Chapter 4

Corruption in the CIS and Eurasia: Sources, Consequences, and Possible Solutions

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ABSTRACT

The research question is whether there is a sufficiently homogeneous pattern of corruption among 15 countries of Eurasia stemming from the Soviet communist heritage and USSR disintegration that a reasonably common set of anti-corruption reform policy recommendations will be effective. The proposed findings draw on a literature review and a comparative analysis of 2016 Transparency International (TI)’s Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) information for countries in the region. The methodology is an analysis of the literature and the TI 2016 CPI information. There is explicitly no original field research or theory development. Perceived corruption in the region appears to be a heterogeneous phenomenon. There is a wide range in the TI perceived corruption of these countries. Political will and popular support for anti-corruption efforts likely vary greatly across the fifteen countries of CIS and Eurasia. Anti-corruption effectiveness thus likely varies markedly by country. An assessment requires country-by-country detailed investigation.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-3264-4.ch004
INTRODUCTION

Fifteen countries comprising the post-Soviet region identifiable as Eurasia were until 1991 (Kupatadze, 2015) Soviet republics within the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Corruption is a key problem, by both perception and survey, across many of the countries (Rapoza, 2017). Transparency International (TI) characterizes corruption in the region as “rampant” (Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty, 2013). One-third of nearly 60,000 respondents surveyed in 42 countries of Europe and Central Asia by TI in 2016 for its Global Corruption Barometer reported that corruption is a big problem (TI, 2016). A vital difficulty is that how to achieve effective anti-corruption reforms is debatable.

Research Question

The research question is whether there is a sufficiently homogeneous pattern of corruption among these fifteen countries stemming from the pre-1991 Soviet communist heritage and the USSR disintegration of 1991 that a reasonably common set of anti-corruption reform policy recommendations will be effective (CIS Countries, 2009; Dethier, 2003; Dionisie & Checchi, 2008; Friedman, 2012; Holmes, 2009; Interparliamentary Assembly, 2017). This inquiry is not a detailed analysis of cognitive-psychological, socio-economic, and political dimensions of corruption in each of the countries.

Methodology

The methodology combines a selective literature review and a comparative analysis of 2016 Transparency International (TI)’s Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) information for the fifteen countries in the region (TI, 2017a). All CPI information here is derived from TI (2017a). This methodology is a collation of materials rather than a systematic integration within a new conceptual framework or theoretical model. The literature review has two dimensions: (1) general information and theorizing on corruption and anti-corruption reform; and (2) specific information and theorizing on countries in the region. The methodology is a subjective analysis of the literature and 2016 CPI information. There is no original field research or new theory development. There is arguably a marked need for new concepts and theories to help with anti-corruption reform, but the purpose here is only an initial and limited survey of the situation.

There are two obvious limitations to this methodology. The first is that there is no overarching framework for integrating the diverse literature cited. Assessment is explicitly subjective, based on a reading of the literature and the TI perceptions.
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