

ASSESSING PROGRESS IN TRANSPARENCY AND ANTICORRUPTION

Manuel Balán
McGill University

Laws of Chance: Brazil's Clandestine Lottery and the Making of Urban Public Life. By Amy Chazkel. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011. Pp. xvii + 346. \$24.95 paper. ISBN: 9780822349884.

Jobs for the Boys: Patronage and the State in Comparative Perspective. By Merilee S. Grindle. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012. Pp. xii + 316. \$45.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780674065703.

Political Careers, Corruption, and Impunity: Panama's Assembly, 1984–2009. By Carlos Guevara Mann. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011. Pp. xvii + 453. \$48.00 paper. ISBN: 9780268029838.

Guerrilla Auditors: The Politics of Transparency in Neoliberal Paraguay. By Kregg Hetherington. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011. Pp. xiv + 296. \$23.95 paper. ISBN: 9780822350361.

Corruption and Politics in Latin America: National and Regional Dynamics. Edited by Stephen D. Morris and Charles H. Blake. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010. Pp. viii + 287. \$27.50 paper. ISBN: 9781588267436.

Corruption and Democracy in Brazil: The Struggle for Accountability. Edited by Timothy J. Power and Matthew M. Taylor. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011. Pp. xii + 315. \$38.00 paper. ISBN: 9780268038946.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, as part of an overall trend toward market reforms and so-called neoliberal policies, *transparency* and *anticorruption* became buzzwords in international development. The promise of uncorrupt governments managing transparent information was as simple as it was appealing: increase government transparency, get rid of corruption, enforce the rule of law and all your problems would go away. Proponents argued that transparency would help deepen and consolidate democracy because stakeholders would have access to information, reducing the asymmetries that breed inequalities in the representation of society's interests.¹ Ending corruption would get rid of rent-seeking induced inefficiencies in the economy, allowing for increased effectiveness that would help lower extreme poverty and perhaps curb inequality.² Even after international

1. Mark E. Warren, "What Does Corruption Mean in a Democracy?," *American Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 2 (2004): 328–343.

2. Sajeev Gupta, Hamid Davoodi, and Rosa Alonso-Terme, "Does Corruption Affect Income Inequality and Poverty?," IMF Working Paper WP/98/76, May 1998.

mandates to reduce the size of governments, privatize public companies, liberalize trade, and deregulate had weakened, transparency and corruption remained cornerstones of international development policy. In other words, the promise of transparency and anticorruption, if not as immediately impactful as other contemporary policy mantras, has been as long lasting as any in shaping policies in the developing world, particularly in Latin America.

It is time to take stock. Is the promise of transparency and anticorruption still alive and well in Latin America? Have we revised expectations about its implications? How has our knowledge advanced in terms of measuring the effects of transparency policies? Coming from different disciplines and focusing on different cases, the books reviewed in this essay help answer these questions through different yet compelling approaches, providing a comprehensive picture of the status of corruption, transparency, and accountability in the region. A number of common threads run through these books, including the improvement—or lack thereof—of accountability mechanisms, the role of formal institutions such as legislatures and bureaucracies, the pervasiveness of common corrupt practices such as bribery, nepotism, clientelism, or patronage, and the stickiness of formal and informal institutions and practices.

This review essay starts with broader works and proceeds to narrower studies that address specific institutions, practices, and cases. The first section looks at two cross-national comparative studies. Stephen D. Morris and Charles H. Blake review the status of corruption in the region, and Merilee S. Grindle examines reform efforts to create more professionalized bureaucracies. The second section treats the Brazilian case. Timothy J. Power and Matthew M. Taylor's edited volume provides an understanding of the electoral impacts of corruption and the roles of accountability institutions charged with addressing corruption. Meanwhile, Amy Chazkel's book offers historical analysis of the *jogo do bicho*, a clandestine but long-standing lottery that sheds light on some deeply embedded attitudes prominent in Brazilian culture. The third section shifts to perennially underexplored cases, examining Carlos Guevara Mann's work on the pursuit of personal gain in the Panamanian Assembly, and Kregg Hetherington's outstanding ethnography on peasant activists using transparency claims to aid their political struggles. The final section concludes by providing an overall assessment of the findings and insights that this remarkable collection of books has to offer, pointing to some unexplored areas that could and should be the subject of future studies.

COMPARATIVE TRENDS IN CORRUPTION AND REFORM

While most countries in Latin America have been democracies for the past twenty years, the stability and in particular the quality of such democratic systems has been and continues to be questioned. Few democratic shortcomings have been as prominent in policy, academic, and media circles as corruption and the lack of transparency in government. Despite the overall pervasiveness of corruption in the region, there are important differences in the types and levels of corruption as well as the proposed responses, and multicountry research helps to map this territory.

Morris and Blake's edited volume *Corruption and Politics in Latin America: National and Regional Dynamics* sets ambitious goals: it seeks to respond to an array of research questions regarding the causes, consequences, types, and measures taken to combat corruption in six countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico, and Venezuela), while also accounting for regional efforts to fight corruption (see the chapter by Florencia Guerzovich and Roberto de Michele). All country chapters follow a similar outline, moving from a description of the patterns of corruption to analyses of their political impact and causes, and finally to a survey of anticorruption efforts. This outline gives the book a comparative flavor, though only in the last chapter do the editors embrace the task of figuring out how the cases fit together. Their overall assessment is difficult to disagree with: while there has been progress in terms of the visibility and attention to corruption, anticorruption efforts consistently run a step behind. The editors point to the need to move beyond detecting corruption and toward punishing it. Despite recent judicial decisions in resounding cases such as the Mensalão in Brazil and the illegal arm sales scandal in Argentina, among others, most corruption goes unpunished. Moreover, many high-profile convictions are still being contested and some, such as the conviction and imprisonment of former Costa Rican president Miguel Ángel Rodríguez, have already been overturned.³

The volume's contributors trace the varied sources of unlawful behavior by public officials. From institutional sources of corruption such as the electoral system (in Bolivia) or the arrangement of subnational governments (in Argentina), to more cultural explanations that rely on heritages of Spanish colonialism (in Cuba), or structural arguments that focus on issues such as oil dependence (in Venezuela), or weakly institutionalized bureaucracies (in most cases), many elements are identified as contributing to the corruption problem. While authors focus on some aspects more than others, the reader senses that the causes identified in certain countries can easily be found in others. For instance, the analysis of the impact that the electoral system has had on corruption in Bolivia could be easily extended to Brazil, among other cases. A cross-national assessment of corruption's effects shows recurring trends such as hindered accountability of elected and unelected public officials, the concentration of power in elites, and a weakening of state capacity and democracy writ large.

A parallel point can be made regarding anticorruption efforts. With the exception of Cuba, all countries have attempted broadly similar reforms, such as introducing new accountability agencies, proposing campaign finance reform, and attempting to increase transparency, with mixed results at best. The relative weakness of the comparative framework set up by the editors hampers explicit comparisons across countries, leaving the reader to wonder whether the elements emphasized by different authors accurately capture the variations among the cases. Strong chapters include Daniel W. Gingerich's work on Bolivia and Matthew M. Taylor's chapter on Brazil, and other entries have the merit of tackling

3. See "Absuelven a ex presidente Rodríguez de Costa Rica," *Tiempo*, December 21, 2012, <http://tiempo.hn/el-mundo/item/4235-absuelven-a-ex-presidente-rodriguez-de-costa-rica>.

difficult or neglected cases, such as Leslie C. Gates's chapter on Venezuela or the chapter on Cuba by Sergio Díaz-Briquets and Jorge Pérez-López.

One particular subset of reforms that is only partially addressed by Morris and Blake's volume centers on the professionalization of the bureaucracy and the move away from patronage. This is the topic of Grindle's book *Jobs for the Boys: Patronage and the State in Comparative Perspective*, which zeroes in on the transition from patronage systems, where "discretionary appointment for personal and/or political purposes is a principal route to a nonelected position in government for a large portion of those enjoying such positions" (Grindle, 18), to meritocratic ones, where "the preponderance of nonelected public sector jobs are filled through a process of credentialing based on education, examination, or some other test of merit" (21). This narrower focus on the persistence and reform of patronage allows Grindle to flesh out a more comprehensive analysis that not only goes beyond Latin America but that also calls into question the reforms themselves, notes backlashes to these reforms, and assesses the variety of purposes served by patronage systems. Grindle's comparative study of patronage systems and bureaucratic reforms demonstrates that breadth of research does not necessarily come at the expense of depth. Her historical analyses of six developed countries that underwent reform in the nineteenth century (France, Germany, Japan, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States) and four developing countries that instituted reforms in the twentieth century (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico) are well justified, rich in detail, and purposefully articulated to the overarching theme and arguments of the book.

A particularly interesting aspect of Grindle's study is its nuanced and complex view of patronage systems. Existing literature usually paints patronage as inherently negative, as it not only generates incentives for corruption but also hinders the effectiveness and efficiency of the state apparatus. In fact, reforms to systems of patronage that seek to create merit-based systems are usually associated with normatively positive terms such as professionalization, modernization, and rationalization. While *Jobs for the Boys* does not directly contradict this proposition, it implicitly tags it as simplistic. Grindle highlights the varied and valid purposes that patronage systems have played throughout history. An evaluation of the consequences for development shows that some countries with embedded patronage systems had "dismal histories of economic stagnation and volatile politics," while others "demonstrated considerable capacity to grow, to sustain political regimes, and to accomplish modern tasks of government" (31). Indeed, patronage systems have been useful in a number of ways. They helped create structures of loyalty that were nonexistent before, as in medieval European history, therefore becoming valuable instruments for the construction and maintenance of power; their flexibility has allowed leaders to pursue multiple and sometime disparate objectives; and they served as a tool for contention. Grindle's convincing argument is that the main flaw of patronage systems is not that they always lead to undesirable outcomes but rather that they are inherently capricious and subject to the will, skills, and purposes of those who manage them. Patronage's flexibility is both its main asset and its central danger.

It is in light of this need for stability that reforms are usually proposed. *Jobs for the Boys* poses questions that will interest scholars studying bureaucracies and the politics of reform, a topic that has received substantial attention from political science in the last two decades. Steering clear of arguments that are too parsimonious or that only apply to a single case of reform, Grindle ably navigates a middle course, describing different paths for civil service reform that share some important commonalities. Her explanation for reforms and their modalities encompasses the legacies of the past as well as the agency of key actors and stakeholders. This combination of a historical institutionalist perspective with a rational choice approach is compelling and in line with current trends in political science, which is—or should be—moving away from single and mutually exclusive approaches. Examining nineteenth-century reforms in what are today developed countries alongside more contemporary reforms in Latin America, Grindle analyzes processes of reform that were established from the top down (Prussia, Japan, Brazil), others that were the result of more or less small elites taking advantage of favorable moments (Argentina, Chile, Mexico) or going through lengthy processes of reform (France, United Kingdom, Spain), and yet others that were the product of public contestation (United States). None of these paths guarantee success, but the distinctions made by Grindle help the reader understand the different sets of challenges and opportunities that come with the various approaches to reform.

Yet another strength of *Jobs for the Boys* lies in its attention to the challenges that arise after reforms are instituted. While literature on anticorruption reforms does focus on the difficulties of implementing accountability and transparency mechanisms, it does not often address the explicit obstacles to reform that emerge after spoils systems are defused. In the Latin American cases under analysis, with the partial exception of Brazil, the challenges are ongoing and the future of civil service systems remains uncertain, which renders analysis of the challenges difficult but all the more relevant.

The Brazilian case stands out as the most puzzling and perhaps the most theoretically relevant of those Grindle examines. Widely considered as having the oldest and better-established professional civil service, Brazil is also seen as the land of red tape and unnecessary bureaucratic complexities, demonstrating what is perhaps Grindle's main point: the link between public sector performance and the existence of a career public service (as opposed to a patronage system) is far from straightforward. Good governance has been elusive in Brazil, but just as having a meritocratic public service is not synonymous with good governance, neither is patronage tantamount to bad governance.

HISTORICAL AND CURRENT PATTERNS OF CORRUPTION AND TRANSPARENCY IN BRAZIL

Grindle's use of the Brazilian case to highlight her conclusions serves as a useful segue into the review of two books that analyze the historical and current trends of corruption and accountability in that country. Aside from its sheer size, complexity, and importance, Brazil constitutes a particularly perplexing case for the study of corruption and transparency. A deeply rooted tolerance for illegal behavior and a history of corrupt law enforcement—well depicted by Amy

Chazkel's *Laws of Chance: Brazil's Clandestine Lottery and the Making of Urban Public Life*—coexist with active corruption reporting and a web of accountability institutions that are unparalleled in the region, which are the subject of Power and Taylor's *Corruption and Democracy in Brazil: The Struggle for Accountability*.

Chazkel's *Laws of Chance* provides a detailed account of the social and cultural underpinnings of the *jogo do bicho*, a centuries-old clandestine lottery that became a fixed part of the Brazilian landscape and helps to explain certain attitudes deeply embedded in the population and the police force. The historical pattern of this illegal game and its repression shows the intricacy of formalizing and regulating informal practices, and raises questions regarding modernity and how the *jogo do bicho* fits in the development of state-society relations. An array of stakeholders, most notably the police force and urban dwellers, made this process a back-and-forth endeavor that sheds light on the development of Brazil's culture of legality and illegality. Chazkel's book is insightful and well crafted, providing an in-depth look at one of the practices most commonly associated with the origins of Brazil's current corruption. The book also touches on important and interesting issues that fall outside the scope of this review, such as the transformation of the Brazilian and in particular Carioca urban landscape and the complex relationship between gambling and modernity. If anything, Chazkel can be faulted for posing too many questions whose implications deserve further exploration, such as her analysis of the role of money and currency (chapter 4) or the interplay of state and society.

Power and Taylor's edited volume *Corruption and Democracy in Brazil* departs from the commonplace assumption, relatively undisputed in policy and academic circles, that corruption is inherently linked to accountability and the institutions constructed to provide it. The editors concur that an improvement in accountability should result in decreased incentives for corruption, and therefore we should focus on the study of both electoral and horizontal accountability in order to understand and help curb corruption. Although this claim is far from original, contributors to the volume depart from conventional wisdom in two very important ways. First, they do not conceive of electoral accountability in absolute terms. In contrast, they provide a nuanced view of the 2006 reelection of Lula (Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva) that assesses the specific impact of corruption scandals on voting behavior, despite his eventual electoral success (chapter 3 by Lucio R. Rennó). Moreover, the in-depth look at both the political bargaining dynamics of the Mensalão scandal (chapter 2 by Carlos Pereira, Power, and Eric D. Raile) and the impact of corruption on campaign financing and reelection (chapter 4 by Pereira, Rennó, and David J. Samuels) provide well-informed and nuanced analyses of political corruption and its causes and consequences. Second, Power and Taylor pay special attention to the articulation of the web of accountability institutions in Brazil. While individual chapters address the role of auditing agencies, the Polícia Federal and the Ministério Público, the federal and state judiciaries, and the media, the overall framework emphasizes the interplay and complementarity of these actors and institutions in achieving meaningful accountability. The argument is that weaker links in the web actually undermine the functioning of the whole system, regardless of the relative strength of other actors or institutions.

Overall, the image depicted by the individual institution-specific chapters suits the paradoxical nature of the Brazilian case. The editors characterize the glass as half-full, emphasizing the advances made on a number of fronts. As they point out, “the development of accountability institutions in Brazil has been broad, dynamic, and continuous since the transition from authoritarian rule began in earnest in 1982” (Power and Taylor, 4). New agencies, such as the Controladoria-Geral da União (CGU, Federal Comptroller’s Office) and the Conselho de Controle de Atividades Financeiras (COAF, Council for the Oversight of Financial Activities) have been recently created; others such as the Ministério Público and the Polícia Federal have been expanded and empowered. There have been attempts to improve Brazil’s ineffective judiciary. Measures were adopted to increase transparency—including the adoption of a Freedom of Information Law in 2011—as well as to encourage the participation of civil society. Corruption scandals such as the Mensalão resulted in campaign finance reforms that we are not yet able to evaluate fully. Yet the volume’s contributors acknowledge that some of these improvements have done little but increase the complexity of the system, one of the usual criticisms advanced regarding the Brazilian government in general and its bureaucracy in particular. For instance, accountability tools such as the Comissões Parlamentares de Inquérito (CPIs, Parliamentary Inquiring Committees) have produced few results while encouraging the political use of corruption exposure. The judiciary continues to be largely ineffective despite the 2004 reforms, and the Ministério Público has therefore resorted to using the media to shame politicians.

The incremental reform process described in *Corruption and Democracy in Brazil* may be a more realistic and desirable outcome than a complete overhaul. The editors find that difficulties in coalition building are behind some of the most gruesome scandals, the electoral system is a big part of the problem, and the judiciary continues to be ineffective despite reforms. They recommend an increased focus on punishment over detection, more systematic research, and more attention to the danger and costs imposed by corruption. These conclusions are compelling, but the challenge in such incremental processes is to keep an eye on the big picture, so perhaps additional attention should be paid to the coordination of reform efforts. One thing is certain: the pervasiveness of different types of corruption as exposed in continuous corruption scandals, together with Brazil’s rich history of tolerance toward corrupt activities such as the *jogo do bicho* and the wide range of policy responses designed and implemented in the last twenty years, make Brazil a propitious case for theory creation and hypothesis testing in studies about corruption and transparency.

OFF THE BEATEN PATH: LEARNING FROM UNDER-EXPLORED CASES

Ask about corruption in Latin America and most people’s first reaction will be to refer to corruption scandals in Brazil (Fernando Collor de Melo’s impeachment, the Mensalão), Argentina (the 2000 Senate bribes scandal, Carlos Menem’s years as president), or Mexico (particularly during the PRI era). They may even refer to Peru and the infamous Montesinos videos. Turn the question around and

ask about transparency and probity in the region, and the examples are invariably Chile, Uruguay, or Costa Rica. Other countries are perennially understudied but no less interesting and important for understanding corruption and transparency, as an intriguing pair of new books makes evident. Carlos Guevara Mann's *Political Careers, Corruption, and Impunity: Panama's Assembly, 1984–2009* takes a close look at Panama's politics and the pervasive private gain seeking by elected members of Congress. Gregg Hetherington's *Guerrilla Auditors: The Politics of Transparency in Neoliberal Paraguay* approaches the transparency issue through a highly compelling ethnographic study of peasant activists.

Most research on the behavior of legislators—particularly that stemming from US academia or focusing on the US case—assumes that representatives seek to maximize their utility, and thus their ultimate goal is to obtain reelection, and if that is not possible then to secure appointment to political office or a position within the party. While Guevara Mann recognizes that this is also the case in Panama, he argues that members of the National Assembly additionally seek to profit in material ways. Legislators seek to enrich themselves through legal or illegal means and to secure impunity.

After a few chapters that provide useful introductions to Panama's key institutions—political parties and electoral and party systems—Guevara Mann turns to analysis of what he calls Panama's informal institutions: systemic corruption, impunity, and clientelism. While this first part of the book is clear and well grounded in the literature and the specifics of the case, the book's main contributions come later (particularly in chapters 8 through 11).

Guevara Mann provides two key insights. First, by focusing his analysis on National Assembly members' goals the author puts legal and illegal means of achieving them on comparable grounds. We are accustomed to seeing the legal manipulation of rules for personal profit, but this practice is arguably just as dangerous as breaking the rules, perhaps more so. Guevara Mann's analysis of the legal means of enrichment is to the point, interesting, and thought provoking. He identifies instances and sectors in which representatives overuse their privileges, which could serve as a starting point for a broader and more interesting analysis. Nonetheless he leaves a key question unanswered: how can we go about curbing behaviors that bend but do not break the law?

Guevara Mann's second insight is his emphasis on impunity, which hits the nail on the head in specifying where efforts to curb corruption should concentrate. Arguably, learning about corruption in the public sector is just as poor an outcome as not learning about it if those involved manage to remain free from prosecution. Although some argue that it is better to know than not to know, there are important costs attached to disclosure without punishment. In particular, a sense of growing impunity can create disenchantment with democratic institutions, hindering their legitimacy and inviting questions about their value in advancing the public good.

The case of Panama's assembly members is rich in examples of different paths for seeking personal profit. Given the prior dearth of empirical material on this case and more generally on corruption in legislatures, Guevara Mann's accessible book is a welcome addition to the literature. The book would have benefitted from

fleshing out the theoretical implications of its main contributions, although this is not a shortcoming. What do legal means of personal enrichment and the emphasis on impunity imply for the ways in which we generally assess and address corruption?

As Guevara Mann's book exemplifies, single case studies often shy away from conclusions that could be generalized to other cases, a trait that is all the stronger in qualitative and particularly ethnographic studies. Yet just as Grindle's book defied the usual assertions about the inherent tradeoff between breadth and depth, Hetherington's monograph shows how ethnography at its best can achieve its recognized goals of rich description and interpretation while speaking to broader topics. This ethnography of Paraguay interrogates the politics of transparency, revealing its nonneutrality and the unintended consequences of reform.

Hetherington's book is a gem, and there are simply too many threads one could pick up and follow to broader and interesting implications. Coverage here will perforce be confined to two interrelated topics pertinent to this review. The first one entails the development of what the practice of transparency actually looks like, where Hetherington paints a much more complex and realistic picture of transparency in motion. The second is the importance of conceiving transparency as nonneutral.

Paraguay's transition to democracy came after forty-five years of dictatorship under Alfredo Stroessner. The demand for transparency and anticorruption was strong but also deeply connected to a neoliberal emphasis on property: if all property were formalized, rights would be equal across individuals in different social classes, allowing everyone to recognize the property of others. This process required the creation of documents that would serve as irrefutable evidence, leading to fewer disputes, more stability and greater predictability. Yet, as Hetherington aptly shows, there are serious asymmetries in people's capacity to create and access such documents, and these differences clearly follow social class, so that it is poor people who are disadvantaged. Reversing Hernando de Soto's assertion, Hetherington writes, "It is not, as he claims, the lack of clear representations that causes poverty, but poverty that causes the lack of representations" (131).

In light of this glaring asymmetry, while peasants can become objects of certain documents (such as the "archive of terror" documenting human rights abuses during the Stroessner period), they can rarely if ever become subjects with access to documents and the ability to shape them. Insofar as transparency assumes the production and accessibility of state documents, these asymmetries in the representation of peasants in documents and in their access speaks to inherent problems with transparency as a concept and a practice. Going back to the simplistic mantra of transparency described at the beginning of this essay, it is hardly the case that achieving equality, freedom, and prosperity is as simple as guaranteeing transparency. While some peasant activists seeking land security, such as the ones described by Hetherington, base their actions in shaping and gaining access to documents, the process by which they do so is far from straightforward and requires an uncommonly high level of expertise and political connections. This is a central theme of Hetherington's book and one that is both convincingly articu-

lated and extremely relevant to the overarching—and unrealistic—claims of the wonders that transparency has to offer.

As Hetherington shows, not only is the promise of transparency unrealistic, but transparency also is nonneutral insofar as it is built upon a set of assumptions that do not hold equally for everyone. In the case developed in the study, transparency favors a liberal conception of property rights that is only one of several ways in which property is acquired and maintained. Moreover, the production of the documents that are the subject of transparency also favors certain actors over others, a point neglected by what Hetherington calls “new democrats.” For transparency to be truly neutral, there should be a sense of equality in both the production of documents and access to them. This is certainly absent in the Paraguayan case, and it is arguably also absent elsewhere in the region, limiting the usefulness of transparency as an analytical concept and as a policy prescription. Hetherington’s study thus raises salient warnings about the paths reform should follow. Furthermore, the explicit way in which the author separates the issues of corruption and transparency (see pp. 152–159) questions exactly how useful transparency can be in creating anticorruption incentives.

FINAL REMARKS

The books juxtaposed in this review challenge fundamental assumptions about transparency and anticorruption as ideals, as intellectual constructs, and as policy prescriptions widely applied in Latin America. Transparency is revealed as less neutral than we would have hoped (Hetherington), anticorruption initiatives have produced mixed results (Morris and Blake, Power and Taylor), and getting rid of patronage does not ensure good governance (Grindle). While these findings are well documented and resonate with the realities in a number of countries in the region, curbing corruption remains a priority, and rightly so. Although early claims may have been overstated, diminishing corruption, whether coupled with increased transparency or not, can have positive effects for democratic and economic development. Latin America’s record to date in decreasing corruption and establishing transparent procedures is notably uneven, but despite variations across these cases, the conclusions drawn by Power and Taylor about Brazil are mirrored to some extent elsewhere: there have been important advances, particularly in increasing the visibility of corruption, and there remain important shortcomings, especially in holding accountable those responsible for corruption.

Two particularly important issues are left almost untouched by this remarkable collection of books, and these constitute likely avenues for future research. Most of the literature on corruption and anticorruption is focused on the public sector, yet the pursuit of personal gain through unlawful means is all too common in the business world. Perhaps the study of this issue—leaving semantic debates aside for the moment, let’s call it private corruption—should not be blended with analyses of public corruption, but the fact remains that scholars have largely ignored private corruption and as a result we know much less about corrupt prac-

tices in the private sphere, their causes and consequences, and how to curb them. The second issue, which is discussed to a limited extent in some of these books but warrants much more attention, is the role of the media in reporting issues of transparency and corruption. While widely considered an important actor, the media and its growing politicization in Latin America are given too little attention in corruption analyses, making it difficult to assess whether and how they are performing a watchdog function. Amid encouraging developments in the literature on corruption and transparency, as exemplified by the works reviewed here, private corruption and the role of the media persist as lacunae that should be filled.