

From the Editor-in-Chief

This volume contains articles selected from papers presented at the Third Conference on Evidence-Based Anti-Corruption Policies in June 2015 organized by the National Anti-Corruption Commission in collaboration with the World Bank, with support from Transparency International Thailand. The conference provided a forum for exchange of knowledge and experiences, as well as innovative ideas among researchers, anti-corruption officials, civil society advocates, and other stakeholders.

The fight against corruption is a difficult one, especially since the forms of corruption have evolved from simple acts such as outright bribery into highly sophisticated and complex forms, often involving connected dealings that may be veiled under the semblance of legality. The theme of the conference was “Combating Organized Corruption”, seen as the most insidious form of corruption, involving ring-leaders in high places, which can include elected officials, government, business and industry.

Medhi Krongkaew discusses the legal accountability of elected officials, the culpability of top government officials and legal precedence. Understanding organized corruption, involving top-level players, requires study of the whole process from the path to power, the role of ethics, compliance programs, enterprise risk management, as well as effective prosecution and new forms of deterrence such as civil lawsuits and asset recovery. With respect to the path to power, Matthew Stephenson examines the relationship between corruption and democratic institutions and identifies key factors that may influence this relationship. The conclusions, though still tentative, add to our understanding of the effect of democratic institutions and electoral systems on corruption.

Adam Graycar identifies “hotspots of corruption” in the crime triangle: offender and motivation, target and opportunity, and place and ability. Preventive measures are discussed by Matthias Einmahl with reference to German local communities, while Renalyn Estiller proposes public administration reform in the Philippine Bureau of Customs. These papers emphasize the need to take into account the social and economic realities and constraints of each situation.

Organized corruption is indeed an insidious threat, not only to national security and a country’s immediate financial position, but also to long-term economic and social development and moral fabric. Abuse of public office for private gain can manifest itself in many shapes and forms, through patronage and nepotism, theft of state assets, or diversion and misuse of state budgets, and procurement is a vehicle through which corruption can occur with impunity. Annika Engelbert, Xavier Codina and Adrei Ivanov concentrate on the most vulnerable areas of procurement and offer solutions.

Sirilaksana Khoman