by “civic organisations”²⁵³ in target countries, demanding that these ‘stakeholders’ “play constructively their development role”²⁵⁴ and help enhance states’ “development effectiveness”.²⁵⁵ Next to “formal institutions of executive oversight” it also wants to strengthen “civil society efforts for better governance”,²⁵⁶ constructing the activities of civil society as an instrument next to institutions to put the ‘right’ incentives in place. Similarly, TI emphasises how important it is to “[e]xtend civil society’s watchdog functions” to the area of corruption²⁵⁷ and explains that its involvement can “add an element of control and participation” to the fight against corruption.²⁵⁸ This instrumental view of civil society engagement was confirmed by interviewees who stressed the need to create a “robust form of engagement from civil society” in form of a civil society “force base”²⁵⁹ for achieving accountability. Also the UNDP, which determined the “[e]ngagement of civil society organizations in ATI programming and policies”²⁶⁰ as one of its IAC ‘entry points’,²⁶¹ calls for “increasing civil society and media participation in policy formulation and international representation” as a means for strengthening the ability of these groups “to provide anti-corruption oversight”,²⁶² rendering the connection between participation and oversight rather clear.²⁶³ Citizens can monitor budgets, service providers, businesses and courts,²⁶⁴ thus functioning as one of the “factors” that may contribute to increasing the “risk of exposure (probability of being caught) and

²⁵² WB (2007: 17)

²⁵³ WB (2007: 18)

²⁵⁴ WB (2007: 17)

²⁵⁵ WB (2007: 18)

²⁵⁶ WB (2007: 7)

²⁵⁷ TI (2009k: 4); see also WB (2007: 39)

²⁵⁸ TI (n)

²⁵⁹ TI-S official 5

²⁶⁰ UNDP (2004: 5)

²⁶¹ UNDP (2008c: 29)

²⁶² UNDP (2008b: 27); see also UNDP (2004: 2)

²⁶³ See also UNDP (2004: 16)

²⁶⁴ UNDP official 1

the consequences for officials if they do get caught”;²⁶⁵ this in turn contributes to greater “congruence among public policy, its implementation and the efficient allocation of resources”.²⁶⁶

In addition to civil society members religious leaders, business organisations, professional associations, ad hoc groups,²⁶⁷ public interest groups and investigative journalists are also counted among those “with a mission and the right to expose abuses”.²⁶⁸

A civil society that monitors the public sector

Civil society participation with regards to the actions of state actors and institutions is particularly important. It “assumes critical importance in combating corruption, because it may have a significant impact on the incentives faced by public officials to be responsive to public interest”.²⁶⁹ Citizens are called to “control the actions of their governments” and to “hold those which come to power accountable”.²⁷⁰ Together with the media, civil society is called “to be involved in a continuous process of government review”²⁷¹ but citizens can also act as consultants, voice dissent and criticise the government.²⁷² They should also be “active in pressing their governments and holding them accountable” to the standards of international anticorruption conventions.²⁷³ IAC discourse supports initiatives that “involve beneficiaries and other stakeholders in policymaking and oversight”.²⁷⁴ “[L]egitimate social groups” should be included in the “participatory development of policies and public spending priorities”,²⁷⁵ participate in election monitoring processes²⁷⁶ or in designing political finance regulations and subsequently monitoring the compliance of the relevant ac-

²⁶⁵ UNDP (2004: 2)

²⁶⁶ UNDP (2008b: 37)

²⁶⁷ TI (2000: xxiv)

²⁶⁸ UNDP (2004: 2)

²⁶⁹ Shah (2007: 242)

²⁷⁰ TI-S official 1

²⁷¹ TI (2000: xxii-xxiv); see also WB (2007: 18)

²⁷² TI (n)

²⁷³ TI (v)

²⁷⁴ WB (2007: v); see also WB (2007: 20)

²⁷⁵ WB (2007: 20); see also WB (2009a)

²⁷⁶ TI (2000: xxv)

tors with those regulations.²⁷⁷ This kind of citizen involvement will partly involve a localisation of IAC activities; as the UNDP explains, “[t]argeting local accountability” through “bottom-up approaches (...) could help promote accountability and transparency in the public sector”.²⁷⁸ Thus, “[p]articipatory initiatives” are advocated “which involve users (via, for example, parents in school committees, or farmers in water users associations) in the delivery and oversight of service provision at the front-line, including participation and oversight of procurement”.²⁷⁹ Citizens’ committees should also organise themselves in sectors such as health and the environment.²⁸⁰ However, when the UNDP demands that civil society be more “involved in the policy dialogue” this also refers to “the development of national strategies and policies for strengthening accountability and transparency in public and corporate governance”,²⁸¹ leaving it open as to who exactly is to be involved and how this is to happen. Furthermore, in the area of the judiciary, civil society is called to speak out against impunity, and to “create public demand for justice” and for a judicial system that “frightens the crooks”,²⁸² through “building coalitions of court users”.²⁸³

The participation of ‘the poor’ is regarded as particularly important for the success of development and anticorruption efforts. According to TI, ‘the poor’²⁸⁴ are to participate in “determining key integrity cracks and in formulating anticorruption initiatives that are integrated into the national development strategy”.²⁸⁵ TI suggests linking anticorruption initiatives to development projects with a pro-poor focus, and to include ‘the poor’ “as key actors during the policy formulation stage” next to the legislators. It also demands participatory budgeting exercises,²⁸⁶ and corruption mapping, electoral pacts and participation in election monitoring.²⁸⁷ While the rights that ‘the poor’ should have in this participatory exercise remain unclear, the reason given for

²⁷⁷ TI (a)

²⁷⁸ UNDP (2004: 7)

²⁷⁹ WB (2012: 71)

²⁸⁰ UNDP (2008b: 20)

²⁸¹ UNDP (2004: 16)

²⁸² TI-S official 5

²⁸³ TI (2000: xxv-xxvi)

²⁸⁴ Who exactly that is or how this is to be determined is not specified.

²⁸⁵ TI (2008b: 5)

²⁸⁶ TI (2008b: 5)

²⁸⁷ TI (2008b: 4); TI (2000: xxv)

their participation is in order to raise accountability.²⁸⁸ Similarly, the UNDP calls for “inclusive participation”²⁸⁹ and announces that it explicitly wants to “ensure that civil society is truly engaged as a development partner, and not only called upon to validate and monitor government anticorruption policies and programmes”.²⁹⁰ Yet, the recommendations in this regard are restricted to oversight and lobbying measures: “One strategy is to have citizens’ oversight bodies that are involved in social audits and budget tracking, and citizens’ committees organized in sectors such as education, health and the environment”.²⁹¹ There is no doubt that oversight of public sector activities is of utmost importance for the success of IAC efforts. The discourse calls for citizens and the media to monitor public policymaking and implementation,²⁹² the performance of institutions and officials,²⁹³ the procurement or public expenditure in general,²⁹⁴ and “income and asset declarations”;²⁹⁵ it demands citizens’ involvement in social audits and budget tracking,²⁹⁶ in public reporting²⁹⁷ and in the “third-party monitoring” that the WB uses to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its own operations.²⁹⁸

Strong media are usually demanded together with citizen engagement,²⁹⁹ making it even clearer that the aim of this involvement is not so much to ensure political deliberation, but to use civil society participation as a tool to monitor, expose and report and to ring the bell as soon as public and private sector actors are suspected to be violating the rules. In this way, actors are to be kept in check so that they do not break the rules. That citizens’ engagement is part of the mechanisms to enhance accountability for IAC discourse is demonstrated for example by TI’s explanation of how citizens’ involvement contributes to two different forms of accountability: “Diagonal accountability is when citizens use government institutions to elicit better

²⁸⁸ TI (2008b: 4); Very interestingly, TI points to the insufficient accountability and citizen participation in “key development frameworks” and concludes that “a consensus on how to strengthen these elements in practice has remained elusive within development cooperation circles” (TI (2008b: 3).

²⁸⁹ UNDP (2008c: 29)

²⁹⁰ UNDP (2004: 16)

²⁹¹ UNDP (2008b: 20)

²⁹² WB (2007: vii)

²⁹³ UNDP (2008b: 36)

²⁹⁴ WB (2007 : 19, 20)

²⁹⁵ WB (2007: 52)

²⁹⁶ UNDP (2008b: 20)

²⁹⁷ UNDP (2008a: 9); see also UNDP (2008b: 10); TI-S official 2

²⁹⁸ WB (2007 : iii)

²⁹⁹ See e.g. WB (2007: 18); UNDP (2008b: 27); UNDP (2004: 2)

oversight of the state's actions, and in the process engage in policy-making, budgeting, expenditure tracking and other activities". Vertical accountability in turn "holds a public official accountable to the electorate or citizenry through elections, a free press, an active civil society and other similar channels".³⁰⁰ Similarly, while accountable institutions form part of the UNDP's focus on the 'supply side' of good governance,³⁰¹ "civic engagement" enhances the "demand side of good governance".³⁰² It functions as "informal institutional systems"³⁰³ that enhance and 'complement' the incentives set by institutions in the public and private sector and thus "ensures the proper functioning of checks and balance".³⁰⁴

While the measures to be undertaken for the purpose of "citizen empowerment" can in rare cases comprise "devolution, citizens' charters, bills of rights, elections"³⁰⁵ and thus result in a real increase in citizens' decision-making power, it is rather clear from the analysis that the main rationale for enhancing citizen involvement is to support the incentive-setting mechanisms foreseen by IAC discourse. Their participation gives citizens opportunities to check the actions of the other actors involved; it "exerts pressure on government and the private sector for greater transparency and accountability"³⁰⁶ and for adherence to the (predefined) rules. This pressure can be expressed mainly through the institution of regular elections and by addressing corrupt public officials through the law. Yet, if the combination of oversight and elections fails to bind representatives to the rules, we know from chapter 3 that the worst can happen – citizens might lose trust in their government and make use of their right to revolt, which should serve as a last powerful disincentive to public sector actors to act corruptly. However, given that this endangers the stability of the whole system including the rule of law itself, it is not advocated in IAC discourse as a means of citizen participation; nevertheless it is mentioned as a warning.

A civil society that monitors the private sector

³⁰⁰ TI (2009j: 2); see also WB (2007: 18)

³⁰¹ UNDP (2008c: 29); see also UNDP official 1

³⁰² UNDP (2008c: 29)

³⁰³ UNDP (2008c: 5)

³⁰⁴ UNDP (2008b: 37)

³⁰⁵ Shah (2007: 242)

³⁰⁶ UNDP (2004: 20); see also WB (2007: 39)

While civil society involvement in the public sector is advocated as ‘participation’, it is notable that this term is not used in reference to the private sector, where oversight or the inclusion of the stakeholders’ interests is the primary demand. While this articulates citizen participation as legitimate in the public but not legitimate in the private sector, the rationale of both kinds of citizen engagement is the same. Citizens and the media are also responsible for promoting transparency,³⁰⁷ “accountability and greater corporate responsibility in the private sector”³⁰⁸ and thus “must: Monitor companies’ anti-corruption efforts”. Most of all, it needs to “demand transparent and understandable reporting from companies and regulators”,³⁰⁹ advocate for corporate integrity systems³¹⁰ and monitor compliance and regulatory efforts.³¹¹ Furthermore it must “[a]dvocate adoption of complaints systems and whistleblower protections” within companies and generally “encourage companies and legislators to create an enabling environment to internally report abuses”.³¹² The WB itself uses “giving ‘voice’ to civil society as a means of reducing the risks of corruption”³¹³ in its own financing operations.³¹⁴ Regarding the question how the so-called stakeholders can actually take part in or influence what businesses do a TI interviewee told me that the population “can ask questions, ask for the use of some share of the value, (...) for their developing benefits, like education, health, infrastructure”,³¹⁵ its activities happen “through press campaigns, mobilisation of the tools of civil society organisations, which are very diverse. (...) You have a lot of consequences of this information being known”.³¹⁶ So despite the stakeholder concept and TI’s insistence that companies activities also need to benefit the stakeholders,³¹⁷ corporate governance is not about any rights of the citizens to direct involvement in corporate actions. Thus, what the concept adds to the demands for better regulation of the economy through the state and to the claims for private sector integrity is not participation but an increase in transparency and oversight. Therefore, civil society involvement in the pri-

³⁰⁷ UNDP (2004: 16)

³⁰⁸ WB (2007: 18)

³⁰⁹ TI (2009i: 4)

³¹⁰ TI (2009k)

³¹¹ TI (2009i: 4)

³¹² TI (2009k: 4)

³¹³ WB (2007: 56)

³¹⁴ WB (2009a: 23)

³¹⁵ TI-S official 3

³¹⁶ TI-S official 3

³¹⁷ TI-S official 3

vate sector means observing business, ringing a fire-alarm in the government's ear when corporate misdeeds are detected, and using consumer power to hold businesses accountable.

TI's 'integrity pacts', which are also advocated by the WB,³¹⁸ are a prominent example of the IAC strategy of civil society participation in order to enhance accountability. Conceived as a "tool aimed at preventing corruption in public contracting" and ensuring "increased accountability of public resources", those pacts are agreements between a government department and "all bidders for a public contract" which are facilitated by civil society organisations. The pact "stipulates rights and obligations to the effect that neither side will: pay, offer, demand or accept bribes; collude with competitors to obtain the contract; or engage in such abuses while executing the contract". The participatory element consists in the fact that the "content of the integrity pact should be agreed upon by the civil society organisations and the government", a process which is to be led by civil society organisations from the target countries. Those civil society organisations then select one or more independent monitors, who should "review the tender documents, the evaluation reports, the award selection decision and the implementation supervision reports (technical as well as financial)" and inform the government of possible irregularities or corruption risks and possible measures. Importantly, "[w]here any corruption risks or possible irregularities are reported by the monitor to the government office and no steps have been taken (or such steps are inadequate) within a reasonable period of time, then the Monitor is entitled to inform the public and/or the public prosecutor's office about this situation".³¹⁹ A TI interviewee described integrity pacts as "an ethical reinforcement for something that is already in the law". When promoting integrity pacts, bidders are told that "what we want is to have you sitting here reinforcing your commitment with the defence of the transparency of the procurement process from an ethical perspective. Because of the importance of ensuring the competition, competition for everybody, getting the best possible contractors out of this pot, and creating legitimacy for what the government does".³²⁰ While this may be interpreted as a social responsabilisation tool for economic actors to manage their own corruption

³¹⁸ See Shah (2007: 240); see also UNODC (2004)

³¹⁹ TI (V)

³²⁰ TI-S official 5

risk for the sake of competition and stability (and would thus be an exception to the purely economic logic of private sector integrity reviewed earlier), it is also quite likely to assure the bidders of the enhanced oversight that is in place; in both cases it will contribute to their incentivisation for integrity.

A responsible civil society...

Thus, overall, participation in IAC discourse is conceived neither as a deliberative mechanism aimed at ensuring consensual decisions nor as the introduction of direct democratic decision-making. Rather it is presented as mainly an informal “preventive corruption measure”³²¹ working through oversight. Yet, considering the short-sighted economic perspective of self-interested individuals (including civil society members); the extremely high ‘transaction costs’ involved in monitoring public and private sector actors; and the rather indirect powers of civil society members to hold these actors accountable,³²² the pressing question is how civil society itself can be made to undertake all those efforts. In the rational actor logic, how can civil society actors themselves be incentivised for this task?

It can be argued that, rather than being a badly designed incentive-instrument, the claims for this kind of ‘toothless’ participation of citizens in the fight against corruption with hardly any formal decision-making rights rely on another incentive setting mechanism that works on the level of culture and that was already touched upon in the section on public servants’ ethics courses and the business culture of whistle blowing: It is about a form of responsabilisation of individuals for ensuring their own freedom (the freedom to pursue their interests without the interference of others) in the good, uncorrupted society. While in early liberalism, freedom is articulated as a “natural attribute of *Homo oeconomicus*, the rational subject of interest”, in neoliberalism it becomes “an artefact”, something that needs to be created through particular ways of societal organisation.³²³ Yet Dean adverts to differences between neoliberal-

³²¹ TI-S official 2

³²² Namely through naming and shaming, electing, the threat of their right to revolt, as well as conscious consumer behaviour.

³²³ Dean (2010: 183); Dean also calls this an “anti-naturalist” conception of freedom in the sense that “its conditions are not found in the natural state of humankind” (e.i.o.).

isms with regards to the ways in which this artefact is to be constructed. He explains that, in German ordoliberalism, Foucault finds a dichotomous division between people's 'natural' self-interested drives and the rational designs of government which are supposed to promote "the conditions of the free, entrepreneurial conduct of economically rational individuals" in order to allow them to be free.³²⁴ In what he calls the contemporarily dominant Hayekian version of neoliberalism however, Dean sees this dichotomy outflanked by Hayek's introduction of culture as "an intermediate and key layer between nature and reason".³²⁵ Human interests are to be channelled in the right ways not only through "the 'thin layer of deliberately adopted or modified rules'" like the rule of law and institutional designs but also through the cultural traditions that restrain them; these cultural rules of conduct are now in fact regarded as that which gives rise to "rationally constructed institutions" in the first place, and the "development of civilization is thus dependent on the capacity to learn and pass on these rules of conduct".³²⁶ These cultural rules of conduct can be learnt and deduced from the orders of the market, language, morals and law³²⁷ and it is people's responsibility to do so. Thus, contemporary neoliberal regimes are organised according to the importance and the "disciplining effect of social orders" in teaching people how to practice their freedom.³²⁸ In this spirit, the chapter on civil society in the TI Source Book quotes Woodrow Wilson with the claim that "Liberty has never come from the government. Liberty has always come from the subjects of it".³²⁹ Participation of the (potential) victims of corruption in monitoring the behaviour of public and private sector actors and in advocating rule-conformity, greater transparency and greater participation means that they are actively engaged in the pursuit of their own interests and thus in the responsible safeguarding of their own freedoms. It is a "culture change"³³⁰ that IAC discourse advocates insofar as individuals are no longer assumed to be simply pursuing their own 'natural' interests – instead they must be taught what their interests are and become responsible for pursuing them in a way that manages the risk that may be posed to them by the irresponsible and corrupt be-

³²⁴ Dean (2010: 183) drawing on Foucault (2008: 148) and Gordon (1991: 40)

³²⁵ Dean (2010: 183) drawing on Hayek (1979: 155)

³²⁶ Dean (2010: 183)

³²⁷ Dean (2010: 183)

³²⁸ Dean (2010: 184)

³²⁹ TI (2000: 129)

³³⁰ UNDP (2004: 6)

haviour of others. So culture enters the picture of the good, uncorrupted society in the form of a cultural change that mediates individual interests and that aims at behavioural changes through the refinement of the incentive structure for rational self-interested actors. The ideal and responsible citizens are “stakeholders who care about the outcome” of anticorruption reform,³³¹ who actively safeguard their interests through constant monitoring of other actors, and who utter a constant “clamour for political reform”.³³²

While corporate ‘responsibility’ is obviously mainly an outcome of economic (and not cultural) incentivisation (as we have seen in this chapter), responsabilisation via culture is heavily at work in civil society involvement against corruption and in public sector reform. In the latter, ethics courses support the incentivisation for integrity that is put in place by institutional meritocratic and accountability mechanisms. While both kinds of incentivisation in the public sector are to be undertaken by the states in the target countries in co-operation with IAC organisations (who provide knowledge, money and may also organise ethics courses), similarly co-operation is necessary for the incentivisation of citizens in the realm of civil society, as IAC discourse suggests. This incentivisation consists of two principal mechanisms: One is the putting in place of institutional incentives and is usually denominated with the signifier ‘enabling environment’ in IAC discourse. The other mechanism, in which IAC organisations have a particularly important role, is the (cultural) responsabilisation of citizens in target countries that goes under the name of ‘capacity building’. These mechanisms are almost always advocated together; for example when the WB declares that it will “strengthen the enabling environment and capacity of civil society and the media to monitor public policymaking and implementation”.³³³

.... in an enabling environment

The creation of an enabling environment that enables citizens to fulfil their role in the fight against corruption also comprises the guaranteeing of transparency and ac-

³³¹ WB (2007: 51)

³³² TI (n)

³³³ WB (2007: vii)

cess of information by both public sector institutions and companies that has already been mentioned and does not need repeating here. It is the most important precondition for the kind of civil society involvement advocated in IAC discourse.

In addition, other measures are necessary in order to ensure that civil society will be able to fulfil its role in the fight against corruption. Although citizens are assumed to be self-interested in IAC discourse, their short-sighted self-interest does not lead them to become active in the fight against corruption and to make the effort to monitor other actors if ‘transaction costs’ are too high. As with public and private sector actors, their self-interest needs to be channelled via changes to the institutional environment that favour their responsible behaviour. This implies that target states need to create an enabling legal and regulatory framework for civil society and media activities,³³⁴ which is something that not only TI lobbies for, but is also one of the WB’s entry points³³⁵ as well as an aspect that the “UNDP can capitalize on”.³³⁶ States are encouraged to “pass Freedom of Information laws; repeal or revise anti-defamation laws and ‘insult’ laws to ensure that these cannot be used to threaten the press; and removing press and media censorship; (...) end government discrimination against certain media; and ensure that state-owned media employees can maintain professional standards of independence and responsibility”.³³⁷ In addition to this, “[n]ongovernmental organisations and other civil society institutions should be easy to establish, (...) and registration provisions should be simple and inexpensive”, meaning that the “[r]egistration of a civil society group should be a right, not a privilege”.³³⁸ Such arrangements provide for the possibility of a responsabilised civil society to fulfil its tasks in minimising corruption risks.

A capable civil society, or a ‘culture of integrity’

³³⁴ WB (2007: 21, 17); TI (2000: xxiv-xxv); UNDP (2004: 11, 15)

³³⁵ WB (2007: 17)

³³⁶ UNDP (2004: 15)

³³⁷ UNDP (2004: 11); see also TI (2000: xxiv-xxv); TI (2009b); WB (2007: 42). Country questionnaires for national integrity assessments, see completed questionnaires from different countries at TI (W)

³³⁸ TI (2000: xxiv-xxv)

However, the institution of a culture of integrity and the creation of citizens that are capable to fulfil their responsibilities in the good, uncorrupted society is equally important – “specifically in countries where other oversight (governmental, parliamentary) is weak”.³³⁹ IAC activities under the name of ‘capacity building’ contribute to that goal and provide another very important ‘entry point’³⁴⁰ for IAC organisations.³⁴¹

The three organisations recognise that even with the right freedoms and rights, with access to information and other institutional incentives in place in the public and private sectors, it may still prove difficult to motivate citizens for their ‘duties’³⁴² to monitor and to participate. TI’s founder Peter Eigen remarks that “developing a vibrant civil society willing and able to play a meaningful role in shaping its environment” in many countries is “the most difficult element in the equation” resulting in the hoped-for crackdown on corruption.³⁴³ If there is no demand for accountability and transparency from the general public, it needs to be generated by IAC organisations.³⁴⁴

Civil society needs to be aware of the problems caused by corruption, and educated enough to be able to do the right things against it.³⁴⁵ Thus, its “capacity (...) to perform watchdog functions” needs to be built,³⁴⁶ “their understanding of decision-making mechanisms”³⁴⁷ needs to be developed and they need to receive “training (...) on anti-corruption”.³⁴⁸ While “innovative activities of CSOs and the media” need to be funded,³⁴⁹ the capacity of civil society organisations needs to be built “not only in advocacy but also in the implementation and monitoring of national or local anti-corruption strategies and programmes”, for example by offering “training of trainers to CSOs to scale up capacity”, as the UNDP suggests.³⁵⁰ IAC organisations

³³⁹ UNDP (2008b: 20)

³⁴⁰ UNDP (2008b: 27)

³⁴¹ WB (2007: iv, vii, 17); TI (n); UNDP (2008b: 20); UNDP (2008a: 15, 16); UNDP (2004: 16)

³⁴² TI (2000: xv)

³⁴³ TI (2000: xv-xvi)

³⁴⁴ UNDP (2008b: 21)

³⁴⁵ TI (2009f); TI (2000: xviii); UNDP (2008b: 21)

³⁴⁶ UNDP (2004: 11)

³⁴⁷ UNDP (2008b: 37)

³⁴⁸ UNDP (2008b: 27)

³⁴⁹ UNDP (2008b: 27, 30)

³⁵⁰ UNDP (2004: 16)

also facilitate “coalition building for South-South exchange of knowledge and expertise”³⁵¹ and enhance “knowledge management” and “knowledge networks” more generally, such as “producing guidelines, manuals, comparative experiences and primers”.³⁵² For example, in Yemen, the UNDP conducted a project that “aimed to promote the exchange of information on corruption issues, methodologies to monitor public expenditure and awareness-raising among NGOs”,³⁵³ while TI in turn provides ‘ethics trainings’ or ‘anticorruption education’ for school-kids and students.³⁵⁴

In addition, the media as an “important opinion former”³⁵⁵ needs to be “informed on causes, effects and magnitude of corruption as well as international anti-corruption norms and standards”.³⁵⁶ Professional standards, the independence, competitiveness and the investigative capacity of journalists and the media need to be raised³⁵⁷ so that they “can investigate, monitor and provide feedback on government performance, including corruption”³⁵⁸ and live up to their “responsibility”.³⁵⁹ The UNDP gives illustrations of its work in this area, for example citing its support in providing resources to the Peruvian Press Council for contributing “significantly to the debate and drafting of the Transparency and Access to Public Information law” and for conducting a “year-long public education campaign for citizens’ right to public information that was published weekly by its print media members”;³⁶⁰ in Yemen, the UNDP supported a “media project advocating for greater transparency through capacity strengthening, networking, and promoting codes of conduct for journalists at the national level”.³⁶¹

Through these measures, IAC organisations inform civil society members not only about corruption and its causes and consequences as constructed by IAC discourse, they also persuade them that they should do something about it and teach them what

³⁵¹ UNDP (2004: 16)

³⁵² UNDP (2008b: 30)

³⁵³ UNDP (2008b: 27)

³⁵⁴ TI (X)

³⁵⁵ TI (a)

³⁵⁶ UNDP (2008b: 21)

³⁵⁷ TI (2000: xxiv-xxv)

³⁵⁸ WB (2007: 21, 52)

³⁵⁹ UNDP (2004: 11)

³⁶⁰ UNDP (2008b: 27)

³⁶¹ UNDP (2008b: 27)

A civil society that is aware of corruption risks

Yet, this is not the only mechanism through which civil society is to contribute to the fight against corruption. As the UNDP explains, civil society has a “vital role in reshaping attitudes” and in reversing “public apathy and tolerance for corruption”.³⁶² While it counts among the tasks of civil society to ensure “that reform measures to combat corruption match the perceptions and expectations of the people”,³⁶³ it is these very perceptions and expectations of the people that need to be moulded in the first place. IAC discourse works towards a general change in interests of citizens in developing countries and a subsequent responsabilisation of these citizens to take part in the fight against corruption and make their contribution to the safeguarding of their freedom in the ‘right’ way.

Thus, civil society groups and the media are also called upon to raise general “public awareness about the seriousness of the corruption problem”³⁶⁴ and of the “*importance of regulation and effective enforcement*”³⁶⁵ and to create an “engaged and informed public” and to generate the “increased demand for good governance” that “the fight against corruption in developing countries requires”.³⁶⁶ This can occur by “producing flyers, fact sheets and posters on topical issues”,³⁶⁷ through raising of public awareness about the reform or adoption of a particular piece of legislation,³⁶⁸ and through youth education and ethics training about corruption and “the values that underpin good governance”, as the UNDP does in Lebanon for example.³⁶⁹ The UNDP emphasises that it is also “crucial that awareness campaigns include activities

³⁶² UNDP (2004: 20)

³⁶³ UNDP (2004: 20)

³⁶⁴ UNDP (2004: 11, 14); see also TI (2000: xxiv-xxv); UNDP (2008b: 21)

³⁶⁵ TI (2009i: 4) e.i.o.

³⁶⁶ UNDP (2004: 11); see also UNDP (2008b: 20)

³⁶⁷ UNDP (2008b: 30)

³⁶⁸ UNDP (2008b: 27)

³⁶⁹ UNDP (2004: 7, 20)

on promoting the goals and objectives of UNCAC and other relevant instruments”.³⁷⁰

Civil society networks are to “mobilise the rest of the population for zero tolerance against corruption”³⁷¹ by appealing to and changing their interests. People need to “understand that actually the public money is their taxpayers’ money, that they’re paying taxes and that is this money that is being (...) involved in corruption, that it has everything to do with them, that it has to do with the bad water service that you get in your house, and it has to do with that your kids can’t go to school”.³⁷² While the UNDP is convinced that “[p]eople generally understand the seriousness of the corruption problem”, nevertheless it claims that they still “need to be convinced that something can be done about it”.³⁷³ Thus, next to raising this awareness in civil society by appealing to its interests it is necessary to give it “specific tools that it can use to report instances of corruption, or to seek remedies”.³⁷⁴

IAC discourse confirms the importance of cultural reform and the responsabilisation of the citizenry for contemporary neoliberal government³⁷⁵ in order to implant “the norms and values of the market and the forms of conduct to be derived from it in all spheres, including the institutions and instruments of government themselves”.³⁷⁶ While IAC organisations are usually eager to robe their work in technical and ‘neutral’ terms, as we have already seen, indeed some articulations make it quite clear that the measures on the level of civil society are not concerned with teaching some technical skills alone. Rather, they are about “educating the society”³⁷⁷ in question and building into it a “culture of integrity”.³⁷⁸ In any “society which perceives some kind of (...) corruption acceptable”,³⁷⁹ IAC reforms need to generate “sustained effort at the community level”³⁸⁰ not only to “change attitudes”³⁸¹ but to “change that

³⁷⁰ UNDP (2008b: 27)

³⁷¹ UNDP (2008b: 20)

³⁷² TI-S official 5

³⁷³ UNDP (2004: 11)

³⁷⁴ UNDP (2008b: 27); see also TI-S official 5

³⁷⁵ See e.g. Dean (2010: 189-191)

³⁷⁶ Dean (2010: 190)

³⁷⁷ UNDP official 1

³⁷⁸ UNDP (2004: 7)

³⁷⁹ UNDP official 1

³⁸⁰ UNDP official 1

³⁸¹ TI (2000: xxiv-xxv)

kind of thinking itself”.³⁸² Therefore, the “ultimate goal” of civil society involvement is to generate “demand for anticorruption (...) in a society”,³⁸³ and this in turn is to be achieved through a “shift towards increased reliance on shared norms and values”.³⁸⁴ Anti-corruption reforms “need to transform values and ethical frameworks (...) in order to be imbedded in public culture”.³⁸⁵ Against the background of the analysis conducted in this thesis, we know that this cultural change in norms and values will be a change in interests (or a redirecting of interests) which is to make individuals safeguard their freedom in the ways foreseen by IAC discourse. Contemporary neoliberalism does not so much deny “that there can be such things as collective beliefs and desires; rather, these things exist only in so far as they are mediated by individual choice”.³⁸⁶ The mechanistic conception of integrity revealed in chapter 4 re-emerges as the outcome of an incentive-setting culture that is supposed to create citizens with integrity, who are conceived as individuals who responsibly safeguard their freedom in the liberal state.

This discursive move reflects the Hayekian re-conceptualisation of reason from that which leads to civilisation to an effect of civilisation as embedded in culture: “Reason is the consequence of those learnt rules of conduct by which humans become intelligent and it is by submitting to their discipline that humans can become free”.³⁸⁷ This re-conceptualisation reconciles the tension between moral and mechanistic conceptions of corruption and integrity and cancels out what was earlier presented as contestations of the mechanistic conception of human nature, or as tensions between moral values and egoistic interests. It is not only that values, norms and morality can now be conceived as an outcome of cultural incentivisation – also oversight and control measures can now be about morality, as a WB interviewee indeed claimed: “All these things are moral. All these things are about values that one can or cannot have, that a country can or cannot have. So I’m not sure how you would distinguish between moral and not moral”.³⁸⁸

³⁸² UNDP official 1

³⁸³ UNDP official 1

³⁸⁴ WB (s)

³⁸⁵ UNDP (2004: 7)

³⁸⁶ Dean (2010: 186)

³⁸⁷ Dean (2010: 183), drawing on Hayek (1979: 163)

³⁸⁸ WB official 2

As Dean argues, the aim of contemporary neoliberalism is nothing less than a “cultural revolution that will restore the responsible autonomy of the citizenry” and that becomes possible through the “deployment of the culturally acquired rules of conduct to safeguard our civilization and the freedom it secures”.³⁸⁹ The cultural shaping of these rules and their deployment is heavily aided through IAC interventions in the realm of civil society. Next to their support for institutional and legal incentivisation, this form of intervention fosters the socio-cultural incentivisation of self-interested actors for the safeguarding of their freedom. This conception of freedom through social control was put in words by a TI interviewee whom I asked whether in the world without corruption as conceived by TI there would not be a lot of control. The interviewee answered that “yes, we’re talking about social control, (...) if you define it as such, it’s more control – and more freedom”.³⁹⁰

Ultimately, we can note that IAC discourse itself works as a mechanism of responsabilisation and social control for the governments of (sovereign) target states, trying to create the necessary “political will”³⁹¹ for anticorruption and governance reform by appealing to the necessity for development and poverty reduction and trying to change perceptions accordingly. The CPI can be regarded as a particularly successful ‘instrument’ in that regard. It is used by TI but also the media and all sorts of other civil society organisations to responsabilise governments around the world for the task of corruption fighting. Thus, the concept of ‘political will’ in IAC discourse embodies states’ acceptance of the responsibility for the proper management of their governing mechanisms. After all, international legal frameworks, loans and expert advice for IAC reforms could not serve as incentives to target states if the lack of development of their societies and the damaging effects of corruption were not recognised as a problem.

This cultural change advocated by IAC discourse also brings with it another feature of neoliberal government. The mechanism of putting different social actors (public sector actors, economic actors, civil society groups, social movements, communities,

³⁸⁹ Dean (2010: 191)

³⁹⁰ TI-S official 2

³⁹¹ UNDP (2004: 5); TI (2009c); TI (2009d); TI (2009i: 2); TI (2009k: 2); TI (2000: 41); TI (2008a: 5); Kpundeh (1998); UNDP (2008b: 13, 14, 15); UNDP (2011b); WB/CommGAP (2010: 2, 28, 44, 50, 52); Kaufmann/Gray (1998); WB (1997: 5, 26)

stakeholders, victims, beneficiaries) in the ‘right’ relations in order to enable them to control each other and hold each other responsible in order to manage corruption risks, leads to a proliferation of locations and actors of government.³⁹² Whereas in the “welfarist version of the social, a unitary apparatus sought to act through and upon ‘the social’ to secure society”, it is now a multitude of actors that are set into play in the different mechanisms of government, as partners and facilitators but also as tutors, controllers and castigators “in the multiple forms of risk”.³⁹³ What can be clearly recognised in IAC discourse is that by responsabilising other actors for the functioning of IAC mechanisms the “national state takes on less of a directive and distributive role, and more of a coordinative, arbitrary and preventive one”.³⁹⁴ While these aggregations of actors are “resisting and opposing the decisions of authorities, claiming rights, contesting the claims of expert knowledge, and demanding consultation over planning and services tailored to their needs”³⁹⁵ the corruption-fighting state acts “as a neutralized and neutralizing referee in this contest”,³⁹⁶ while managing its own risk.

Benchmarking, reflexive government and cultural responsabilisation

In co-operation with other (international) authorities such as different IAC organisations, the task of the state becomes more that of assessing and controlling the governing processes taking place between the new plurality of governing agents. Anti-corruption impact³⁹⁷ or baseline assessments,³⁹⁸ benchmarking and progress monitoring³⁹⁹ that are to be carried out by the multiple agents that IAC discourse envisions to play against each other are examples of such activities and indicative of the replacement of the welfare state by one of ‘performance government’.⁴⁰⁰ Such assessments happen again on the basis of the “neutral methodologies”⁴⁰¹ discussed in

³⁹² See also Dean (2010: 200)

³⁹³ Dean (2010: 202)

³⁹⁴ Dean (2010: 200)

³⁹⁵ Dean (2010: 221)

³⁹⁶ Dean (2010: 201)

³⁹⁷ WB (2007: iv)

³⁹⁸ UNDP (2004: 11); TI (2000: xxiv-xxv)

³⁹⁹ WB (2012: 72); WB (2007: 42)

⁴⁰⁰ Dean (2010: 202)

⁴⁰¹ UNDP (2008b: 20)

chapters 1 and 5. Indirect surveillance by regulatory authorities like IAC organisations, private sector institutions, cartel authorities or financial regulatory agencies makes the performance or the capacity of these many agents “calculable and comparable so that they might be optimized”; at the same time it allows for the “indirect regulation and surveillance of these entities”⁴⁰² in order to manage “the risks that all types of governmental institutions – whether public, newly privatized, or contractualized – pose to both taxpayers and customers”.⁴⁰³ Government in neoliberalism, as Dean puts it, “has become more multiple, diffuse, facilitative and empowering. It is also, however, strangely more disciplinary, stringent and punitive”.⁴⁰⁴

Both the incentive-setting measures for the governing of institutional processes and the incentive-setting through civil society responsabilisation advocated in IAC discourse can be distinguished as characteristics of a reflexive liberal government that exceeds the Hayekian version of neoliberalism and that is reflexive in the sense that it folds its ends back onto itself.⁴⁰⁵ The former set of measures is concerned with the safeguarding of the security of governmental mechanisms themselves in both the public and the private sphere, reflecting the task of neoliberal reflexive governments to manage “the risks to taxpayers, shareholders and governments of the activities of public servants, state professionals, community organizations and their workers, state-owned enterprises, and private companies and their management”.⁴⁰⁶ Thus, it aims to manage the risk to society in that it manages the risk of its own governing processes through the right incentive-setting. The second set of measures indicates a “form of government that can only govern through existing or potential ‘indigenous’ mechanisms of government”, such as of communities and civil society groups. The fostering of civil society capacities for active participation in the fight against corruption that is necessary for this kind of government might be regarded as “constructing the conditions of reflexive government by establishing local sites of self-government that can be indirectly managed” by authorities such as governments, IAC organisations and other international organisations through the use of evaluation

⁴⁰² Dean (2010: 202)

⁴⁰³ Dean (2010: 226, see also 202/203)

⁴⁰⁴ Dean (2010: 200)

⁴⁰⁵ See e.g. Dean (2010: 224-226); in Dean’s terminology or the governmentality literature more generally, these sets of mechanisms would be called ‘technologies of performance’ and ‘technologies of agency’.

⁴⁰⁶ Dean (2010: 225)

and control mechanisms like benchmarking and anticorruption assessments.⁴⁰⁷ Put simply, it is the end of this way of governing to make civil society govern itself and in order to reach this aim it already relies on self-governing mechanisms of civil society which it only supervises, assesses and thus indirectly directs.

A third characteristic of reflexive liberal government distinguished by Dean as well as by Hindess⁴⁰⁸ consists in the contrivance and active construction of “markets where they do not exist”, namely in the mechanisms of national government itself, for example by reconfiguring public service provision as “a set of markets in services, provision and expertise” and the reconstruction of citizens as “consumers in these markets”.⁴⁰⁹ As the analysis has shown, this is not a particularly pronounced feature of IAC discourse; yet, the first elements of this kind of reflexive government are present in IAC discourse, for example in recommendations and support for the subcontracting of social services and thus their outsourcing to private agencies operating as entrepreneurs in the free market.

Conclusion

Against the background of the analysis conducted in previous chapters we can conclude that IAC discourse represents an advanced liberal hegemonic project in that it displays the core hegemonic stratagems⁴¹⁰ as well as four additional hegemonic stratagems⁴¹¹ (as discussed in chapters 3-5, see also conclusion of the thesis) through which it seeks to advance a very comprehensive Universal of a good, uncorrupted society that bears the social logics discussed throughout this chapter. Through the equivalisations discussed in chapters 3 and 4 to 6 respectively the discourse divides the discursive space very clearly into two antagonistic chains (hegemonic stratagem II). In short, while chain AC constructs the Universal with its very particular social logics, the construction of corruption in chain C serves to render these particular

⁴⁰⁷ Dean (2010: 225)

⁴⁰⁸ Hindess (2004)

⁴⁰⁹ Dean (2010: 189)

⁴¹⁰ ‘Equivalisation of differential claims which are oriented towards the Universal’ (I); ‘Antagonistic division of the discursive space’ (II); ‘Representation’ (III)

⁴¹¹ ‘Basic stratagem of super-differential demarcation’ (IV); ‘Emergent openness of interpretation of the symbolic equivalent of the Universal’ (V); ‘Institution/ perpetuation of subject positions for political-societal forces’ (VI)

governing mechanisms important and necessary. In this chapter we have seen in detail what these mechanisms entail.

They are based on a model of human nature as self-interested and rational and consist in the manipulation of individuals' behaviour through the setting of incentives to their self-interest in a way that makes them stick to the rules. The rules to which self-interested actors are made to stick are preconceived and geared at securing what IAC discourse constructs as the 'public interest' – which consists in the freedom of the self-interested individuals in society to pursue their interests with neither others nor themselves endangering them. This freedom is best secured by guaranteeing competition for material rewards amongst individuals in both the public and the private sector while restraining their temptations to distort this very competition by clear rules, transparency, oversight and sanctions.

In the public sector this incentivisation is to happen via institutional engineering (by the state itself) as well as via civil society oversight and elections. In the private sector it is to happen via institutional engineering (in the form of state regulation) as well as via civil society oversight and conscious consumer behaviour. Finally, in the realm of civil society (and to a limited extent also in the public sector) it is to happen via cultural responsabilisation for the task of managing the corruption risk in the two sectors.

This preoccupation of IAC discourse with securing processes of government (rather than, for example, governing politico-economic processes conceived as external to government) indicates the structuring of the discourse according to contemporary neoliberal logics of government. More specifically, in that they fold the ends of government back on themselves in different ways, these structures of IAC discourse are suggestive of reflexive liberal forms of governing. In line with the Hayekian version of neoliberalism, culture, in IAC discourse, becomes an important mediator between human natural drives and rational institutional designs in the achievement of an uncorrupted society. Far from indicating a shift away from the incentives logic, culture itself is conceived as the field in which interests are moulded to manage corruption risks and thus realise the societal ideal.

We have seen in illustrations in this chapter that IAC organisations actively advance the installation of incentivisation mechanisms in all three areas, through technical

and monetary support for institutional engineering, the provision of expert knowledge on how to do that, and through the advocacy and awareness raising among civil society groups for the task of holding public and private sector actors accountable (i.e. via the instrumental and reform logic traced in chapter 5). They do this in a very coherent and consensual way in which organisational divides become relevant only in terms of the division of labour regarding the instruments used.

While chapter 4 showed that one way to advance this Universal is through linguistic articulation of all sorts of vague and appealing aims of the fight against corruption, we can now set them in relation to the very particular logics traced here in the linguistic and non-linguistic articulations of concrete policy demands. Economic growth and productivity, which figure among the aims, are ensured by the insertion and protection of competition through liberalisation, privatisation, reduction of subsidies, the rule of law, transparency and property rights. Economic and social equality and inclusion as well as the prominent aim of the reduction of poverty (articulated as economic and social exclusion) can only be achieved to the limited extent provided for by basic services which prevent poor people from suffering hunger and thirst, becoming ill and going uneducated, while others will have many more opportunities in society. The aims of democracy and political inclusion and of the reduction of poverty as social and political exclusion set out in IAC discourse come down to a procedural representative democracy in which citizens sanction or reward politicians for either sticking to or foregoing the rules. Next to that, as we have seen, civil society assumes a strong role in monitoring public and private sector actors; however, this responsibility is not rewarded with an increase in direct or representative democratic decision-making powers as we know them. The increase in participation and inclusion simply means that all citizens use their existing liberal freedoms more 'responsibly'. Accordingly, in the private sector, citizens participate in economic decision-making via conscious consumerist behaviour, sanctioning or rewarding private sector actors in light of their adherence to the rules. With regards to the public sector, they support state institutions in their monitoring tasks.

For the claim of context-sensitivity, which is important for the persuasiveness of the hegemonic project as we have seen, this means that IAC discourse is able to adapt to local contexts only to the extent that the interests of the people in the target countries are to be taken into account. Yet we have seen that, first, these interests are assumed

to be universally egoistic, and second, they are to be embedded in a particular culture; a culture which directs them in such ways as to make other actors stick to rules which are already defined by international legal frameworks and IAC experts.

This makes the space for adaptation of IAC efforts to local contexts extremely limited if not non-existent. By fostering the homogenisation of institutional structures and cultural norms in the adopting countries, IAC efforts work to negate other conceptions of social norms such as those outlined in the studies of Olivier de Sardan and Gupta discussed in chapter 1. But this construction of the fight against corruption as a hegemonic project that advances a neoliberal society actually disallows the realisation of any political project that differs from the good, uncorrupted society.

Republican models of the state which put an emphasis on civic virtues and conceive the pursuit of self-interest itself as corruption⁴¹² are obviously not reconcilable with a societal ideal based on the regulation (rather than the restriction) of self-interest. As Philp argues, the “tactical attitude to law-keeping/breaking” that the rational actor logic entails would “on republican theories of politics (and others), (...) itself be seen as an indication of corruption”.⁴¹³ Socialist or social democratic states which foresee a large public sector with an important role in the provision of matching social services and also provide extensive and fixed welfare provisions for public officials fail to encourage competition and provide too much discretion for their public officials. They may also be unwilling to restructure their whole state apparatus according to the principles of transparency and control, thus failing to provide the right incentives and to guarantee efficiency in the use of taxes and in the provision of services. Moreover, the high levels of redistribution in social democratic or socialist states, the heavy role of the state in regulating or even running them as well as workers’ unions’ rights are irreconcilable with the primacy of competition and growth in the neoliberal economy of the uncorrupted society. Not least, ‘welfare-state citizens’ with ideologies of social solidarity and expectations of service provision by the state are not able to pursue their interests in the right ways and hold public and private sector actors accountable as IAC discourse envisions. The incompatibility with the IAC Universal of communist states in which the desire to belong to the wealthy

⁴¹² See Philp (1997)

⁴¹³ Philp (1997: 447)

bourgeoisie is regarded as corruption⁴¹⁴ and which feature complete control over the economy by the proletariat need not even be mentioned. Furthermore, participatory democracies which constantly subject free citizens to the will of their fellows and conceive corruption as ‘duplicitous exclusion’ from society and participatory processes⁴¹⁵ are rendered invalid in the face of a liberal procedural conception of democratic decision-making as regular elections and self-interested naming and shaming.

While the comprehensiveness of its Universal and its concomitant negation of all sorts of other societal ideals has the potential to render IAC discourse a very contested and resisted project, we have already seen in the previous chapters that the discourse employs a variety of discursive logics that defend it from such external contestations. Having identified the comprehensive Universal that the ‘fight against corruption’ symbolises, we can see another and very important logic through which the IAC project shields itself against potential dislocation. This logic relies on its peculiar composition which features a negatively formulated symbolic equivalent of the Universal (the ‘fight against corruption’), which appears to be a type 2 claim but is in fact a type 3 claim. This needs some explanation. As mentioned in chapter 2, Nonhoff distinguishes between different claims to the Universal, namely type 1 claims that articulate a necessary condition for the curing of the lack of the Universal (cumulative claims), type 2 claims that articulate a necessary condition for the curing of the lack of the Universal that is at the same time a sufficient condition for the fulfilment of other claims that are oriented towards the Universal (subsumptive claims), and type 3 claims that articulate a sufficient condition for the curing of the lack of the Universal (comprehensive claims).⁴¹⁶ The fight against corruption comes across as a project which does not seem to impose a substantive political good but merely aims to combat a particular behaviour (corruption) and to get some processes right. While this would make it a type 2 claim, the analysis has shown that it in fact details the ways of societal organisation to such a comprehensive extent that it renders all claims oriented towards another Universal invalid (type 3 claim). Thus, the fight against corruption emerges as a comprehensive claim towards the Universal which is concealed by its modestly-sounding ‘representative’, the fight against corruption,

⁴¹⁴ Mayer (1993)

⁴¹⁵ See Warren (2004)

⁴¹⁶ Nonhoff (2006: 119)

and thus does not easily arouse the interest and criticism of politically differently-minded actors.

Conclusion

The aim of the thesis was to investigate the societal ideals that are implicit in the IAC agenda, and to examine the ways in which they are constructed and advanced, with a particular focus on the coherence of these constructions. Adopting a poststructuralist hegemony theoretical perspective, the thesis inquired into the structures of IAC discourse. It examined whether it constitutes one hegemonic project or whether different politico-economic ideals contest each other in the discourse and investigated the discursive logics through which the ideal(s) was/were constructed and advanced. The analysis was based on a set of strategic policy documents and interviews with the staff of three main IAC actors; TI, the UNDP and the World Bank.

Summing up the contribution of the thesis in a nutshell, it revealed, on the one hand, that the IAC agenda strives to realise what can be interpreted as an advanced liberal ideal of a good society. On the other hand, it showed how the discourses of the three powerful IAC actors construct this society surprisingly coherently as the 'right' one, while other societal systems are presented as inadequate, and it demonstrated how they combine forces to transform these 'inadequate' societies. In the course of this, the thesis was able to offer a number of reasons why this enterprise is rarely scrutinised and disputed, thus facilitating its advancement.

The thesis was presented in two parts. The first part, consisting of chapters 1 and 2, dealt with the existing literature on corruption and anticorruption efforts and set out post-Marxist discourse and hegemony theory as an alternative approach to researching IAC efforts; and the second part of the thesis comprised the empirical analysis of IAC discourse.

More specifically, the first chapter drew attention to the potentially normative and political nature of the IAC agenda and to the lack of political controversy surrounding it but also the lack of academic inquiry into this topic. It argued that the dominant positivist approach to researching corruption is unable to examine the ways in which corruption and anticorruption activities are socially constructed and potentially related to social norms and societal ideals. It showed how a broadly post-positivist perspective allows investigation of the normative and historically and culturally contingent nature of conceptions of corruption and also shifts the focus onto

IAC efforts as a site where meanings of corruption and potentially also the meaning of ideals of uncorrupted societies are constructed. By way of giving an overview of the findings of existing critical studies of IAC efforts, the chapter identified an extensive need for further investigation of different but closely related aspects of the IAC agenda. While the critical literature claimed that the IAC agenda constitutes a consensual neoliberal undertaking, the chapter found both the consensus claim and the neoliberal interpretation to be insufficiently proven. It showed that much remained to be investigated with regards to the political ideals purported through the IAC agenda, the consensus on these by different IAC actors, and the ways in which these ideals are constructed and advanced.

For an investigation of these aspects, chapter 2 set out a post-Marxist discourse and hegemony theoretical approach to IAC discourse. It explained the ontological and epistemological presuppositions of PDHT as elaborated by Laclau and Mouffe. Moreover, it introduced further theoretical tools, namely the concept of the hegemonic project as developed by Nonhoff and a conception of more detailed discursive logics. The analytical tool of the hegemonic stratagems distinguished by Nonhoff as the general (political and fantasmatic) discursive logics of hegemonic projects was amended by an analytical perspective on more specific discursive logics. Following Glynos and Howarth, these can be referred to the categories of political, fantasmatic and social logics. As the chapter explained, combining both analytical tools allowed tracing of how, in IAC discourse, hegemonic stratagems and more specific logics combine to construct corruption and societal ideals and to advance these ideals in specific (consensual or conflictive) ways. Thus, the chapter provided an analytical grid specifically suited to examine the gaps in the literature by addressing the research question that asked (1) to what extent IAC discourse constitutes one coherent hegemonic project, (2) how hegemonic stratagems and/or other discursive logics structuring the discourse construct and advance particular societal ideals, or (3) how they diverge and dislocate each other.

The second part of the thesis contained the empirical analysis of IAC discourse. In line with the chosen theoretical approach, the empirical chapters were structured first and foremost according to the main political logic of IAC discourse, the antagonistic division of the discursive space into a Universal or a sought after societal ideal and an 'antagonist' threatening that Universal. While chapter 3 primarily analysed the

construction of corruption as an ‘enemy’ to the Universal (in chain C of IAC discourse), chapters 4, 5 and 6 investigated the aims of the fight against corruption, the specifications of the Universal, the reform strategies and instruments to realise that Universal, and the concrete shape of that Universal as constructed in IAC discourse. By tracing the deeply interconnected, general and specific, logics of these constructions, the empirical chapters simultaneously addressed the questions of the societal ideal inherent in IAC discourse, the logics of its construction and advancement and their coherence i.e. the extent of consensus surrounding them.

Findings and argument

The empirical analysis showed that IAC discourse constitutes a coherent hegemonic project, displaying the three core stratagems ‘equivalisation of differential claims oriented toward the Universal’ (I), ‘antagonistic division of the discursive space’ (II) and ‘representation’ (III) in a clear and coherent manner. In addition, four additional hegemonic stratagems were distinguished, namely the basic stratagem of ‘super-differential demarcation’ (IV), the ‘emergent openness of interpretation of the representative’ (V), and the ‘institution/ perpetuation of subject positions for socio-political forces’ (VI), demonstrating additional ways in which the hegemonic project seeks to advance the two chains and expand. Given that the discourse was assessed as an entirety and without explicitly focussing on changes over time, it was not the aim of the thesis to delineate in detail stratagem VII, the ‘targeted and sporadic breaking of the antagonistic frontier’.

As one of the main purposes of employing the hegemonic stratagems as a theoretical tool was to examine the hypothesis of a political consensus within the IAC agenda and to evaluate to what extent such a consensus exists, this consensus could be confirmed to exist to a very high degree, thus answering the first research question. Addressing the third research question, divergences were discerned in the constitution of the two chains of equivalence, yet they were found to serve rather than dislocate the hegemonic project (see discussion of findings on coherence below).

However, these two questions could only be answered by addressing the second research question which asked how hegemonic stratagems and/or other discursive lo-

gics structuring the discourse construct and advance particular societal ideals. Thus, addressing this question constituted the main focus of the analysis and in turn led to what can be categorised as three sets of findings.

The first set of findings speaks to the question of the nature of the societal ideal and consists of the findings on what has been termed the ‘social’ logics structuring the ideal of the uncorrupted society. The second (and closely related) set of findings of the thesis speaks to the questions of how IAC discourse constructs corruption and a particular societal ideal, and how it advances that ideal. This set of contributions consists of the findings on the political logics of IAC discourse and on two specific fantasmatic logics which enhance these political logics. The third set of findings speaks to the cross-cutting question of consensus and coherence but also divergence and contradiction in these constructions of corruption and societal ideals. Together, they provide a comprehensive picture of the political nature of IAC discourse as operationalised in the thesis. Let me first summarise the first set of findings.

Social logics

As the analysis revealed, IAC discourse constructs and advances a particular Universal, an imaginary ideal of how societies should be organised. According to PDHT, the necessary incompleteness of any social structure will ultimately prevent the full realisation of this ideal; yet its ‘social logics’, the ways in which this ideal is to function according to IAC discourse or to a certain extent may already function in IAC target countries could be drawn out from the discourse (particularly in chapters 4 and 6).¹

The Universal or the uncorrupted society constructed in IAC discourse relies on the rational actor logic discerned in chapter 3, which posits that people are universally self-interested and rationally follow their (economic, or material) interests. As chap-

¹ Again, it must be stressed that given the way IAC discourse was accessed in this thesis no statements can be made about the actual extent to which these logics are actually ‘social’ in the sense of constituting normalised workings in the target societies or still ‘political’ in the sense that they take place as hegemonic articulations in an antagonistic environment. The term ‘social logics’ is thus to be understood as pointing to what IAC discourse seeks to institute as the normal ways of societal organisation in target countries – a process which happens according to different political logics.

ter 4 revealed, it is structured according to the incentives logic, which is closely related to the rational actor logic. This logic posits that, rather than condemning human self-interest or attempting to forcefully contain it, this unchangeable human character trait needs to be respected, allowing people to freely pursue their self-interest. Governing processes then must be organised in a way that guarantees people's free pursuit of their self-interests but at the same time also secures these governing processes themselves from subversion, destabilisation and destruction by self-interested individuals. The incentives logic makes the securing of governing processes the highest principle of the uncorrupted society. Good societies are those organised in such a way that they set particular positive and negative external incentives to the self-interest of rational actors, allowing individuals to pursue their self-interest while at the same time safeguarding the stability of these processes by incentivising the multiplication and maximisation of these individual interests. These incentives are organised around the nodal points of minimisation of discretion (or: clear rules of the game), competition, transparency, accountability and integrity. The 'clear rules' set up the rules of the uncorrupted society that are concerned with regulating social relations according to the 'right' incentives. The compliance with those rules is ensured via rewards attainable through competition as a positive incentive for individual self-interest, and through a combination of transparency and accountability as setting constraints or negative incentives. If the incentives are 'well set', rational actors will stick to the rules, thus displaying integrity.

Inquiring into the concrete policy demands of IAC discourse, chapter 6 further specified the concrete logics structuring social, political and economic relations in the uncorrupted society. It highlighted the advanced liberal logic structuring these relations, which posits that both institutional and cultural incentivisation is needed for the uncorrupted society to function in the right ways. In the uncorrupted society, individual self-interests are incentivised not only by rationally designed institutions but also by particular cultural designs, which make them responsibly pursue their interests and thus manage the corruption risk of public and private sector actors. This gives rise to a set of institutional arrangements and cultural requirements for the organisation of the public and private sectors as well as for civil society. These include that the public sector is extensively structured by market principles, transparency and interdependent institutional control mechanisms; the economy is based on liberal,

competitive and transparent markets; the rule of law is secured by the state; minimal social services are provided for citizens; corporations act responsibly in the sense of ensuring their own competitive behaviour, transparency and internal accountability; and active civil society members responsibly pursue their interests by ensuring the successful incentivisation of public and private sector actors through oversight and control (the latter takes the form of ‘ringing the bell’ of oversight institutions; elections; and responsible consumer behaviour).

Moreover, the uncorrupted society is characterised by the logic of reflexive government that folds back onto itself in the sense that the state manages the risk of society to an important extent by managing the corruption risk of its own governing processes through the right incentive-setting and in the sense that civil society and the private sector develop towards self-management and responsibility, by taking over processes of governing, which always entail the channelling of self-interests. States, international organisations and other regulatory entities exert an indirect supervision over these self-governing processes via evaluating their performance through mechanisms such as benchmarking. While the thesis has revealed this particular societal ideal to be inherent in IAC discourse, it has also, and equally importantly, traced the ways in which this ideal and its social logics are advanced in the discursive space.

Political and fantasmatic logics

These insights constitute the second set of findings and refer to the ways in which IAC discourse attempts to change and restructure the discursive space to orient it toward this (ultimately unattainable) Universal² and which are, in the language of PDHT, the political logics of IAC discourse.

Throughout the empirical chapters, by tracing how the discourse constructs two chains of equivalence, one containing corruption and the other containing the fight against corruption as their main nodal points, the thesis was able to reveal the main political logic that structures IAC discourse and thus aids the advancement of its

² The extent to which IAC discourse has already expanded in the discursive space was not an object of the investigation conducted in this thesis.

Universal: the ‘antagonistic division of the discursive space’ (stratagem II), which, according to PDHT, is the main logic of hegemonic projects. The existence and nature of this division and the ways in which it is expanded, thus advancing the Universal discussed above, were in turn revealed by tracing a number of other, more specific discursive logics within the discourse.

Chapter 3 demonstrated how, crucially for the hegemonic project, IAC discourse sets up corruption as a dangerous ‘enemy’ or antagonist to the Universal. It is this construction that gives rise to the antagonistic divide of the discursive space and sets up the uncorrupted society discussed above as an endangered and at the same time desirable Universal. The linguistic equivalences of corruption with a number of negatively connoted signifiers in this ‘corruption chain’, or chain C, construct corruption on the one hand, as an immense threat to societies which needs to be overcome, as a symbol of lack and destruction, and on the other, as a very particular problem, namely the absence of the particular Universal outlined in chain AC and discussed above.

Importantly, the chapter demonstrated how IAC discourse renders the enterprise of fighting corruption persuasive through what was identified as a particular fantastic logic with a horrific dimension. By equating corruption with a great number of negative attributes and through the use of metaphors which ‘monstrify’ it, IAC discourse articulates it as an enormous threat to all people, which will grow if not contained; in doing so it enhances the energy and direction of the main political logic of the antagonistic division of the discursive space. The discursive logic that turns corruption itself into the only ‘subject position’ in chain C, as an ubiquitous potential threat to everyone, also constructs everyone as a potential victim of corruption and thus facilitates the articulation of subject positions into chain AC, as supporters of the fight against corruption. This in turn serves the expansion of chain AC, containing the Universal.

While these articulations convey the necessity to fight corruption and to support the IAC enterprise, chain C was also shown to construct corruption as a very particular problem (namely the absence of the particular Universal). Chapter 3 revealed that, much like the Universal, the construction of corruption is underpinned by the rational actor logic. In line with this, corruption is defined not so much as a violation

of higher moral values, but rather as an act of breaking the rules defining the public interest for one's own interest. Moreover, it was demonstrated that the causes of corruption are constructed as particular failures in societal structures external to individuals, negating the legitimate existence of systems allowing for discretion and monopoly and failing to control individuals. By way of articulations of its consequences, corruption is furthermore constructed as an immense threat to economic welfare and stability but also to a vague market-liberal democratic societal ideal. This articulates as desirable a society in which structures are designed to deal with self-interested individuals and in which stability and economic growth are safeguarded. In such a society, IAC discourse conveys, all the horrible consequences of corruption are avoided. While this prepares the ground for the articulation of the Universal in chain AC as a society in which these conditions are fulfilled, other articulations construct developing countries as particularly far away from such a society. While corruption on the one hand, is presented as an omnipresent threat, on the other it is articulated as particularly prominent in developing countries. This conveys that it is here where societal structures are most problematic and where corruption needs to be fought most urgently, instituting the Universal.

While the analysis of chain C made a central contribution to the understanding of how IAC discourse works towards advancing the Universal through particular constructions of corruption, the analysis of 'equivalisations of differential claims oriented toward the Universal' (stratagem I) contained in the 'anticorruption chain' or chain AC yielded many more insights into the political logics in which IAC discourse constructs and advances this particular societal ideal and into the 'social' logics governing that ideal.

As chapter 4 demonstrated, different articulations on the other side of the antagonistic divide, in chain AC, also work in fantasmatic logics that contribute to the persuasiveness of the fight against corruption. As was shown, the 'fight against corruption' not only functions as the 'representative' of chain AC (stratagem III), thus giving the hegemonic project its name and assuming the role of the 'symbolic equivalent of the Universal'; it is also rendered extremely open to interpretation through the equivalisations of a wide range of positively connoted but only very vaguely or diversely defined aims, which provides it with a beatific dimension and therefore constructing it as desirable. This 'emergent openness of interpretation of the symbolic equivalent

of the Universal' (stratagem V) has the potential to enhance the persuasiveness of the discourse for a wide range of supporters because it can accommodate quite diverse expectations regarding the lacking Universal, thus energising the political logic of IAC discourse and serving to advance the hegemonic project. The discussion showed that the declared aims of the fight against corruption hardly clarify the Universal pursued and function mainly as 'vectors'³ for the political logic of expanding chain AC. While many of the signifiers figuring as aims – such as equality, fairness, democracy, social justice etc – did not play any other role in the discourse apart from rendering it persuasive, some of them – such as inclusion, participation and economic growth – turned out to function as important nodal points in the social logics of the Universal.

In stark contrast to the vague and broad aims of the fight against corruption, the signifiers constructed as main defining features or 'specifications' of the Universal were very clearly articulated in chain AC, as the discussion in chapter 4 made clear. By (linguistically) articulating in chain AC the signifiers minimisation of discretion (or: clear rules of the game), competition, transparency, accountability and integrity as crucial elements or specifications of a society able to contain the threat of corruption constructed in chain C, IAC discourse works towards advancing its Universal. It conveys that a system featuring these things, and the incentives logic they bring with them, is superior to the problematic societal systems presented in chain C, allowing corruption to flourish, and is thus desirable.

The chapter showed how even morally connoted concepts such as integrity and ethics, which at first may not seem compatible with a rationalist discourse, are integrated into chain AC. Instead of clashing with the incentives logic, they are coherently rearticulated along the lines of interest-maximisation and incentive-setting. As chapter 4 argued, their positive, virtue-related connotation can increase the persuasiveness of the discourse while their seemingly technical re-articulation enables the discourse to keep its 'values' rather implicit, shielding itself from (potential) accusations of imposing Western values and thus from dislocation.

³ Glynos/Howarth (2007: 145)

Besides these linguistic ways in which IAC discourse advances the Universal, articulating it as filling the lack embodied by corruption, the thesis also analysed more practical or material ways in which IAC discourse works toward advancing this ideal. Chapter 5 inquired into the ‘instrumental claims’ of IAC discourse, by asking what IAC discourse constructs as the reform strategies to fight corruption and as the instruments to pursue these strategies.

The discussion of the reform strategies (legal reform, institutional reform and civil society reform) through which IAC actors attempt to fight corruption, demonstrated how these reforms work as strategies for comprehensive restructuring of societies in developing countries (and in the case of TI in countries all around the world) according to the incentives logic. Thus, what is articulated as strategies to fight corruption functions as political strategies to restructure the laws, institutions and the civil society in target countries in order to re-orient them towards the Universal. As discussed, this advancement of the Universal is facilitated by the articulation in chain C of societal structures not based on incentives as inadequate and of developing countries as particularly problematic in that regard.

The examination of the ‘instruments’ through which these reform strategies are pursued in IAC discourse revealed the interesting and complex logics in which the three IAC actors work together but also in different ways towards advancing the Universal. Distinguishing the ‘institution/ perpetuation of subject positions for socio-political forces’ (stratagem VI), the chapter showed on the one hand how the Universal is advanced through the engagement of the three powerful IAC actors in the fight against corruption. It became clear that they function as important discursive nodal points which, by way of their immense financial resources, political and business networks and authority, are able to considerably expand chain AC and advance the Universal in the target countries. However, it was also shown how IAC discourse has already incorporated a wide range of other socio-political forces as active supporters of the fight against corruption, enhancing its potential to hegemonize the discursive space.

Yet the chapter also revealed the crucial function of the kind of knowledge used for the design of instruments of corruption but also produced and reproduced in IAC discourse as such an instrument in itself. The rational choice inspired research that

IAC discourse almost exclusively draws on and produces not only turned out to structure the constructions of corruption and the Universal in crucial ways, namely via the rational actor and the incentives logic it introduces in IAC discourse; it was also interpreted as capable of considerably aiding the fight against corruption and thus the advancement of the Universal by concealing the normative character of this enterprise. Given the established authority of positivist research as an objective and politically neutral way of understanding and explaining the world, the kind of research IAC discourse draws on is able to imbue IAC efforts with an air of neutrality and objectivity. Its dissemination and production helps to justify the measures taken because they are advocated in scientific studies. This in turn may explain, at least to a certain extent, their almost universally unquestioned acceptance, and the lack of political contestation surrounding them. This lack of political contestation of the fight against corruption, and thus dislocation of IAC discourse, clearly facilitates the advancement of the Universal. Thus, the research that chapter 1 of this thesis critiqued as being unable to deal with the normative and potentially political nature of corruption and IAC efforts was revealed as not only structuring but also aiding the political logic of IAC discourse; as was shown in chapter 5, it has the potential to have a very real political impact if used to design anticorruption measures and map out a good society – irrespective of whether or not it is based on an ‘as if’ assumption.

Moreover, the analysis of the other ‘instruments’ applied by IAC actors in form of lending; technical assistance; and advocacy, awareness raising and civil society capacity building revealed that these ‘instruments’ are designed as means to implement the incentives logic. While the WB focuses more on lending, the UNDP’s focus is on technical assistance and advocacy, and TI’s focus is mainly on advocacy, awareness raising and civil society capacity building, the chapter demonstrated how these three actors combine their power as three prominent nodal points in IAC discourse to form a particular ‘instrumental logic’; through conditional lending for institutional reform, technical assistance for legal and institutional reform, global awareness raising, knowledge provision, coalition-building with manifold actors, and civil society mobilisation they pursue in different ways the reform strategies discussed earlier, thus advancing the Universal in very material ways.

The analysis of instrumental claims also showed two linguistic ‘super-differential demarcations’ (stratagem IV) which work to shield IAC discourse from dislocation. The first draws a demarcation between IAC discourse and any claims for Western superiority, albeit in different ways. While chapter 3 already showed this demarcation to be drawn by claims by TI that the CPI is not intended to brand countries, chapter 5 argued that the demarcation is enhanced by claims that IAC measures are context-sensitive, yet also drawn by claims that IAC discourse is not imposing Western values because there is already a global consensus on what corruption means and how it should be fought. The second super-differential demarcation is drawn between IAC discourse and ‘political discourses’, articulating IAC measures as unpolitical. While the former demarcation works to shield IAC discourse against criticism in the form of accusations of Western hubris or neoimperialist tendencies, the second demarcation shields it against inquiry into and potential criticism of its normative and political nature. Both demarcations work to secure the advancement of the Universal and are potentially strengthened by the seemingly objective and neutral knowledge upon which IAC interventions are based. It camouflages not only the political nature of the Universal advanced in IAC discourse and justifies its universalist approach but also allows IAC discourse to make ‘scientifically justified’ articulations that developing countries are more corrupt, thus justifying IAC intervention.

The analysis of what the discourse articulates as concrete policy claims for fighting corruption revealed how the incentives logic traced in the specifications of corruption on the one hand and the instrumental logic linking up the different instruments employed by IAC actors on the other, combine in IAC discourse for a very particular reorganisation of the state, private sector and civil society, thus completing the political logic. Chapter 6 detailed the kind of society emerging from all these claims (the Universal) while tracing and highlighting the logics structuring it (see discussion of social logics above) and illustrating how IAC actors implement it according to their respective instruments. In showing how linguistic claims for particular policy measures and their material articulations combine in the attempt to realise the Universal, the chapter also drew attention to the ways in which the concepts of inclusion and participation, which are not typically associated with neoliberal political agendas, are smoothly incorporated into the discourse. While they may render the discourse persuasive for a range of subject positions, they are rearticulated in line with

the advanced liberal logic in which inclusion and participation of civil society in responsabilisation and incentivisation form a key feature.

In sum, to speak with Laclau and Mouffe, the analysis of political logics has shown how the elaborate articulation of corruption as the symbol for a lack of fullness or as an enemy serves the construction of a common will regarding the proposed Universal as the best possible social arrangement. While chain AC works in different ways to advance the Universal, it does so via constant references to corruption as articulated in chain C.

Coherence and contradiction

The third set of findings refers to the question of consensus or contestation i.e. of coherence or dislocation of the two antagonistic chains within the discourse.

While there were reasons to doubt the consensus argued for by the critical literature and while one could have expected differences not only within but especially between the discourses of the three IAC organisations the thesis has shown a surprisingly consensual picture of the IAC discourse on the discursive level of strategic policy documents that was investigated. The empirical chapters were able to show that IAC discourse consists of two quite clearly defined chains of equivalences, the presence of which also signals that IAC discourse is one coherent hegemonic project. The ‘equivalisation of differential claims oriented toward the Universal’ (stratagem I), chain AC (discussed in chapters 4, 5, and 6) as well as the ‘equivalisation of differential claims oriented against the Universal’ (discussed in chapter 3) happen quite coherently, letting the ‘antagonistic divide’ emerge rather clearly, with only minor blurrings.

Some articulations could be interpreted as smaller discourse-internal dislocations, for example contradictions with regards to the rational actor logic (in chapter 3) and the incentives logic (in chapter 4). Yet they were not very pronounced and easily diffuse in these dominant logics without affecting the overall constitution of the chains.

Other divergences were found between the discourses of the three organisations but did not present dislocations to the chains either. For example, such divergences arose

with regards to the definitions of corruption (chapter 3); however these differences did not seem to lead to differences with regards to IAC measures and the Universal. Also divergences in the definition of vague aims did not dislocate chain AC but can rather be interpreted as enhancing the beatific dimension of the fight against corruption. Divergences with regard to the geographical scope of reform, while not hampering the expansion of the hegemonic project in the first place, turned out to blur the boundaries of the discourse due to the global reach of actual IAC policies. Moreover, divergences with regards to the ‘instruments’ applied to fighting corruption came down to a division of labour for realising the Universal rather than a mutual dislocation of instruments. The high degree of consensus within IAC discourse was also expressed in mutual articulations of the respective other IAC organisations in the discourses of all three actors and in the subsequent absence of a fight over the ‘actual advocate’ of the fight against corruption. Thus, organisational differences in constitution, overall focus, history and modes of operation make hardly any difference for the social and political logics of IAC discourse; this again points to the defining power of the kind of knowledge shared in IAC discourse for the construction of the Universal and the ways through which to realise it.

Furthermore, the thesis pointed out that some contradictions in the discourse do not necessarily endanger the coherence of the discourse but could actually serve its political logic if held together.⁴ Such examples were the articulation of everyone as potential perpetrators of corruption but also as victims of corruption, the articulation of corruption as an omnipresent problem but one that is particularly bad in developing countries, the articulation of the fight against corruption as not imposing Western values but the articulation of Western systems as superior, the articulation of IAC measures as context-sensitive but also consensual and the simultaneous application of universalist measures in countries around the world, and the articulation of IAC measures as unpolitical and objective and the simultaneous restructuring of whole societies through IAC measures.

Thus, as we have seen, the thesis has not simply confirmed the claim of the critical anticorruption literature that there is a consensus in IAC discourse; it has also re-

⁴ What constitutes a contradiction is of course a matter of perception rather than an essential quality and this perception is shaped by the onlookers’ positionality in socially shaped structures.

vealed how this consensus is constituted and advanced, explained its nuances, and thus grounded its argument much more firmly in empirical material. In doing so, it has revised and clarified many of the unclarities in the critical literature discussed in chapter 1.

Relevance for gaps in the literature

Most of all, the empirical analysis conducted in this thesis refined the picture of the societal ideal advanced by the discourse. While the literature claimed there to be a neoliberal ideal without specifying the nature of this ideal much, the thesis revealed the constitution and social logics of this ideal in detail, showing how it is reflective of advanced liberal ways of governing.

It was also able to show that such an interpretation is able to make sense of aspects of IAC discourse that had caused confusion in the critical literature (see chapter 1). For example, the confusion surrounding the role of morality and eventual tensions with a technical logic in IAC discourse could be resolved by showing how morally connoted concepts figure in the discourse but are rearticulated very coherently in terms of the dominant incentives logic, and by pointing to the potential political consequences of this.⁵ Similarly, the analysis of civil society participation advocated in IAC discourse revealed that this feature, which so far had not received any attention in the critical anticorruption literature, is a central part of the incentivising structures of the advanced liberal society to be brought about through the cultural reform advocated in the discourse. Concepts like equality were shown to mainly serve the persuasiveness of the discourse rather than to play a role in the actual Universal.⁶ The thesis also demonstrated that, far from leaving the private sector untouched, IAC discourse assigns it an important role in the incentivisation structures of the uncorrupted society.⁷ The confusion about the role of institutions in a society made up by rational

⁵ Cf. Polzer (2001); Bukovansky (2006)

⁶ Cf. Bukovansky (2006: 195)

⁷ Cf. Brown/Cloke (2004); Bukovansky (2006); Murphy (2011)

actors could easily be explained by demonstrating how institutions are constructed as main sites of mutual control of such rational actors.⁸

Importantly, the thesis not simply confirmed the consensus argument but refined it substantively by showing that there are divergences within IAC discourse and tracing the ways in which they nevertheless combine to a consensual advancement of a particular ideal through a division of labour between the three IAC organisations.

In doing so, the thesis also spoke to disagreements in the critical literature about the role of TI in the neoliberal enterprise of fighting corruption. As the thesis revealed, TI's grass-roots approach does not lead its discourse to differ much from the discourses of the WB and the UNDP, either in terms of the Universal pursued or the ways in which to pursue it. Instead, by claiming the whole world as a discursive territory for the expansion of its hegemonic project, TI discourse can be regarded as an even more ambitious promoter of the Universal than the other two. Given that the anticorruption efforts of the UNDP had so far completely avoided academic attention, the thesis made an important contribution in revealing how UNDP discourse forms an important part of the IAC consensus and hegemonic project.

Furthermore, by refining some of the insinuations of the critical literature regarding hidden intentions of IAC actors,⁹ the interviews conducted for this thesis showed that, far from planning to improve the world for international business, many subject positions furthering the fight against corruption want to make the world more just for everyone. They believe in the aims of the fight against corruption, while at the same time holding that the right way to fight it is that suggested by rational choice models.

IAC discourse within wider discursive structures

Apart from fulfilling its main aim of investigating the logics of the operationalised section of IAC discourse and answering the research question, the thesis was also able to gain some ad hoc insights on the relations of IAC discourse to wider structures of power and knowledge. It became clear that the social and political logics of

⁸ Cf. Brown/Cloke (2004: 288)

⁹ Cf. Murphy (2011)

IAC discourse are informed and supported by the dominance of positivist research approaches both in academia and in development practice, and that influential socio-political actors are already active in pushing the fight against corruption further, helping to advance the Universal. The analysis of specifications also contributed to an understanding of good governance measures as incentives-based societal restructurings. These insights contribute to an understanding of IAC discourse as a hegemonic project that seems to connect with wider hegemonic structures that divide the discursive space in similar ways. This is also suggested by the ways in which the logics of the Universal seem to be reflective of the logics that Dean has distinguished as characterising contemporary neoliberal regimes more generally.

Significance of findings

The significance of the findings of this thesis on the political nature of IAC discourse become particularly clear against the background of the historical and cultural-geographical variations of conceptions of corruption demonstrated in chapter 1. According to PDHT, the construction of hegemonic formations can only happen via the negation of many other discourses and their concomitant identities and alternative universals. Fighting corruption in IAC discourse concerns the transformation of existing social formations in the target countries and thus the negation of their existing orders and identities. Having uncovered the very particular and comprehensive Universal advanced in IAC discourse, we can now understand that the discourse is negating a wide range of alternative models. Excluded from the IAC hegemonic project are all sorts of other Western models of the state and of democracy (e.g. deliberative, participatory, radical, reform liberal, classical liberal, social democracy, socialism, communism, republicanism, anarchism etc.). The exclusion and thus delegitimisation of more socially inclined and more state-centred political projects in IAC discourse have become particularly obvious through its reaction to the global financial crisis. Rather than prompting IAC organisations to strongly condemn unsocial behaviour by private sector actors and to demand heavy regulation and restriction of financial and other markets by the state, instead it seems to have led to a deepening of the focus in IAC discourse on governing mechanisms according to market virtues. The Universal that IAC discourse advances also negates all other conceptions of cor-

ruption and a good society that may exist in other cultural contexts (such as the local conceptions illustrated in chapter 1, but also many other examples such as theocratic models of society, or those dominated by particular ethnic or other social groups). This negation does not happen via violent intrusion or through moral condemnation but through arguments about the superiority of a particular, seemingly technical system which are based in crucial ways on constructions of corruption as an enemy to this system, and through material structures backing them. Also, explicitly racist or fascist conceptions of societies are negated by IAC discourse; however IAC discourse expresses some distrust in the ability of non-Western people to pursue the right incentives and clearly contributes to persistent Western conceptions of people in the developing world as less able to construct good societies.

Overall, IAC discourse delegitimizes any social constellation and political project that involves a conception of human beings which differs from 'rational and self-interested'. This also explains my discomfort back in 2005 when, during my TI internship, I was involved in the production of a 'risk map' which assessed the risk in government institutions according to the rational actor model – this was not the way in which I wanted to look at the human beings around me, and the incentives logic embedded in the risk map struck me as a strangely technical way of understanding social relations. These negations of different social structures and political projects are related to other negations, such as of non-positivist ways of acquiring knowledge and investigating corruption and possible counter-measures. In a political project that is structured consistently according to the presuppositions and findings of positivist, rational choice inspired research, any other ways of looking at the world (such as the one adopted in this thesis) can only be risky and wrong and endanger the fight against corruption.

While IAC discourse seems to be rather successful in camouflaging its political nature, as the seemingly unquestioned public acceptance of IAC measures as self-evidently good indicates, it was particularly important to reveal not only the Universal advanced but also the manifold ways in which the discourse covers over its political nature and works to appear as a politically neutral and merely technical agenda. In that sense, the analysis of the political nature of IAC discourse conducted in this thesis can be understood as an intervention into these covering logics.

Wider debates in the literature that the thesis speaks to

These findings on the political nature and strategies of IAC discourse speak in interesting and important ways to wider debates in the critical literature especially on the international development agenda (of which IAC measures form a part through their link to powerful development institutions and their aim of creating development). However, it also points to the political implications of dominant Western research approaches and agendas.

In finding the Universal in IAC discourse indicative of an advanced liberal logic of government, the thesis speaks to other critical studies of the international development agenda which have pointed to its neoliberal or liberal nature. In particular, the findings on the role of civil society in the ‘uncorrupted society’ seem closely related to Williams’ findings in his study of the WB’s good governance efforts, where he argues that “the policies and practices of ‘good governance’ are a specifically liberal project of social transformation”.¹⁰

Considering that it is international financial institutions such as the WB and the IMF which tend to be criticised as the main advocates of neoliberal policy agendas, and that NGOs still tend to be regarded as more socially oriented actors,¹¹ the examination of TI’s discourse in this thesis makes an important contribution. It demonstrated that TI forms part of this neoliberal agenda, adhering to rational choice inspired forms of knowledge and closely cooperating with other international actors. This insight contributes to findings regarding the role of NGOs and other civil society actors in the advancement of a Western-centric neoliberal agenda especially in developing countries, such as Medina’s study of how a transnational network of conservation NGOs introduces neoliberal, market-based governing techniques for environmental conservation in Belize.¹²

¹⁰ Williams (2008: 6). See also Harrison (2004); Escobar (1995); Cooke/Kothari (2001); Craig et al (2006); Rankin (2001); Cammack (2002); Sukarieh/Tannock (2008); Thomas (2001); Moore (2000); Kothari (2005); Brohman (1995); Bracking (2009)

¹¹ Cf. e.g. Bukovansky (2006)

¹² Medina (2010). See also Wallace (2009); Gill (1997); Nelson (1996); Klees (1998); Shivji (2007); Kamat (2003); Finn/Sarangi (2008); Lavalette/Ferguson (2007); Humphreys (2004); Fisher (1997); Tembo (2003)

While other studies have critically examined the concept of participation in international development efforts, the findings of the thesis on the role of civil society participation as a central element of the advanced liberal rule advocated by IAC discourse add to problematisations of the role of participation in international development, for example those in Cooke and Kothari's edited volume on the 'tyranny of participation'.¹³

The findings regarding the significance of rational choice theory for the political nature of IAC discourse relate to other examinations of the development agenda which have drawn attention to the links between the role of positivist knowledge in development enterprises and their (neo)liberal nature. Brohman for example argues that the dominance of neoclassical economic theory leads to neoliberal development policies characterised by a neglect of sociocultural and political relations, values and their social formation¹⁴ - an argument which is related to my findings on the rational choice inspired incentives logic in IAC discourse but is also modified by the findings of the role of culture and values in the uncorrupted advanced liberal society.

Related to this, my findings on the alleged unpoliticalness of IAC discourse and their discursive effects speak to other studies that have demonstrated the de-politicisation of the societal restructuring that is undertaken by powerful international organisations in developing countries, such as Ferguson's study of the 'Anti-Politics Machine' at work in development projects in Lesotho.¹⁵

Not least the thesis also applied two rather recent methodological takes on Laclau-Mouffian hegemony theory – the hegemonic stratagems developed by Nonhoff¹⁶ and the set of discursive logics by Glynos and Howarth.¹⁷ Thus, it is of relevance for methodological debates about how to operationalise this theoretical approach in concrete empirical investigations,¹⁸ and for respective practical suggestions to do so.¹⁹

¹³ Cooke/Kothari (2001); see also Hickey/Mohan (2005)

¹⁴ Brohman (1995); see also Williams (1999)

¹⁵ See e.g. Ferguson (1990); Kurki (2011a); Kurki (2011b); White (1996); Nustad (2001); Williams (2004); Cooke/Kothari (2001); Berenson (2010); Harriss (2002); Gasper (1996)

¹⁶ Nonhoff (2006)

¹⁷ Glynos/Howarth (2007)

¹⁸ See e.g. Nonhoff (2007); Nonhoff (2006); Howarth et al (2000); Howarth (2008); Howarth (2010); Müller (2008); Critchley/Marchart (2004); Glasze (2008); Glasze/Mattisek (2009); Glynos/Howarth (2007); Howarth (2010)

The combination of these two theoretical tools, and the challenges this entailed, may be of interest to scholars aiming to further develop Laclau and Mouffe inspired research methods.

The thesis has shown the merits of taking seriously the theoretical model of hegemonic discursive construction through antagonistic division of the discursive space into chains of equivalences. While bearing some practical challenges, sticking to the chains certainly helped to draw a clear picture of the structure of the discourse and the discursive links and logics between its elements. The investigation of the equivalences according to the two chains of equivalence has allowed for detailed insights not only about the coherence of the hegemonic project but also about discourse-internal dynamics between the chains that contribute to its power. Furthermore, Nonhoff's hegemonic stratagems proved helpful in understanding the ways in which IAC discourse seeks to advance as a hegemonic project. However, the thesis also showed that a perspective on the discursive logics distinguished by Glynos and Howarth can contribute considerably to the analytical potential of a Laclau-Mouffian framework, allowing for a widening of the analytical focus to include more specific logics of the discourse under consideration and a better understanding of the particular role of different discursive logics for the functioning of the discourse. Moreover, the thesis has shown that this composite theoretical framework, with slight revisions to the Nonhoffian take, is well capable of addressing also negatively framed societal projects such as the fight against corruption.

Directions for future research

Given that my research shed light on just one level of the international anticorruption discourse (the level of strategic policy documents mainly produced in the 'centrals' of the three IAC organisations examined), further research is needed in order to assess the actual political effects of IAC discourse, and to understand how the discursive structures traced in this thesis are perpetuated, subverted (or rearticulated), and resisted (or dislocated) in other discursive territories.

¹⁹ See e.g. Wullweber (2010); Nonhoff (2006); Methmann (2010); Cornwall/Brock (2005); Marchart (2002); Glasze (2007); Habermann (2008)

With regards to TI for example, more research is needed into how exactly the policy recommendations and knowledge products produced in the Secretariat are or are not taken on board by the different national chapters. With regards to the UNDP, it needs to be examined how UNDP country offices take up the general anticorruption strategies outlined by the UNDP headquarter section on anticorruption in New York. Considering the WB's complex structures, more research is needed regarding the processes of anticorruption policy diffusion within the organisation, such as how exactly the GAC strategy is being translated into concrete project components. One cannot necessarily expect the analysed discourse to be the same in these local and regional branches of the three organisations.

In addition, the practices of other anticorruption organisations and initiatives, such as Tiri, UNODC, the EU, the International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC), the TRACE initiative etc. merit attention in order to understand how they may or may not contribute to the political project assessed in this thesis.²⁰

However, apart from enabling an increased understanding of the inner workings of IAC actors, it is of course very important to investigate how IAC efforts play out in their concrete implementation on the ground. While IAC discourse may not be particularly successful in terms of combating what many people perceive to be corruption in the target countries (see CPI levels), and while this may be partly because the world is not full of rational actors (yet), however it may be successful in instituting particular elements of its Universal, such as distrust, control, free market institutions, competition and 'responsible' NGO initiatives into social relations in the respective societies. The investigation of how concrete anticorruption projects work will render interesting insights about the question of how advanced IAC is as a hegemonic project and how it may be transformed, subverted, co-opted and resisted by different local discourses.

Furthermore, the global dimension of IAC discourse merits further investigation. It will be interesting to examine how the kinds of corporate governance provisions that form part of IAC discourse and the respective civil society oversight mechanisms transform economic relations and the workings of companies. Also, given its influ-

²⁰ For more organisations see UNODC (c)

ential social networks, IAC discourse is likely to exert an influence on the political agendas of other powerful international actors who, if they do not already co-operate with one of the three IAC organisations, use and copy their indices, recommendations and ‘tools’. Such co-operations and ‘best practice’ sharing are likely to reproduce the conceptions of a good, uncorrupted society inherent in IAC discourse and to provide them with an even wider reach.

Consequences for IAC work

The insights that my thesis has rendered pose challenges to practitioners working on anticorruption and indirectly for those working on related issues such as development and governance.

For anticorruption actors my findings have clearly demonstrated that an unpolitical anticorruption agenda is not possible. It is understandable that IAC organisations in the design of their policy recommendations focus on the corrupt people, those who are inclined to damage public goods for their own interests. Yet my thesis has shown that the use of the simplistic rational choice model of human behaviour is not just a strategic decision about how to tackle the problem of corruption technically. It has become clear that if a whole societal system is modelled on an image of human beings as purely self-interested and only exercised by their own economic advantage, the outcome is a particular Western economic ideal type that makes more socially inclined political projects impossible, thus running the risk of breeding precisely the kind of behaviour that it attempts to avoid. While the ongoing denial of the political content of IAC activities by the respective actors serves to camouflage this, recognising the political content of their work would in turn generate important questions and new perspectives for IAC actors. The interest in my findings shown by TI staff during a seminar given at the TI Secretariat in Berlin suggests that IAC actors are at least open to and interested in such considerations.

Ideally, the acceptance of the normative and political nature of the concept of corruption and any anticorruption activity would open up a debate among IAC actors about the political content of the IAC agenda. Are the currently advanced conceptions of corruption and the advocated policy measures working towards the world without

corruption or poverty that they have in mind? Given that at least some of my interviewees seemed to be convinced of its moral underpinnings, the social aims and the context-sensitivity of IAC work, this might not actually be the case.

So if one recognises, for example, that human nature and morality are at least partly shaped in socio-cultural processes, what would an IAC agenda that pays more attention to the complexities and social constitution of human nature look like? How should IAC actors deal with the unavoidable dilemma of wanting to advance certain norms but also wanting to avoid the imposition of Western norms onto non-Western people? Is an international fight against corruption still possible under such preconditions?

While such questions certainly do not make IAC work easier and are likely to endanger the unquestioned legitimacy of the international fight against corruption, they promise to provide more openings for thinking, discussing and eventually agreeing about what a good society should be like. After all, anticorruption fighters do not see themselves as self-interested rational actors, but decide to join IAC organisations because they “feel that they’re aligned in terms of their moral values”.²¹ These values, however, may differ from the ones that are right now embedded in the ideal of the uncorrupted society advanced in IAC efforts. It is my hope that this thesis has enabled better reflection on what those values actually are and thus better debate on what they should be.

²¹ This is the full quote from a TI interviewee: “We honour people (...) we believe in change that is possible through people (...) and I would imagine TI to be a place where people come because they feel that they’re aligned in terms of their moral values” (Interview with TI-S interviewee 2).

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