The Politics of Corruption: Two Competing Definitions

Professor Ivor Chipkin
Director, Public Affairs Research Institute
and Associate Professor in the School of Social Sciences
at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

Thursday, February 21st 2013
2:00 to 4:00 pm
University of Ottawa Campus, 120 University
Faculty of Social Science Building (FSS 4004)

ABSTRACT

In South Africa since the late 1990s, and especially since allegations of corruption in the strategic defence acquisition (the “Arms Deal”), corruption has become a major topic of public conversation and increasingly of government concern and policy making. Surveys of public perception indicate that South Africans regard public servants as increasingly corrupt and corruptible. This situation is frequently depicted in terms of the moral decline of the country’s political leaders and public servants. This analysis misses a number of important points – with implications for understanding how corruption plays out in other post-colonial contexts.

First, talking about and acting on corruption in South African invoke two mutually exclusive conceptions about the state, such that the ‘struggle against corruption’ is also a political struggle about the form of the state. Ivor Chipkin will outline these competing understandings and move to an analysis of an overlooked variable in the discussion about drivers of public sector corruption and how to combat it.

The presentation hopes to stimulate a broader discussion about conceptual and methodological approaches to studying corruption and the behaviour of public servants, especially in developing country contexts.

INFORMATION

This is a free public conference.
Places are limited, Please RSVP by email at ceg-cog@uOttawa.ca by Tuesday February 19th.
This event will be presented in English with an exchange in English and French
**Ivor Chipkin’s Bio**

Professor Ivor Chipkin is the founder and director of the Public Affairs Research Institute and Associate Professor in the School of Social Sciences at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Ivor has also written widely on questions of government, governance and the State, with a focus on South Africa. In 2008 he published *Do South Africans Exist? Nationalism, Democracy and the Identity of ‘the People’*. Ivor completed his PhD at the École Normale Supérieure in France. Ivor can be contacted at: ichipkin@pari.org.za

The **Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI)** brings theoretically-informed social science research into the service of dealing with the major issues facing the public sector. The aim of the Institute is to contribute to the development of effective and accountable public institutions, with a primary focus on South Africa. PARI approach is to examine the institutional context in which decisions, authority and power are made and executed – this approach involves ‘getting inside’ public sector organisations to see how they function in practice. Whilst this research focuses primarily on South Africa, in the coming year PARI plans to start working in southern Africa more broadly. More information on PARI is available at: www.pari.org.za

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**Le cycle de conférences : Innovations en gouvernance**

La *Cycle de conférence Innovations en gouvernance* est une initiative du Centre d’Études en gouvernance de la Faculté des sciences sociales de l’Université d’Ottawa. Elle a pour but de créer un espace de réflexion sur les solutions novatrices, originales et même parfois avant-gardistes pour faire face aux grands défis et problèmes contemporains auxquels les gouvernements sont confrontés. Les professionnels en résidence, les chercheurs invités, les universitaires associés au Centre d’Études en gouvernance sont les premiers sollicités. Le caractère appliqué, concret et ciblé de la série vise à favoriser le dialogue entre le milieu universitaire et celui des intervenants gouvernementaux et non-gouvernementaux. Les innovations proposées portent sur la gouvernance publique, la gestion publique, les politiques publiques, les rapports entre les acteurs gouvernementaux et non-gouvernementaux (secteur privé et société civile) dans le développement de politiques et la production de services publics. Le public cible se compose de la communauté universitaire, des intervenants du secteur public et communautaire et du grand public.

**The Governance Innovation Lecture Series**

The *Governance Innovation Lecture Series* is an initiative from the University of Ottawa’s Centre on Governance, Faculty of Social Sciences. The main objective of the series is to create a space for thinking about innovative solutions to address contemporary problems and challenges faced by governments. Senior Fellows, visiting researchers and faculty associated with the Centre on Governance will be the first asked to contribute to the series. The series focus on applied, concrete and targeted innovations and will aim at fostering dialogue between the academic, the government and the non-governmental sectors. The selected governance innovations should focus on public governance, public management, and public policy along with relationships between the government, the private sector and civil society in public policy design and public service delivery. The target audience is the academic community, civil servants, public and non-profit actors and the general public.

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