Rethinking the Anthropology of Corruption
An Introduction to Supplement 18

by Sarah Muir and Akhil Gupta

In our introduction to this special issue, we take stock of where the anthropological literature on corruption has come and where it might go next. Our goal is neither to provide an exhaustive literature review nor to summarize the papers gathered together in this issue. Rather, we aim to identify especially promising areas in need of more focused research and analytic attention and to articulate pressing questions within those areas. Toward that end, we theorize corruption as an object of analysis by framing it as a globalized concept, the practical and social life of which anthropology is especially well suited to study. Finally, we specify how such an approach is especially helpful in disentangling the stubborn problematics that have so persistently dogged both analytic and practical engagements with corruption.

An Anthropology of Corruption?

In many ways, corruption would seem an ideal object of anthropological analysis. The term conjures clandestine transactions outside officially recognized channels; hidden alliances and intimacies; and the rumors, scandals, and gossip that swirl around those illicit and cryptic relations. Within the academic division of labor, anthropology has long taken up the task of teasing out the significance of just these sorts of political, economic, and discursive practices—practices that do not abide by the institutional norms of modern states, markets, and publics but that are nonetheless central to the lived reality of those institutions.

And yet, for some time, corruption received scant attention from anthropologists. Over the past few decades, corruption has become an object of intense popular concern in different parts of the world. At the same time, a robust body of scholarship has arisen in disciplines such as economics and political science, scholarship that has helped shape a globally circulating set of anti-corruption campaigns, policies, and laws. Nonetheless, anthropologists—justifiably wary of reproducing clichéd images of political dysfunction, especially in postcolonial and other contexts that routinely bear the brunt of transna-

tional governance—have often approached the topic with reserve, even reticence.[1]

Recently, however, a sizable corpus of anthropological literature on corruption has begun to coalesce. Examining a variety of illegitimate, illegal, or otherwise irregular political and economic practices, as well as critical discourses about those practices, this literature has developed a properly anthropological approach to corruption. That approach challenges commonplace stereotypes regarding political cultures outside the Global North, even as it also takes seriously the vehement complaints about corruption that have energized so many citizens around the world.

The essays in this special issue of *Current Anthropology* come out of a Wenner-Gren symposium convened in September 2016 to take stock of the anthropology of corruption. Seventeen anthropologists working in a wide range of geographic locations—including China, Europe, Southeast Asia, Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East—gathered to think comparatively about where the anthropology of corruption has taken us and to consider where it might go next. Speaking across geographic, topical, and theoretical differences, we debated whether we could identify common patterns to corruption. We wondered whether the phenomenon of corruption could even be said to hold together in any analytically defensible way. We considered what might be a specifically anthropological approach to corruption. And we asked what such an approach might contribute to a number of debates: to broad conversations within anthropology about the state and bureaucracy, exchange and politics, ethics and the law; to scholarly arguments on

Sarah Muir is Director of the International Studies Program and Doctoral Lecturer in the Department of Anthropology, Gender Studies, and International Studies of the City College of New York (City University of New York, 160 Convent Avenue, New York, New York 10031, USA [smuir@ccny.cuny.edu]). **Akhil Gupta** is Professor in the Department of Anthropology of the University of California, Los Angeles (341 Haines Hall, Box 951553, 375 Portola Plaza, Los Angeles, California 90095, USA [akgupta@ucla.edu]), and Professor of Anthropology and Development Studies at the University of Melbourne (John Medley Building, Parkville, Victoria 3010, Australia [akhilg1@unimelb.edu.au]). This paper was submitted 6 IV 17, accepted 21 XI 17, and electronically published 8 III 18.

1. A notable exception to this reticence has been the longstanding anthropological interest in patron-client relationships, analyses of which have deeply informed the more recent turn to analyze corruption more broadly (e.g., Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984; Gellner and Waterbury 1977; Schmidt et al. 1977; Schneider and Schneider 1976; Scott 1975).

the topic of corruption within and across other disciplinary traditions; and to the work of policy makers and others grappling with corruption outside academe.

As luck would have it, the symposium occurred in the last months of a US presidential campaign dominated by concerns regarding the collusion of political and financial elites, stark socioeconomic inequality, and long-term histories of marginalization and disenfranchisement. The full repercussions of that election are still unknown. Nonetheless, at a bare minimum, the campaign and the first year of Trump's presidency illustrate the stakes for an anthropology of corruption in the contemporary moment. We are compelled to ask, When and how does corruption become available as an idiom for articulating claims of illegitimacy, inequality, and ethical probity? What difference does the idiom of corruption make for the success of those claims? In short, what are the conditions of possibility for anti-corruption politics and what are the limits of that mode of politics?

As Shore and Haller (2005:6) note, most anthropologists—including the majority of the authors writing in this issue—come to study corruption by accident rather than by design. That this should be the case indicates how overlooked corruption has been as an object of anthropological analysis and suggests the need to raise a set of questions to further theorize corruption as an object of study. With this in mind, our goal in this introduction is neither to provide an exhaustive literature review nor to summarize the papers gathered together in this special issue.[2] Rather, we aim to map the terrain of the anthropology of corruption so as to identify especially promising areas in need of more focused research and analytic attention. In so doing, we specify how an anthropological approach can disentangle the stubborn problematics that have so persistently dogged both analytic and practical engagements with corruption. Toward that end, we begin by laying out a way of conceptualizing corruption as a globalized concept, the practical and social life of which anthropology is especially well suited to study.

Corruption's Transgressions

Whatever else it is, "corruption" is a category of transgression, in several senses. First, corruption names the transgression (or "blurring"; see Gupta 2012) of boundaries, particularly between the public and the private. As an array of scholars have argued, the public/private distinction grew out of but diverged from European medieval political theology and became fundamental to the ideological and bureaucratic structures of modern states and markets (Arendt 1958; Corrigan and Sayer 1985; Habermas 1991 [1962]; Kantorowicz 1958; Marx 1978

[1846]; Polanyi 1944; Weber 1978 [1922]). And yet, as all the articles in this issue demonstrate so clearly, maintaining that distinction and policing movements across it are fraught matters. Precisely because corruption blurs boundaries, it calls forth efforts to clarify limits and to redefine social relations (Feldman 2018). In this sense, the specter of corruption haunts modern politics and economics, threatening the legitimacy of states and markets while simultaneously animating repetitive, incomplete attempts to cleanse and legitimate the political-economic order (Bratsis 2003; Bubandt 2014; Lomnitz 1995; Nuijten and Anders 2009; and Sharma 2018).

Corruption is also transgressive in its capacity to elide definitions.[3] Within academia and beyond, corruption today is often associated with the neoliberal policy imperatives of organizations such as Transparency International, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank (Anders 2008; Hasty 2005; Hetherington 2013; Sanders and West 2003). However, the category also evokes longer-term, intertwined traditions of republican, liberal, and democratic thinking about substantive and procedural justice, about inequality and civic virtue, and about the proper relationship between economic resources and political authority (Locke 1988 [1698]; Machiavelli 1970 [1517]; Montesquieu 2001 [1748]; O'Donnell 2007; Pocock 1975; Rawls 1971). If always condemnatory rather than laudatory in tone, the category of corruption is nonetheless extraordinarily polyvalent, for it does not refer to a determinate set of practices or relations. Differentiating between the "appropriation of public goods for personal gain" and "privatization," for example, or between "governmental distortion of the market" and "regulation," or, indeed, between a "bribe" and a "gift," is always a performative judgment that invites disagreement across the entangled fields of legality and legitimacy (Smart 1993). In other words, which transactions can be categorized as corrupt can never be a definitional question; it is always necessarily perspectival, evaluative, and performative (Bocarejo 2018; de Sardan 1999; Granovetter 2007; Humphrey 2000; Ledeneva 1998; Pardo 2018; Pierce 2016; Roitman 2005).

Far from being a liability, this lack of definitional precision is crucial to corruption's success as a globally circulating concept that traverses geographic boundaries, sociocultural contexts, and institutional structures. It is nearly impossible to argue convincingly in favor of corruption. To be sure, a small section of the literature in the economics of corruption did suggest, in contrarian fashion, that corruption might further the social good, perhaps by greasing the wheels of rigid bureaucratic machines (e.g., Nye 1967).[4] However, that

---

2. Readers interested in more detailed reviews of the literature on corruption, both anthropological and otherwise, should consult the informative and insightful introductions to the collected volumes edited by Barcham, Hindess, and Larmour (2012), Nuijten and Anders (2009), Pardo (2004), Shore and Haller (2005), and Buchan and Hill (2014), as well as the review by Wedel (2012).

3. The extensive and intensive range of corruption is extraordinarily unwieldy, a fact that we take to be essential to its social utility. As such, we do not attempt to chart its varied meanings, either diachronically across different historical periods or synchronically across various social contexts.

4. More recently, on the eve of Trump's inauguration, Peter Thiel—Silicon Valley billionaire, techno-futurist, and avowed anti-democrat—mused that some degree of corruption may well be a welcome quality in the incoming presidential administration: "No corruption can be a bad thing," he opined (Dowd 2016).

proposition troubles the principle of popular sovereignty on which nearly all modern governments, from the most authoritarian to the most democratic, base their claims to legitimacy (a dynamic we return to in the concluding section of this introduction). It therefore remains an outlier within policy, academic, and lay discourse around the world. Because corruption is at once definitionally unclear but definitively negative in valence, people in diverse contexts can easily take it up to identify and condemn social ills of all sorts and with all manner of consequences. In this special issue alone, for example, the reader will find examples of concerns with corruption furthering social critique (Musaraj 2018) and consolidating elites (Osburg 2018), empowering grassroots activists (Schneider 2018) and erecting barriers to political participation (Hetherington 2018). In fact, in many contexts, opposition to corruption has become the very definition of "good governance," gathering together under a single, unassailable, and remarkably anodyne banner policies and social movements that pursue divergent, even irreconcilable, ends.

Finally, corruption transgresses normative conceptions of historical progress. As a key category of modern political economy—anxiously naming that which must be expelled in order to assure legitimacy—corruption typically indexes the nonmodern. It is essential to note that this alleged resistance to modernizing progress takes on very different forms depending on the social space on which it is mapped. In centers of power within the United States and Europe, corruption names the alleged deterioration of institutions and civic virtues. In such contexts, corruption entails a sense of cancerous erosion and decline, and it therefore amounts to a call to return to a golden age of civilizational integrity.[5] However, in places long marked as "behind" (see Fabian 1983), corruption tends to conjure the motif of stagnancy rather than regression. In such contexts, the failure of postcolonial state and market institutions to eradicate mass poverty and to secure access to basic necessities has meant that many people engage in "informal" (Hart 1973) activities that can fall under the category of small-scale or petty corruption. These everyday measures mobilize existing social relations and practices toward new ends, transforming them in the process. Nonetheless, they can sometimes appear to be simply the stubborn persistence of culture (de Sardan 1999), a framing that risks reproducing colonial-era distinctions between the modern and the traditional and thus foreclosing the

possibility of seeing in these measures the elements of new forms of citizenship and law (cf. Chatterjee 2006; Obarrio 2007; Roitman 2005). Thus, for different reasons, in both the Global North and the Global South, the temporality of corruption tends to focus attention on the present in relation to the past. What is lost in so doing is a robust reimagination of the present in terms of desirable futures.

These varied transgressions make corruption an especially unruly topic for scholarly and practical engagement. How, then, can we approach the question of corruption? How can we take seriously the concerns so many have with corruption if we cannot define, let alone measure it? How can we think comparatively about something so labile and polyvalent without resorting to a facile and misleading nominalism? And how should we treat a concept honed in European traditions of political philosophy that exerts stringent normative demands on actors in non-European, especially postcolonial, contexts?

We begin by considering corruption as a part of the class that Trouillot (2003:26) called "North Atlantic universals," that is, concepts like development, democracy, and civil society that "project transhistorical relevance while hiding the particularities of their marks and origins" (see also Chakrabarty 2000). When taken up as analytics, these universalizing concepts can allow a speaker to move seamlessly between descriptive and normative claims, obscuring the difference between the two. For that reason, they can easily map peoples and nations onto all-too-familiar racialized and civilizational hierarchies.

Rather than take them up as analytics, anthropology is especially well situated to meeting the methodological challenges of studying the practical and social life of these North Atlantic universals. The discipline's insistent combination of grounded ethnography and comparative scope allows analysts to tack back and forth between local and translocal dynamics so as to illuminate how abstract concepts—like corruption—are lived out in particular, concrete instantiations. A broadly anthropological approach allows analysts to track the circulation of corruption as an idea with a decidedly local genesis but global reach and as a folk concept employed by elites as well as by people challenging elite prerogatives.[6] In short, an anthropology of corruption allows scholars to interrogate the social life of corruption as a concept-in-the-world that simultaneously transforms—and is transformed by—the particular social worlds in which it finds fertile soil.

The authors of the essays in this issue draw on an array of theoretical frameworks to investigate corruption across divergent social, geographic, and historical locations. However, that diversity belies a more fundamental common ground, for all of the essays exemplify this broadly anthropological attention to the practical, social life of concepts. The essays that follow take seriously concerns with corruption, whether they

---

5. See Pocock's (1975) reading of Machiavelli (1970 [1517]) for a paradigmatic articulation of this version of corruption. See Montesquieu (2001 [1748]) and Hardt and Negri (2000:20–21) for related mobilizations of "corruption" as civilizational decay. Less common in the contemporary moment are temporal conceptions of corruption as a fall from a natural state of virtue. We see this latter understanding of corruption in the works of writers such as Montaigne (1948 [1580]), Rousseau (1992 [1755]), and Thoreau (2016 [1854]), and it is worth considering why it is relatively absent today. We return to this question very briefly in a footnote in the conclusion, but it merits more analytic attention than we can offer in these brief introductory remarks.

6. We hope it is clear, then, that we do not mean "corruption" to describe only the practices of the elite as opposed to the subaltern. Neither do we impute a moral valence to any of the practices that could fall within the category.

are the concerns of activists or policy makers, of administrators or disenfranchised communities, or indeed of other academics and theorists. However, rather than take those concerns as self-evident, the authors in this issue approach them as social facts in and of themselves, emerging from and shaped by particular contexts and histories. In so doing, they bring together under a single analytical gaze both the logics of practice undergirding the exchanges that (some) people judge as corrupt and the logics of evaluation through which such judgments are rendered. The result is a dynamic collection of essays that resonate with one another across a number of analytic domains.

In what follows of this introduction, we sketch five of those domains—the corruption/anti-corruption complex, ethical and legal judgments, circulatory conditions, affective states, and axes of inequality. Within each domain, we pose a handful of questions to which the anthropology of corruption might next turn its attention. Finally, we return to the overarching concerns about the possibilities and limitations of anti-corruption politics that we articulated at the outset and suggest that concerns with corruption are indissolubly bound up with commitments to political equality and popular sovereignty.

The Corruption/Anti-corruption Complex

Corruption and anti-corruption need to be conceptualized not as two discrete things but, rather, as one complex phenomenon. Given our discussion above of corruption as a category of transgression, we can easily see why. The threat or actuality of corruption calls forth its opposition, animating attempts to police and defend the distinction between political authority and economic resources and between the commonwealth and private property. But those differentiations themselves elicit transgression, whether for reasons of profit or efficiency. What is more, which side of the distinction is at risk of encroachment and contamination is a historically variable question, as Nugent (2018) argues in his comparison of mid-twentieth-century concerns with corruption and those of the neoliberal era. The dialectic of corruption and anti-corruption is therefore in constant movement, as each anti-corruption effort transforms the logic of corrupt practices and each corrupt practice calls forth new kinds of anti-corruption measures. That dialectic produces long-term social histories such as the one that Schneider (2018) offers in her account of over 50 years of mafia corruption and anti-mafia efforts in Sicily.

Because of this dynamic, anti-corruption efforts routinely produce unintended and unwanted consequences. For example, as Smart (2018) demonstrates in his analysis of attempts to curb the discretionary powers of petty officers in colonial Hong Kong, the push toward greater legal precision in defining corruption can ease the way for savvy actors to game the system, as they engage in practices that stay—just barely—within legal limits. Somewhat differently, Shore's (2018) discussion of anti-corruption surveillance in universities suggests that anti-corruption efforts can narrow the scope of acceptable behavior so drastically that they actually encourage people to skirt the rules. Legalistic modes of anti-corruption can also have the effect of distracting people from forms of corruption that might be popularly illegitimate but are nonetheless legal (Gupta 2017; Pardo 2018). And so, each law begets more laws in a perpetually expanding process that can threaten to swallow up entirely the realm of politics (Sharma 2018).

Nonetheless, anti-corruption efforts can conjure a positive, aspirational image of a legitimate society grounded in just law and meritocratic distribution. As such, the logic of anti-corruption has the potential to serve as a powerful political tool for those who have been excluded from elite networks of influence and access (Pardo 2018; Sharma 2018). Nonetheless, that potential is often exceedingly difficult to actualize. At times, the poetics and forms of anti-corruption come to mimic uncannily the corrupt practices that are its targets, and the effect is a disconcerting lack of clarity about how to distinguish one from the other (Musaraj 2018). At other times, the promise of anti-corruption retains something of its earnest appeal, but it comes to seem something reserved for other places populated by other, better people (Muir 2016; Tidey 2018).

Given the complex and shifting ways that corruption and anti-corruption are intertwined, several questions arise that an anthropological approach is well suited to pursue. First, how can we think with more nuance and precision about how different kinds of corrupt practice might call for different modes of anti-corruption? Can we identify a wider range of anti-corruption possibilities, especially nonlegalistic measures that escape the logic of audit culture, perhaps by employing interpersonal or informal mechanisms to discourage illegitimate behavior (Hasty 2005)? How should we conceptualize the differences and points of convergence between what we might term "vernacular" or "grassroots" anti-corruption efforts and officially sanctioned crackdowns? Finally, how should we understand the roles that poetics and institutional location play in shaping the diversity of forms that corruption and anti-corruption can take?

Ethical and Legal Judgments

To pursue these questions about the corruption/anti-corruption complex is necessarily to study socially situated judgments about fairness and justice and about the proper relationship between economic resources and political power. Of course, ethical and legal judgments about these matters do not necessarily coalesce, as both Pardo's (2018) discussion of legal corruption in Italy and Sharma's (2018) analysis of anti-corruption laws in India demonstrate so vividly. It is precisely that lack of alignment between the ethical and the legal that makes the corruption/anti-corruption complex such a productive site for debate, mobilization, and contestation.[7]

---

7. The title of Pardo's (2004) edited volume *Between Morality and the Law* nicely evokes the conflictual space between ethical and legal judgments.

In popular parlance, to decry something as "corrupt" usually refers not to legal codes, strictly speaking, nor even to civic codes of ethics. Rather, the epithet tends to evoke a quasi-theological framing of right and wrong, of purity and contamination (Bratsis 2003; see also Douglas 1966). Because of this connotation, the discourse of corruption can operate as a form of antipolitics (Ferguson 1994) that risks shifting debates about social relations onto a doxic (Bourdieu 1977 [1972]:164) or legalistic (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006) terrain within which certain imperatives are beyond dispute. Indeed, over the past several decades, many places around the world have seen a steady stream of anti-corruption measures driven by the nearly unquestionable imperatives of "transparency" and "accountability" (Hetherington 2013; Sampson 2010; Strathern 2000). As several essays in this issue suggest, such measures can set in motion practical dynamics that limit or even undermine people's capacity to achieve the substantive goals and values of the institutions they inhabit (Feldman 2018; Hetherington 2018; Smart 2018; Tidey 2016).

However, even the most dogmatic discourse of anti-corruption can give rise to a more open-ended dynamic. Fueled by an underdetermined moral imaginary, condemnations of corruption can enable critiques that question and go beyond dominant forms of politics and law (Pardo 2018). At times, the space opened by critiques of corruption lies on the margins of the state, as in the case Bocarejo (2018) examines, in which Colombian peasants' experiences of legal and illegal economies involve ethical deliberations rooted firmly outside the space of the state and its laws. However, as Nugent's (2018) analysis of anti-corruption efforts in mid-twentieth-century Peru demonstrates, critiques of corruption can also create fissures at the very heart of the state apparatus, to immensely destabilizing effect. In his case, the struggle to weed out corruption creates a paranoid political class and bureaucratic apparatus that makes the state unrecognizable as a modern bureaucratic state at the very same time that it aspires to become one.

In this sense, it is crucial to emphasize the decidedly perspectival nature of judgments about corruption. Indeed, we see time and again in the essays gathered here that what is clearly corrupt from one point of view can be entirely justified from another. Thus, for example, the essays by Ansell (2018), Hetherington (2018), and Osburg (2018) all argue persuasively that personalistic exchanges with state actors can, in certain circumstances, ameliorate patterns of exclusion, marginalization, and alienation (see also Ansell 2014; Verdery 2003). Relatedly, the essays by Nugent (2018), Smith (2018), and Tidey (2018) explore how accusations of corruption can function as powerful but unpredictable political weapons, capable of subjecting normally tolerated practices to harsh scrutiny and opprobrium.

Despite this perspectivalism, judgments about which behaviors are intolerably corrupt do tend to possess a sort of family resemblance with one another. It is possible to chart any given exchange along a series of linked continua: short- to long-term, closed to open-ended, depersonalized to concretely interpersonal. These continua routinely map onto ideological distinctions between socially disembedded market economies governed by a relatively amoral logic of self-interest and socially embedded gift economies governed by a thoroughly moralized logic of obligation (Bohannon 1955; Graeber 2011; Mauss 1967 [1925]; Sahlins 1974). In general, the anthropological literature suggests that relatively short-term, closed, and depersonalized exchanges tend to be restricted to social spaces or "transactional orders" (Bloch and Parry 1989) dedicated explicitly to them. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that market-style transactions in nonmarket contexts tend to receive especially swift and unforgiving condemnation (Hornberger 2018). By contrast, exchanges that lack a clear logic of quid pro quo are often much more difficult to censure because they are thoroughly entangled with legitimate interpersonal relations and commitments (Ansell 2018; Lomnitz 1971).

The issue of judgment becomes especially fraught in contexts where people find themselves troubled by the ethics of their own actions. This is frequently the case when people find that their pursuit of widely shared goals requires violating equally widely shared values (Hornberger 2018; Smith 2018; Tidey 2018). The stance of self-recrimination that often follows is ambiguous, compelling people sometimes to assess the legal and political terrain as illegitimate and at other times to resign themselves to that illegitimacy. However it plays out, this sort of conundrum may be far more common than the literature would indicate. If so, it suggests that there are untapped and undertheorized reservoirs of discontent and (self)-critique at the very heart of at least some corrupt practices (Muir 2016).[8]

Researchers would do well to attend to these sorts of discomfiting self-critiques and ambiguous judgments, which characterize so many people's engagements with corruption and anti-corruption. Those dynamic evaluative stances pose considerable challenges to some recent works in the anthropology of ethics that have moved away from the question of judgment in an effort to situate the ethical in largely tacit, everyday practice (e.g., Lambek 2010). In recentering judgment as itself a mode of practice, analyses of corruption have the opportunity to pursue several questions that have not yet been fully explored in the literature, anthropological or otherwise: How does the fact of actual or potential judgment shape the logic of a given act? How do people move between ethics, legality, and other modes of evaluation in forming judgments about their own and others' acts? How do people hold competing, even contradictory, judgments? And, finally, does that experience of paradox or cognitive dissonance afford any hitherto unnoticed spaces for political possibilities? As this last question suggests, conceptualizing judgment as itself possessing a practical logic and inquiring into the affordances offered by particular practices of judgment would also speak directly to contemporary attempts to retheorize the relationship between ethics and politics (see Hankins, forthcoming; Tambar 2017).

---

8. Normative definitions of corruption fail to understand such contradictions, thereby missing significant social phenomena.

Circulatory Conditions

If the corruption/anti-corruption complex always involves socially situated judgments, an essential part of its analysis is to specify the contexts in which those judgments are viable and the publics for whom those judgments are important. Running throughout the essays of this issue, therefore, is a persistent undercurrent of questions concerning how practices and discourses of corruption circulate: What conditions allow particular practices of corruption to flourish? What conditions allow a diagnosis of corruption to hold for particular segments of a population? How do the practices and discourses of corruption circulate across scales, through space and over time? And what dynamics of visibility and publicity characterize this circulation (Gupta 2012; Muir 2016)?

Periods of rapid institutional transformation frequently create zones of legal, ethical, and practical ambiguity within which corrupt practices emerge and flourish (Smart 1993). Of course, the specific kinds of corrupt practices that flourish and the particular anxieties those practices elicit is a historical matter. The logics of corruption and anti-corruption are quite variable, and one could tell the political-economic history of a given locale by charting shifts in those logics (Nugent 2018; Schneider 2018). Clearly, the structural adjustments and postsocialist privatizations of the 1980s and 1990s marked one such shift, out of which emerged not only particular kinds of corruption but also the now familiar neoliberal-style emphasis on transparency and accountability metrics as anti-corruption measures. However, many of the essays here also point toward the ongoing relevance of longer-term histories: of the Cold War's geopolitical terrain of client states (Nugent 2018; see also Coronil 1997) and the United States–led drug war's proliferation of prohibitions and profit-making opportunities (Bocarejo 2018; Schneider 2018; see also Roitman 2005), of postcolonial developmentalist and nation-building politics (Hetherington 2018; see also Mbembe 2001), and the colonial-era appropriation and transformation of so-called traditional or local structures of authority (Smith 2018; see also Lomnitz 1995; Pierce 2016).

A second pattern has to do with locale. An unanticipated theme of many of the essays gathered here is that of the built environment, meaning not only obviously constructed edifices but also landscapes (Smith 2003) of all sorts as they are shaped by histories of human engagement (Schneider and Schneider 2003). The importance of place stems in part from the fact that what amounts to corruption is often simply rent seeking, in which access to some locally situated resource or office is monopolized illicitly. More broadly, because most forms of corruption mobilize interpersonal, intimate, and quotidian relations in the service of illicit transactions, the particularities of place are especially salient factors in determining the sorts of corrupt practices that emerge (Bocarejo 2018; Schneider 2018; Smart 2018). What is more, locale is crucial in another sense, given that specific modes of corruption often become so closely associated with a given place that they become woven into popular conceptions of local or national identity (Ansell 2018; Muir 2016; Smith 2007; Tidey 2018).

All the essays in this special issue take the nation as their primary frame of reference. However, each one points to the centrality of international and transnational processes in any accounting of corruption's extraordinary global success as a category of popular critique. Shore (2018) provides an important analysis of the role transnational accounting firms play in turning anti-corruption into a business, with all the distortions and unintended consequences that process entails. The works of nongovernmental organizations like Transparency International, quasi-governmental organizations like the World Bank and the IMF, and institutions of international governance like the United Nations are all equally central, as several essays take pains to emphasize (Feldman 2018; Hetherington 2018; Musaraj 2018; Sampson 2010; Tidey 2018). However, the nation remains a key analytic frame because diagnostic blame for corruption lands, with few exceptions, on popular conceptions of national culture—usually a rather underspecified notion of broadly shared "values" —and national institutions—generally conceptualized as a relatively thin but constrictive set of "incentives."

Here, clearly, is one area where there is pressing need for research. While the global diffusion of transparency and accountability imperatives through bodies such as Transparency International or the World Bank is relatively obvious, it is not clear how particular protocols, evaluation metrics, policy recommendations, and enforcement procedures develop. Much more ethnographic study within these sorts of organizations and of the relationship between these organizations and national bureaucracies is necessary in order to understand better how corruption is constituted as an object of knowledge and intervention for policy makers, legislators, and businesspeople working within and across the scales of the local, the national, and the global.

Just as pressing is the need for analysis of the dynamics of visibility and publicity that the corruption/anti-corruption complex entails. While corrupt practices are generally secretive, discourses of corruption circulate widely through face-to-face, mass-mediated, and social media channels. That circulation can prove hazardous and uncomfortable, as in the case that Smith (2018) describes, in which his published (2007) analysis of corruption in Nigeria embroiled him in an international legal controversy as well as a heated anthropological debate. However, as Musaraj (2018) shows in her discussion of an Albanian television show that exposes acts of corruption, corruption narratives can also be decidedly pleasurable for both narrator and addressee, for they envelop both parties in a frisson of shared knowledge of an illicit and covert realm (see also Hornberger 2018). Regardless of how they circulate, the consequences of these narratives are unpredictable. In some cases they foment outraged action (Sharma 2018), but in others, a frenzy of paranoid suspicion can take hold (Nugent 2018) and, in still others, a stance of confused self-doubt (Hornberger 2018) or resigned cynicism (Muir 2016). Despite anthropology's long-

standing engagement with rumor, gossip, and mass-mediated spectacle (e.g., Brenneis 1984; Briggs 2004; Gluckman 1963; Gupta 2012), we have much to learn about how corruption scandals unfold within national and other publics, and with what effects. That analysis has the potential to make significant contributions to current anthropological debates over how modes of narration, attention, and evidentiary evaluation articulate with the political, social, and circulatory dynamics of mass publicity (see Cody 2015; Gupta 2012; Mazzarella 2017; Muir 2015; Yeh 2017).

Affective States

These dynamics point toward the need to attend to the affective dimensions of the state, as well as of other institutions that claim legitimacy through a logic of bureaucratic rationality (Weber 1978 [1922]). Affect plays a central role in statecraft, especially in producing practical commitments to state sovereignty and an experiential sense of conviviality among state subjects. Of course, such commitments and sense of conviviality do not require naive belief in the state, but can thrive, however paradoxically, in conditions of critique, suspicion, and even resistance (Arextaga 2003; Bayart, Ellis, and Hibou 1999; Herzfeld 1997; Muir 2015; Navaro-Yashin 2002; Taussig 1997; Wedeen 1999). The essays in this issue demonstrate in compelling terms that the corruption/anti-corruption complex is key to this process of "constructing" the state (Gupta 2012; see also Appadurai 2015). In negotiating the issue of corruption in both practical and evaluative terms, people cultivate affectively laden relations to one another and to the state, producing along the way new modes of citizenship and national belonging and new horizons for collective action.

In particular, the essays in this issue explore the corruption/anti-corruption complex as the site for two contradictory sets of desires: on one hand, for the rule of law, proceduralism, and justice, and, on the other hand, for modes of sociality, discretion, and intimacy that exceed the law.[9] A zeal for equitable treatment under the law can animate people in very concrete ways, as we see in several essays in this issue (Hetherington 2018; Pardo 2018; Sharma 2018). However, the proverbial Weberian problems of bureaucratic rationality seem almost inevitably to follow, as Shore (2018) and Smart (2018) explore so thoroughly. Those double binds call forth attempts to re-embed the law within a social terrain defined by the interplay of multiple evaluative schema, as is the case in the contexts that Ansell (2018) and Osburg (2018) analyze. Again and again across this collection of essays, we find people wrestling with those competing desires and, more often than not, finding themselves fairly dissatisfied with the outcome.

9. Were we to follow Hume (1983 [1751]), we might characterize bureaucracy as the site where the "artificial" and "natural" virtues come into conflict in an especially heightened way, and we might approach corruption as a potential outcome of that conflict.

However dissatisfied people may be, the dynamic tension that animates these two sets of desires is itself productive of the state in a very particular way. Both acts and narratives of corruption can produce affectively charged moments of communion and ritual belonging, as Ansell (2018) shows to be the case with clientelistic politicking in northeast Brazil and as Hornberger (2018) demonstrates with respect to middle-class South Africans' experiences with petty bribery. Far from being defined by a narrowly utilitarian logic of self-interested calculation, many, if not most, forms of corruption are characterized by remarkably rich connections of mimetic exchange and solidarity among the principal actors as well as among those positioned as their audience (Blunt 2016; Lomnitz 1995; Muir 2016; Musaraj 2018). In short, we find that corruption provides a somewhat paradoxical avenue to the sacred in Durkheim's (1995 [1912]) sense of that which, in being set apart from the everyday, opens up onto a transcendent experience of sociality. The result is a "state effect" (Mitchell 1991) in which sovereignty is a thoroughly intimate, affective, and ambivalent affair (see Arextaga 2003).

In this sense, the corruption/anti-corruption complex offers a privileged window onto the state as an affective formation or, perhaps better yet, as a constellation of multiple, often conflictual affective dynamics, as Tidey (2018) explores in her analysis of Indonesian personalistic politics and anti-corruption measures aimed at combating those politics. For this reason, it is important to frame the heightened concern about corruption over the past several decades as more than just a side effect of neoliberalization. Rather, we should theorize that anxious concern as a key part of the process by which the state as affective formation is remade, and remade differentially for differently positioned people. Within this framing, the essays in this issue point toward three sets of questions.

The first questions concern how this process of state (trans) formation takes place. As people try to work through or around the conflicting demands and desires of the corruption/anti-corruption complex, what processes do they—usually inadvertently—set in motion? When do those processes result in the transformation of the state as affective formation? When do those processes double back on themselves and strengthen or perpetuate existing patterns?

Second, how can we periodize the history of the state in terms of these shifting affective formations? Might the corruption/anti-corruption complex offer a privileged way of charting such a history? The state that Nugent (2018) describes is thoroughly paranoid, taken over by a suspicion run amok that will be familiar to students of other Cold War contexts (see Aureli 1999; Glaeser 2004; Verdery 1996). How can we characterize the dominant affective "tone" of the state in other historical periods, such as the contemporary moment, when the triumphalist and hegemonic authority of the neoliberal state and of transnational organizations like the IMF seems to be giving way to something more muted and contestable (Streeck 2016)?

Third, how does a framing of the state as affective formation allow us to analyze concerns about corruption in spaces be-

yond the public sphere? As we know from contexts like the one Feldman (2018) describes, nongovernmental organizations do a great deal of the work of governing in the world today. How does the state effect produced in those contexts differ from that produced in the more familiar context of the territorially sovereign nation-state? What is more, people frequently use the language of corruption to frame critiques, anxieties, and moral condemnations in decidedly nonpublic, even intimate, spaces (Muir 2016; Smith 2018; Tidey 2018). What does this diffusion of anxiety about corruption suggest regarding where we, as analysts, should find the "state" today? What can we learn by framing these intimate engagements with the corruption/anti-corruption complex as productive of a sort of state effect at the very heart of institutions such as the family (see Geschiere 2013)?

Axes of Inequality

More than any other topic, inequality originally spurred our interest in corruption, just as it has for so many people—citizens, policy makers, and activists—in places around the world. After all, although corruption and anti-corruption (and talk about them both) can produce a ritualized sense of interpersonal, even intimate, belonging, it by no means necessarily produces an egalitarian sociality.

Across the essays gathered here we see a recurring tension between the potentials of corruption and anti-corruption to mitigate and to exacerbate social inequalities. At times, engaging in corrupt acts can be the prerogative of an elite, for it can serve as a gatekeeping mechanism that ensures the ongoing power and distinction of that group, as is the case with the elite networks of businesspeople and state officials that Osburg (2018) analyzes in Chengdu, China. At other times, corruption functions as the last resort of the marginalized, insofar as it serves as a means of circumventing "the rule of law" and other anti-egalitarian barriers to access. Most of the time, corruption does both things at once, but for different people, as when corruption serves as the terrain for intra-elite competition (Nugent 2018). In such a situation, anti-corruption can bring together displaced elites and rising middle classes through the ideals of transparency and accountability. However, efforts to combat corruption can also reinforce existing social and political inequalities, as Feldman (2018) shows in her analysis of the ways that suspicions of corruption are intertwined with the humanitarian governance of Palestinian refugees. In short, corruption and anti-corruption enable new kinds of inequality to emerge and alter existing ones; their relation to inequality is not knowable in advance or in general.

Given this variability, it is imperative to disarticulate the issue of inequality along several axes, of which class or socioeconomic inequality is perhaps the most obvious. In many contexts, anti-corruption is strongly associated with the middle class and with ideals of meritocratic professionalism, as Hetherington (2018) shows in his analysis of civil service reform efforts in Paraguay (see also Ansell 2014; Muir 2016).

This is particularly the case in places—like much of Latin America and Africa—where the twentieth-century consolidation of national middle classes hinged on employment opportunities in expanding state bureaucracies (Johnson 2012 [1957]; Lomnitz 1971). As a result of that history, middle-class norms in these regions tend to be strongly inflected with a civic, republican ethos, even when people find that they cannot avoid violating those norms in practice (Apter 1999; Hornberger 2018; Lomnitz 1971; Muir 2016). In other contexts with other histories of state and class formation, we find very different class dynamics. In India and China, for example, there are important anti-corruption campaigns marked by a decidedly popular or working-poor class valence (Osburg 2018; Sharma 2018).

Of course, class dynamics are often closely intertwined with distinctions of race, ethnicity, and nationality (Feldman 2018; Hornberger 2018). As we mentioned above in our discussion of corruption as a "North Atlantic universal," perceptions of corruption can map all too easily onto longstanding racialized sociogeographic distinctions of development and modernity. These hierarchies often play out quite visibly in the work of transnational governance organizations. Artifacts like Transparency International's (2016) Corruption Index, for example, routinely portray corruption as an endemic and "deadly" (World Bank 2016) problem plaguing countries in the Global South. However, those organizations typically examine their own corrupt practices or those of politicians in the Global North in the rare and fleeting moments of high-profile scandals (e.g., Behar 2012). Racialized distinctions can also play out in the intimate spaces of everyday life, as people in some contexts find themselves drawing on these broader discourses to produce modes of self-orientalizing critique (Gupta 1998; Muir 2016; Smith 2018; Tidey 2018). Contrarily, when people find themselves alienated from those discourses and from the political and economic centers that produce them, we can sometimes see greater scope for critique both in everyday practices and in ethical judgments (Bocarejo 2018).

A third axis of inequality has to do with gender. In most of the cases explored in this special issue, corrupt acts occur within social domains that are gendered masculine (regardless of the gendered identities of the particular individuals involved; see Osburg 2013). That this would be the case is not surprising because, as we argued above, corruption is paradigmatically a problem of the public sphere, and the public/private distinction is a thoroughly gendered one (Gal 2002). As we might expect, then, corruption's intrusion of private interests into normatively public domains carries with it a feminizing valence. Indeed, corruption as the feminization and weakening of civic norms is a trope with a long history stretching back to Renaissance political thought and beyond, to ancient Greek thought regarding the polis (Arendt 1958; Pocock 1975).

These three axes of inequality do not by any means exhaust the relationship of corruption and anti-corruption to inequality. By articulating with other linguistic, sexual, and educational differences as well as sociogeographic differences such as the

urban/rural divides that are salient in so many contexts (Hetherington 2018; Pandian 2009) and the unequal relationships between nation-states, corruption/anti-corruption discourses and actions have far-reaching consequences. Attending to those points of articulation is an important area for future research and suggests a number of promising questions. For example, given what we know about the importance of language ideologies in shaping social norms regarding exchange, evaluation, and representation (Keane 1997), how do linguistic inequalities affect the corruption/anti-corruption complex? How do corruption and anti-corruption reshape the lives of members of various minority populations and their possibilities for political participation, substantive rights, and social membership? And how can we as analysts better leverage an understanding of the multiple axes of inequality and difference in the service of policy initiatives that seek not merely to combat corruption per se but to promote more just and equitable futures?

Conclusions—Speaking to Anthropology and Beyond

The issue of inequality allows us to return, on surer footing, to the questions we articulated at the outset: Why has corruption become especially relevant now to anthropology and to the communities and publics that anthropologists study? What are the historical conditions that have allowed corruption to become a matter of urgent, outraged concern in so many parts of the world? And what are the possibilities and limits of that concern? By way of conclusion, we will suggest that the relationship of the corruption/anti-corruption complex to inequality is key to answering these questions.

   In his history of the concept of corruption from Machiavelli through 400 years of political experimentation, Pocock (1975) shows that this varied tradition of thought has long cast corruption as the most dangerous threat to political legitimacy.[10] We can see why corruption should loom so large within this and related political imaginaries if we return to an issue we mentioned earlier regarding the fundamental place of popular sovereignty within the three intertwined lineages of democratic, republican, and liberal thought. Within these traditions, legitimate rule is grounded in popular sovereignty, which in turn is predicated on a notion of equality known as "isonomia," in which citizens have equal political rights (Arendt 1963:30; Pocock 1975:516). What constitutes equal political rights and whether they can exist absent other, more substantive rights have, of course, long been contentious matters.[11] Nonetheless,

irrespective of any particular theorization of isonomia, its necessarily abstract form of political subjectivity necessarily renders illegitimate the very notion of particularistic appropriation or non-universal claims. As a result, the logic of popular sovereignty—as formulated in its many liberal, democratic, and republican variations—stands in diametric opposition to corruption, which violates rights-based equality. As Pocock (1975: 208–211) argues, for Machiavelli and his varied inheritors, corruption and political inequality reinforce one another in a vicious cycle that leads inexorably to political disintegration.

   Given this constellation of political intuitions regarding (in)equality that revolve around the grounding concepts of popular sovereignty and political equality, the pluripotent capacity and the recent global success of corruption as an idiom of critique become much clearer. As we have argued, corruption is an extraordinarily polyvalent judgment that allows people to condemn public behavior, especially when there is a pronounced lack of alignment between legal and ethical regimes of legitimacy. That lack of alignment certainly characterizes the social contexts of all of the essays gathered in this issue. More generally, it characterizes the aftermath of the past several decades of neoliberal globalization, which has produced profound transformations in norms and practices concerning the proper relationship between the public and the private and between the political and the economic. The transnational infrastructure and global standardization of ideas and metrics of good governance that have proliferated during this same period provide ready-to-hand tools for addressing and redressing that lack of alignment within a neoliberal framework of accountability and transparency.[12] However, to reduce contemporary concerns with corruption to a mere symptom of neoliberal governance would be to ignore the potential of the corruption/anti-corruption complex to serve as one of the most malleable and powerful vehicles for the critique of both formal and substantive inequalities within a hegemonic political framework that, insofar as it is predicated on popular sovereignty, cannot escape an irresolvable tension between universal, abstract equality of rights and substantive conditions of material inequality (Ferguson 2015).

   That anthropology has, at last, turned its attention to this nexus of issues says a great deal about how the discipline has

---

   10. Teachout (2014) echoes Pocock's argument and foregrounds the concern—even obsession—that the framers of the US Constitution had with corruption.

   11. Arendt (1963:31) insists that, for the ancient Greeks, this form of equality pertained "specifically [to the] political realm, where men met one another as citizens and not as private persons." However, as Pocock (1975:537) points out, at least from Machiavelli onward, theorists of popular sovereignty have continually struggled with that tightly cir-

cumscribed conceptualization and have frequently worked to expand understandings of equality to include other dimensions of social life, with social contract theories posing one especially robust alternative account (see, e.g., Rawls 1971:72). Noteworthy in this long history of debate over the nature of equality is that the intuition of a natural or essential equality of virtue—so central to proto-Romantic, Romantic, and certain democratic strains of thought that we mentioned earlier and that are epitomized by Montaigne (1948 [1580]), Rousseau (1992 [1755]), and Thoreau (2016 [1854])—have fallen so far from view within major currents of political debate in the contemporary moment.

   12. There is a rich body of anthropological work interrogating this infrastructure, including works on audit culture, numbers and metrics, and expert knowledge (e.g., Appadurai 1993; Mitchell 2002; Musaraj 2015; Strathern 2000).

(in welcome ways) transformed over the past several decades into an intellectual space dedicated not to the exploration of particular geographic regions, organizational forms, or cultural domains but to the analysis of the social mediation of human life. It is this attention to rich contextual mediation that allows anthropological approaches to shed light on some of the most difficult issues pertaining to the study of corruption. Unlike normative or definitional methodologies, a broadly anthropological approach emphasizes the importance of context in a deep sense. The lack of sufficient attention to context is one major reason that so many anti-corruption measures have resulted in the consolidation of power by entrenched elites, or resulted in changes in forms of governance that make elites even less accountable than before. As the essays in this issue demonstrate, a profound understanding of social context—particular histories, relations, meanings, and cultural forms—is essential to the articulation of effective reforms. Particular policy measures that work well in one social context may not work at all in another, and decontextualized conceptions of incentives and disincentives are especially weak tools with which to combat corruption. At the very least, the anthropology of corruption shows that any analysis of the corruption/anti-corruption complex must attend, first and foremost, to the question of the interpretive communities or publics for whom corruption and anti-corruption exist as significant objects of knowledge, concern, and praxis.

The essays gathered in this issue explore in rich detail how, in interpretive communities around the world today, the corruption/anti-corruption complex is a profoundly significant way for people to grapple with fraught problems of equality and popular sovereignty. Given this problematic, we conclude with one final set of questions: Can anti-corruption efforts actually improve people's lives, and, if so, whose lives? Is it possible to formulate anti-corruption efforts that are more successful in improving the lives of the most vulnerable and least enfranchised populations? What are the ultimate horizons of a political imaginary centered around the problem of corruption? And, perhaps most ambitiously, can those horizons point beyond the rather thin version of political equality that the legacies of democratic, republican, and liberal approaches to popular sovereignty have bequeathed us?

Acknowledgments

References Cited

Anders, Gerhard. 2008. The normativity of numbers: World Bank and IMF conditionality. *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 31(2):187–202.

Ansell, Aaron. 2014. *Zero Hunger: political culture and antipoverty policy in Northeast Brazil*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

———. 2018. Clientelism, elections, and the dialectic of numerical people in Northeast Brazil. *Current Anthropology* 59(suppl. 18):SXXX–SXXX.

Appadurai, Arjun. 1993. Number in the colonial imagination. In *Orientalism and the postcolonial predicament*. C. A. Breckenridge and P. van der Veer, eds. Pp. 114–135. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

———. 2015. Corruption, scale and governance in India. In *Local politics, global impacts: steps to a multidisciplinary analysis of scales*. Olivier Charnoz, Virginie Diaz, and Alan Kolata, eds. Pp. 62–78. London: Ashgate.

Apter, Andrew. 1999. IBB = 419: Nigerian democracy and the politics of illusion. In *Civil society and the political imagination in Africa*. Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, eds. Pp. 267–308. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Arendt, Hannah. 1958. *The human condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

———. 1963. *On revolution*. New York: Penguin.

Arextaga, Begoña. 2003. Maddening states. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 32:393–410.

Aureli, Andrea. 1999. The usual suspects. In *Paranoia within reason: a casebook on conspiracy as explanation*. George E. Marcus, ed. Pp. 197–224. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Barcham, Manuhuia, Barry Hindess, and Peter Larmour, eds. 2012. *Corruption: expanding the focus*. Canberra, Australia: ANU E Press.

Bayart, Jean-François, Stephen Ellis, and Béatrice Hibou. 1999. *The criminalization of the state in Africa*. Stephen Ellis, trans. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Behar, Richard. 2012. World Bank spins out of control: corruption, dysfunction await new president. *Forbes*, June 27. https://www.forbes.com/forbes/2012/0716/feature-world-bank-robert-zoellick-too-big-to-fail.html.

Bloch, Maurice, and Jonathan Parry. 1989. Introduction: money and the morality of exchange. In *Money and the morality of exchange*. Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry, eds. Pp. 1–32. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Blunt, Robert. 2016. *Corruptus interruptus*: the limits of transactional imaginaries in Moi's Kenya. *Social Dynamics* 42(3):377–394.

Bocarejo, Diana. 2018. Thinking with (il)legality: the ethics of living with bonanzas. *Current Anthropology* 59(suppl. 18):SXXX–SXXX.

Bohannon, Paul. 1955. Some principles of exchange and investment among the Tiv. *American Anthropologist* 57(1):60–70.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977 (1972). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Richard Nice, trans. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bratsis, Peter. 2003. The construction of corruption, or rules of separation and illusions of purity in bourgeois societies. *Social Text* 21(4):9–33.

Brenneis, Donald. 1984. Grog and gossip in Bhatgaon: style and substance in Fiji Indian conversation. *American Ethnologist* 11(3):487–506.

Briggs, Charles L. 2004. Theorizing modernity conspiratorially: science, scale, and the political economy of public discourse in explanations of a cholera epidemic. *American Ethnologist* 31(2):164–187.

Bubandt, Nils. 2014. *Democracy, corruption, and the politics of spirits in contemporary Indonesia*. New York: Routledge.

Buchan, Bruce, and Lisa Hill. 2014. *An intellectual history of political corruption*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2000. *Provincializing Europe: postcolonial thought and historical difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Chatterjee, Partha. 2006. *The politics of the governed: reflections on popular politics in most of the world*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Cody, Francis. 2015. Populist publics: print capitalism and crowd violence beyond liberal frameworks. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 35(1):50–65.

Comaroff, Jean, and John L. Comaroff. 2006. *Law and disorder in the postcolony*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Coronil, Fernando. 1997. *The magical state: nature, money, and modernity in Venezuela*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Corrigan, Philip, and Derek Sayer. 1985. *The great arch: English state formation as cultural revolution*. New York: Basil Blackwell.

de Sardan, J. P. Olivier. 1999. A moral economy of corruption in Africa? *Journal of Modern African Studies* 37(1):25–52.

Douglas, Mary. 1966. *Purity and danger: an analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo*. New York: Routledge.

Dowd, Maureen. 2016. Peter Thiel, Trump's tech pal, explains himself. *New York Times*, January 11. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/11/fashion/peter -thiel-donald-trump-silicon-valley-technology-gawker.html.

Durkheim, Emile. 1995 (1912). *Elementary forms of religious life*. Karen E. Fields, trans. New York: Free Press.

Eisenstadt, S. N., and L. Roniger. 1984. *Patrons, clients, and friends: interpersonal relations and the structure of trust in society*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Fabian, Johannes. 1983. *Time and the other: how anthropology makes its object*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Feldman, Ilana. 2018. Care and suspicion: corruption as definition in humanitarian relations. *Current Anthropology* 59(suppl. 18):SXXX–SXXX.

Ferguson, James. 1994. *The anti-politics machine: development, "depoliticization," and bureaucratic power in Lesotho*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

———. 2015. *Give a man a fish: reflections on the new politics of distribution*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Gal, Susan. 2002. A semiotics of the public/private distinction. *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 13(1):77–95.

Gellner, Ernest, and John Waterbury. 1977. *Patrons and clients in Mediterranean society*. London: Duckworth.

Geschiere, Peter. 2013. *Witchcraft, intimacy, and trust: Africa in comparison*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Glaeser, Andreas. 2004. Collective intentionality, belonging, and the production of state paranoia: Stasi in the late GDR. In *Off stage/on display: intimacies and ethnographies in the age of public culture*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Gluckman, Max. 1963. Gossip and scandal. *Current Anthropology* 4(3):307–316.

Graeber, David. 2011. *Debt: the first 5,000 years*. New York: Melville House.

Granovetter, Mark. 2007. The social construction of corruption. In *On capitalism*. Victor Nee and Richard Swedberg, eds. Pp. 152–172. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Gupta, Akhil. 1998. *Postcolonial developments: agriculture in the making of modern India*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

———. 2012. *Red tape: bureaucracy, structural violence, and poverty in India*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

———. 2017. Changing forms of corruption in India. Special issue 6, *Modern Asian Studies* 51:1862–1890.

Habermas, Jürgen. 1991 (1962). *The structural transformation of the public sphere: an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. Thomas Burger, trans. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Hankins, Joseph. Forthcoming. Living together: sympathy and the practice of politics. *Anthropological Theory*.

Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. 2000. *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Hart, Keith. 1973. Informal income opportunities and urban employment in Ghana. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 11(1):61–89.

Hasty, Jennifer. 2005. The pleasures of corruption: desire and discipline in Ghanaian political culture. *Cultural Anthropology* 20(2):271–301.

Herzfeld, Michael. 1997. *Cultural intimacy: social poetics in the nation-state*. New York: Routledge.

Hetherington, Kregg. 2013. *Guerrilla auditors: the politics of transparency in neoliberal Paraguay*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

———. 2018. Peasants, experts, clients, and soybeans: the fixing of Paraguay's civil service. *Current Anthropology* 59(suppl. 18):SXXX–SXXX.

Hornberger, Julia. 2018. A ritual of corruption: how young middle-class South Africans get their driver's licenses. *Current Anthropology* 59(suppl. 18): SXXX–SXXX.

Hume, David. 1983 (1751). *An enquiry concerning the principles of morals*. New York: Hackett.

Humphrey, Caroline. 2000. Rethinking bribery in contemporary Russia. In *Bribery and blat in Russia: negotiating reciprocity from the Middle Ages to the 1990s*. Stephen Lovell, Alena Ledeneva, and Andrei Rogachevskii, eds. Pp. 216–241. New York: Macmillan.

Johnson, John J. 2012 (1957). Middle groups in national politics in Latin America. In *Latin America's middle class: unsettled debates and new histories*. David S. Parker and Louise E. Walker, eds. Pp. 25–34. Lanham, MD: Lexington.

Kantorowicz, Ernst H. 1958. *The king's two bodies: a study in medieval political theology*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Keane, Webb. 1997. *Signs of recognition: powers and hazards of representation in an Indonesian society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lambek, Michael. 2010. Introduction. In *Ordinary ethics: anthropology, language, and action*. Michael Lambek, ed. Pp. 1–38. New York: Fordham University Press.

Ledeneva, Alena V. 1998. *Russia's economy of favours: blat, networking, and informal exchange*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Locke, John. 1988 (1689). *Two treatises on government*. Peter Laslett, ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lomnitz, Claudio. 1995. Ritual, rumor, and corruption in the constitution of polity in modern Mexico. *Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 1(1):20–47.

Lomnitz, Larissa. 1971. Reciprocity of favors in the urban middle class of Chile. In *Studies in economic anthropology*. George Dalton, ed. Pp. 93–106. Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association.

Machiavelli, Niccolo. 1970 (1517). *The discourses on Livy*. New York: Penguin.

Marx, Karl. 1978 (1846). The German ideology: part I. *The Marx-Engels reader*. 2nd edition. Robert C. Tucker, ed. Pp. 146–200. New York: Norton.

Mauss, Marcel. 1967 (1925). *The gift: forms and functions of exchange in archaic societies*. Ian Cunnison, trans. New York: Norton.

Mazzarella, William. 2017. *The mana of mass society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mbembe, Achille. 2001. *Notes on the postcolony*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Mitchell, Timothy. 1991. The limits of the state: beyond statist approaches and their critics. *American Political Science Review* 85(1):77–96.

———. 2002. *Rule of experts: Egypt, techno-politics, modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Montaigne, Michel de. 1948 (1580). Of cannibals. In *The complete essays of Montaigne*. Donald M. Frame, trans. Pp. 150–159. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Montesquieu, Charles de Secondat. 2001 (1748). *The spirit of the law*. Thomas Nugent, trans. Kitchener, Ontario: Batoche.

Muir, Sarah. 2015. The currency of failure: money and middle-class critique in post-crisis Argentina. *Cultural Anthropology* 30(2):310–335.

———. 2016. On historical exhaustion: Argentine critique in an era of "total corruption." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 58(1):128–159.

Musaraj, Smoki. 2015. Indicators, global expertise, and a local political drama: producing and deploying corruption perception data in post-socialist Albania. In *The quiet power of indicators: measuring governance, corruption, and rule of law*. Sally Engle Merry, Kevin E. Davis, and Benedict Kingsbury, eds. Pp. 222–247. New York: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2018. Corruption, right on! hidden cameras, cynical satire, and banal intimacies of anti-corruption. *Current Anthropology* 59(suppl. 18):SXXX–SXXX.

Navaro-Yashin, Yael. 2002. *Faces of the state: secularism and public life in Turkey*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Nuijten, Monique, and Gerhard Anders. 2009. Introduction: corruption and the secret of law. In *Corruption and the secret of law: a legal anthropological perspective*. Monique Nuijten and Gerhard Anders, eds. Pp. 1–25. New York: Routledge.

Nugent, David. 2018. Corruption now and then: managing threats to the nation in twentieth-century Peru. *Current Anthropology* 59(suppl. 18): SXXX–SXXX.

Nye, J. S. 1967. Corruption and political development: a cost-benefit analysis. *American Political Science Review* 61(2):417–427.

Obarrio, Juan. 2007. *The spirit of the laws in Mozambique*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

O'Donnell, Guillermo A. 2007. *Dissonances: democratic critiques of democracy*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame.

Osburg, John. 2013. *Anxious wealth: money and morality among China's new rich*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

———. 2018. Making business personal: corruption, anti-corruption, and elite networks in post-Mao China. *Current Anthropology* 59(suppl. 18):SXXX–SXXX.

Pandian, Anand. 2009. *Crooked stalks: cultivating virtue in South India*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Pardo, Italo. 2004. Introduction: corruption, morality, and the law. In *Between morality and the law: corruption, anthropology, and comparative society*. New York: Routledge.

———. 2018. Corrupt, abusive, and legal: Italian breaches of the democratic contract. *Current Anthropology* 59(suppl. 18):SXXX–SXXX.

Pierce, Stephen. 2016. *Moral economies of corruption: state formation and political culture in Nigeria*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Pocock, J. G. A. 1975. *The Machiavellian moment: Florentine political thought and the Atlantic republican tradition*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Polanyi, Karl. 1944. *The great transformation: the political and economic origins of our time*. Boston: Beacon.

Rawls, John. 1971. *A theory of justice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Roitman, Janet. 2005. *Fiscal disobedience: an anthropology of economic regulation in central Africa*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. 1992 (1755). *Discourse on the origin of inequality*. Donald A. Cress, trans. Indianapolis: Hackett.

Sahlins, Marshall. 1974. *Stone age economics*. New York: Transaction.

Sampson, Steven. 2010. The anti-corruption industry: from movement to institution. *Global Crime* 11(2):261–278.

Sanders, Todd, and Harry G. West. 2003. Power revealed and concealed in the new world order. In *Transparency and conspiracy: ethnographies of suspicion in the new world order*. Harry G. West and Todd Sanders, eds. Pp. 1–37. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Schmidt, Steffen W., James C. Scott, Carl Landé, and Laura Guasti, eds. 1977. *Friends, followers, and factions: a reader in political clientelism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Schneider, Jane. 2018. Fifty years of mafia corruption and anti-mafia reform. *Current Anthropology* 59(suppl. 18):SXXX–SXXX.

Schneider, Jane, and Peter T. Schneider. 1976. *Culture and political economy in western Sicily*. New York: Academic Press.

———. 2003. *Reversible destiny: mafia, antimafia, and the struggle for Palermo*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Scott, James C. 1975. *The moral economy of the peasant: rebellion and subsistence in Southeast Asia*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Sharma, Aradhana. 2018. New brooms and old: sweeping up corruption in India, one law at a time. *Current Anthropology* 59(suppl. 18):SXXX–SXXX.

Shore, Cris. 2018. How corrupt are universities? audit culture, fraud prevention, and the big four accountancy firms. *Current Anthropology* 59(suppl. 18): SXXX–SXXX.

Shore, Cris, and Dieter Haller. 2005. Introduction—sharp practice: anthropology and the study of corruption. In *Corruption: anthropological perspectives*. Dieter Haller and Cris Shore, eds. Pp. 1–26. Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto.

Smart, Alan. 1993. Gifts, bribes, and *guanxi*: a reconsideration of Bourdieu's social capital. *Cultural Anthropology* 8(3):388–408.

———. 2018. The unbearable discretion of street-level bureaucrats: corruption and collusion in Hong Kong. *Current Anthropology* 59(suppl. 18): SXXX–SXXX.

Smith, Adam T. 2003. *The political landscape: constellations of authority in early complex polities*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Smith, Daniel Jordan. 2007. *Culture of corruption: everyday deception and popular discontent in Nigeria*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

———. 2018. Corruption and "culture" in anthropology and in Nigeria. *Current Anthropology* 59(suppl. 18):SXXX–SXXX.

Strathern, Marilyn. 2000. New accountabilities: anthropological studies in audit, ethics, and the academy. In *Audit cultures: anthropological studies in accountability, ethics, and the academy*. Marilyn Strathern, ed. Pp. 1–18. New York: Routledge.

Streeck, Wolfgang 2016. *How will capitalism end?* New York: Verso.

Tambar, Kabir. 2017. The uncanny medium: semiotic opacity in the wake of genocide. *Current Anthropology* 58(6):762–784.

Taussig, Michael. 1997. *The magic of the state*. New York: Routledge.

Teachout, Zephyr. 2014. *Corruption in America: from Ben Franklin's snuff box to Citizens United*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Thoreau, Henry David. 2016 (1854). *Walden*. New York: L. G. Classics.

Tidey, Sylvia. 2016. Between the ethical and the right thing: how (not) to be corrupt in Indonesian bureaucracy in an age of good governance. *American Ethnologist* 43(4):663–676.

———. 2018. A tale of two mayors: configurations of care and corruption in eastern Indonesian direct district head elections. *Current Anthropology* 59 (suppl. 18):SXXX–SXXX.

Transparency International. 2016. *Corruption perceptions index*. www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016.

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 2003. *Global transformations: anthropology and the modern world*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Verdery, Katherine. 1996. *What was socialism, and what comes next?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

———. 2003. *The vanishing hectare: property and value in postsocialist Transylvania*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Weber, Max. 1978 (1922). *Economy and society: an outline of interpretive sociology*. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, ed. Ephraim Fischoff et al., trans. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Wedeen, Lisa. 1999. *Ambiguities of domination: politics, rhetoric, and symbols in contemporary Syria*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wedel, Janine R. 2012. Rethinking corruption in an age of ambiguity. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 8:453–498.

World Bank. 2016. *Anti-corruption*. www.worldbank.org/en/topic/governance/brief/anti-corruption.

Yeh, Rihan. 2017. Visas, jokes, and contraband: citizenship and sovereignty at the Mexico-U.S. border. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 59(1): 154–182.