28th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum
CONCLUDING MEETING
Prague, 10-11 September 2020
Session II: Enhancing transparency, promoting good governance and the rule of law for preventing and combating corruption

OFFICIAL

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM | THE INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL INNOVATION

The role of academia in combating corruption through innovation

Presentation to the 28th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, 10-11 September 2020

Professor Heather Marquette
Professor of Development Politics, International Development Department
&
Team Leader, '21st Transnational Organised Crime: (TOC, Corruption & Development Research Cluster', Institute for Global Innovation

OFFICIAL

What is innovative research helping corruption reformers understand and do better? (1/2)

Investment in anti-corruption research is leading to a huge range of innovative solutions focused on specific anti-corruption problems; for example…

- **Procurement**: using big data to identify procurement 'red flags' with open source software that can be used by anyone
- **PEPS/shell companies**: using leaked datasets & new statistical methods to better map 'offshore' & complex relationships
- **Geo-tracking medicine theft**: current research testing the use of tiny geolocators for tracing medicine theft
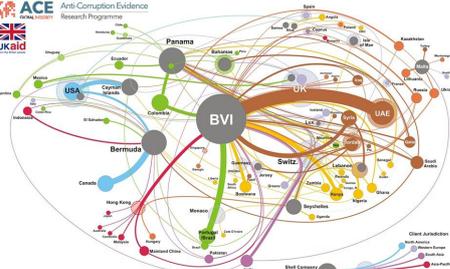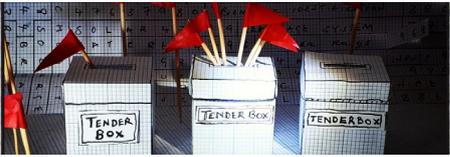
UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM | THE INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL INNOVATION

Geographic Structure of Shell Companies Linked to Politically Exposed Persons in the Panama and Paradise Papers
Source: International Consortium of Investigative Journalists Created by Daniel Haberly, 2020

What is innovative research helping corruption reformers understand and do better? (2/2)

Testing solutions for what works and what doesn't; for example…

- **Civil service integrity**: large-N, cross-national survey experiment showing importance of *public service motivation* for triggering improvements in integrity/ethics & performance (what works)
- **Corruption messaging**: experimental survey research in 3 regions shows that anti-corruption messaging decreases the likelihood that people will stand up against corruption *and* increases their likelihood of paying a bribe (what doesn't work)
- **Digital identity systems**: research suggests that existing strength of rule-of-law affects whether or not rolling out digital ID systems will have positive or negative impacts on corruption & other governance issues (potential unintended consequences)
- **Corruption functionality**: testing new framework for improving anti-corruption strategies & programming with practitioners & activists (tbd)

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM | THE INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL INNOVATION

What does recent research & evidence tell us that we should know for our discussion?
(1) Solution-first approaches are rarely 'magic keys'

- Evidence suggests moving away from 'solution-led' approaches to 'problem-driven' likely to lead to more effective anti-corruption interventions & strategies
  - These should be as granular as possible – sector, type, context etc
- When someone comes with a ready-made (tech) solution, ask:
  - What is the actual problem (it's unlikely to be corruption…)?
  - Is the problem really important enough to grapple with right now?
  - Is change politically feasible (more in a second…)?
- Better co-working between public sector & researchers can help with problem identification, while better working between both & private sector can help improve the tech offer
- This needs dedicated investment in research and an open-minded approach from all

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM | THE INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL INNOVATION

(2) We need to stop using political will as an excuse for why anti-corruption efforts fail

- Research is showing how we can move beyond seeing 'political will' as a barrier to effective anti-corruption interventions
    - 'Political will has become a global shorthand for explaining why reforms succeed or fail. The phrase "we can't do anything here because there's no political will" has become like a resigned shrug to end a difficult conversation.' (Marquette, 2020)
- Success is more likely when *motivated individuals* align action with vision & the right people are in the room to tackle a specific problem (Marquette & Peiffer, forthcoming)
- Overcoming barriers is more likely through cooperation & *coalitions* with approaches that *resonate* with society (Hudson et al, 2018)

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM | THE INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL INNOVATION
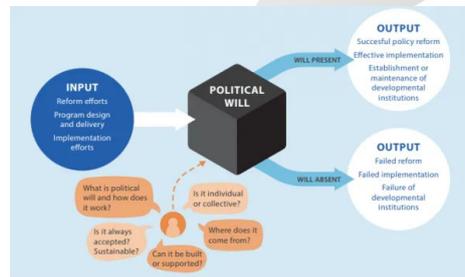
(c) Evidence on COVID-19 suggests we need to speed up our efforts...or else... ☹

- The evidence on the impact of COVID-19 so far on corruption is very worrying (Herbert & Marquette, forthcoming)
- We need to move faster to improve our understand of what the (often underlying) problems are & how to fix them, because criminals & the corrupt have much bigger "R&D budgets" than we do
    - They are the true innovators right now...
- We will need to think & work differently – collectively & across sectors – to 'fix the cracks', in order to combat corruption & enhance security, stability & growth
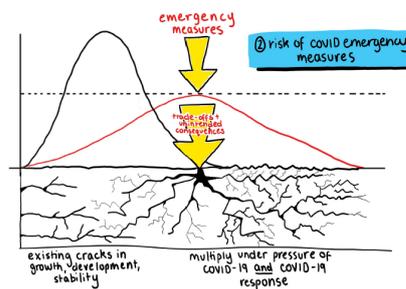
Source: Marquette & Evans, 2020

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM | THE INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL INNOVATION

Thank you!

h.a.marquette@bham.ac.uk
https://twitter.com/hamarquette
https://www.linkedin.com/in/heather
-marquette-1331903/

...political lenses blurred?
...technical focus lacking depth?
try new
poltechs-rayspecs

pol tech

see real-world problems
in amazing 4D !

Source: pjevanspainting

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM | THE INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL INNOVATION