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THE STRENGTH OF INSTITUTIONS: CORRUPTION, CULTURE AND INSTITUTIONS

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PLENUM 1: DAS ANTI-KORRUPTIONS-BÜNDNIS UND DIE RENAISSANCE DER BÜRGERLICHEN ÖFFENTLICHKEIT – EIN MODERNER KREUZZUG ZUR MORALISIERUNG VON POLITIK UND GESELLSCHAFT?

Corruption is often seen as an integral part of cultural patterns. In fact, corruption is embedded in particular values, it is based on particular institutional and political cultures, and it functions as an inclusionary mechanism in otherwise highly divided societies. However, since corruption always advantages particular social groups above others, deeply ingrained corruption is not necessarily widely accepted – to the contrary. Campaigns against corruption are confronted with cultural traditions and ubiquitous habits. Cultural values that nurture corruption are juxtaposed against institutions that curb corruption. Are institutions capable of counteracting the impact of culture?

This paper explores the role of cultural values and institutions in inducing and supporting corruption. Based on a cross-national sample of 60 countries, the impact of collectivistic and non-egalitarian values patterns is explored within and across different institutional frameworks: mature and transitional democracies.

The results show that the two value patterns impact on the level of corruption even within the institutional framework of mature democracies. However, in transitional countries, institutions are decisive. Institutional designs reduce corruption, independent of highly conducive cultural patterns.