

Estudos Organizacionais

THE HOW, WHERE, AND WHAT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CORRUPTION: AN INTEGRATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

ABSTRACT

Research on organizational corruption has been approached from a variety of perspectives, but still lacks a more comprehensive focus on organizational research. In this paper, we conducted a comprehensive review of 305 academic articles in the area of business and management. The review revealed that studies on corruption are mainly concentrated in the northern hemisphere, with a significant emphasis on quantitative research. This geographic concentration raises important questions about the need to extend the scope of research to include the southern hemisphere, where organizational corruption is also a significant concern. In addition, the predominance of quantitative research suggests the need for a more balanced approach, which incorporates qualitative methods and mixed studies to allow for further investigation of organizational corruption. Finally, we propose a research agenda to guide future investigations on organizational corruption.

Keywords: Organizational corruption; integrative literature review; organizational studies; global south.

RESUMO

A investigação sobre a corrupção organizacional tem sido abordada a partir de diversas perspectivas, mas ainda carece de um enfoque mais abrangente na investigação organizacional. Neste artigo, realizamos uma revisão abrangente de 305 artigos acadêmicos na área de negócios e gestão. A revisão revelou que os estudos sobre a corrupção estão concentrados principalmente no hemisfério norte, com uma ênfase significativa na investigação quantitativa. Esta concentração geográfica levanta questões importantes sobre a necessidade de alargar o âmbito da investigação para incluir o hemisfério sul, onde a corrupção organizacional também é um problema. preocupação significativa. Além disso, a predominância da investigação quantitativa sugere a necessidade de uma abordagem mais equilibrada, que incorpore métodos qualitativos e estudos mistos para permitir uma investigação mais aprofundada da corrupção organizacional. Finalmente, propomos uma agenda de pesquisa para orientar futuras investigações sobre corrupção organizacional.

Palavras-chave:

Corrupção organizacional; revisão integrativa da literatura; estudos organizacionais; sul global

Introduction

Corruption is defined as the abuse of power for private benefit (ASHFORTH; ANAND, 2003; CLEGG; COURPASSON; PHILLIPS, 2006). It covers a range of unethical activities, from transactions between a private and a public agent to an enduring transnational scheme involving several agents. In this relation, it must be noted that the determinants of corruption vary between the individual and structural levels (GRAAF, 2007). Jancsics (2019) defined different concepts of corruption by their type of resource transfer or the primary beneficiary. Other researchers shifted their focus on corporate corruption from public agents to private managers (CASTRO; PHILLIPS; ANSARI, 2020).

Recent reviews have focused on different areas of corporate corruption (CASTRO; PHILLIPS; ANSARI, 2020) especially its articulations with international business (BAHOO; ALON; PALTRINIERI, 2020). Our research extends this literature by focusing on the intersection between public and private corruption and delineating the development of the corruption theory in these fields. Specifically, we ask the following three questions about organizational corruption in management and organization studies:

- (1) What has been studied on organizational corruption?
- (2) How have the researchers studied organizational corruption?
- (2) Where are the studies conducted?

To answer those questions, we conduct an integrative literature review. First, we review the methods, theories, and state-of-the-art corruption research. Second, we discuss the geographical location of the corruption studies and the implications of their geographical distribution. Finally, we suggest an agenda for future research.

Concerning the methodology for the integrative literature review (CALLAHAN, 2010; ELSBACH; VAN KNIPPENBERG, 2020), we search for the keywords “corruption in organizations” and “organizational corruption.” This search and the subsequent filtration yielded 305 management and organization studies on public, non-profit, and private organizations (ARELLANO-GAULT et al., 2013). From these articles, we extract their objectives, theories, method, empirical context, and findings. This approach integrates the micro and macro views of the organizing processes (ROBICHAUD; COOREN, 2013).

This integrative literature review is divided into the following five sections. First, we explain the need to study organizational corruption and present examples of corruption. Then we describe the review methodology. After that, we present the results of our review. Specifically, it shows the methods and theories used to study corruption and the geographic location of the studies. Finally, we present avenues for future research and concluding remarks.

Why Study Organizational Corruption?

Corruption is often defined as the misuse of power or position by a public agent for personal gain to the detriment of society (DARSAREH; BASTANIPOUR, 2016). However, the definition of corruption varies greatly depending on its context. The overemphasis on public agents has led scholars to overlook the importance of private agents in corrupt relationship (CASTRO; PHILLIPS; ANSARI, 2020). Corruption is a collective and systemic phenomenon that captures the state and organizations for private interests and thereby harms society (FAZEKAS; TÓTH, 2016; HELLMAN; JONES; KAUFMANN, 2000). Despite this systemic nature, scholars often study corruption as an exception. It is based on the idea that the private agent is just doing business and treating the perpetrators as bad apples

(FELPS; MITCHELL; BYINGTON, 2006; NIELSEN, 2003). Recently, organizational studies have shown that corruption has turned into a systemic and organizational problem mainly because of organizational scandals such as the Enron scandal (LEVINE, 2005), the Volkswagen scandal (HULPKE, 2017), and the Brazilian Car Wash operation (CASTRO; ANSARI, 2017; RODRIGUES; BARROS, 2020). These scandals portray private companies as the main actors in systemic and transnational corruption schemes. Given this, it is impossible to find good apples or structures untouched by corruption (PINTO; LEANA; PIL, 2008).

Several studies have reviewed the corruption literature. Jancsics (2019) and Graaf (2007) focused on the characteristics of public administration to understand the factors contributing to corruption. This interdisciplinary collaboration facilitates a conceptualization of corruption prevention by positioning prevention mechanisms in different disciplines along with their focus and scope (Bautista-Beauchesne & Garzon, 2019). In another review, Castro et al. (2020) focused on the antecedents of corruption. Concerning the review methodology, Bahoo et al. (2020) used a quantitative citation analysis, while Castro et al. (2020) selected articles using publication rankings. Complementary to their review, we use an integrative and qualitative review approach making interdisciplinary research in public and private management literature. Moreover, we move on from those reviews that are mostly focused on the antecedents of corruption to understand the geographical location of resea.

Concerning the methodological approach, we show that the focus on either public or private corruption derives from theoretical and methodological choices. Emphasizing one or the other may lead to a failure in acknowledging the intersections between these two fields. We also review the methodological choices of research on corruption owrch and the theories and methods used to research corruption.

Most of the corruption literature reviews seek to understand the antecedents of corruption. We argue that, besides determining the antecedents of corruption, locating the theories used, where the studies are conducted and how may help scholars to advance their research. Previous literature reviews focused on specific fields and summarized the literature by grouping articles into research streams. Our review focuses on the following contributions: providing a methodological approach to study corruption, presenting the geographical location of corruption studies, and exploring how corruption has been studied to the difficulties of acquiring data from corrupt organizations. Corporations show resilience toward this topic. Given this, quantitative studies use proxies (e.g., CPI) that disregard the cultural and economic development issues of countries. Some studies do not recommend using CPI to proxy for the level of corruption (DE MARIA, 2008). In this context, we review the methodologies and data used to research corruption.

This research on methodology complements the review of the geographical location of corruption studies. This review corresponds to the discussion that corruption greases the wheel of economies and helps developing countries (NUR-TEGIN; JAKEE, 2020; NYE, 1967). In that sense, we analyze whether corruption studies give equal empirical focus to the global north and south to propose directions for future studies progressing corruption theories.

Methods

An integrative literature review comprehensively searches, analyzes, critiques, and synthesizes the state-of-the-art literature on a topic (FINK, 2005). We conduct the literature review in line with the approach of Tranfield et al. (2003). First, we

ascertain the contribution of the review to the corruption theory. Second, we establish a search protocol and select articles written in English, ranked by the Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS) journal list; this ranking serves as a proxy for quality. Subsequently, we organize and analyze the data, summarizing their crucial aspects. Finally, we present a report and recommendations for future studies (TRANFIELD; DENYER; SMART, 2003).

Research protocols

The protocols comprise the timeframe of the articles, databases, keywords, and article selection criteria (CALLAHAN, 2010; TRANFIELD; DENYER; SMART, 2003). We searched the Web of Science® and Scopus® because they provide the impact factor measures and cover various international journals of high quality in management and business studies. We filtered articles by research area and language. Specifically, we selected articles written in English and published in peer-reviewed journals of business, management, or public administration. These criteria limit the reach of our conclusions and portray the texts analyzed. We exclude relevant knowledge that can be presented through other meaningful criteria to provide an understanding of corruption research. We also emphasize that language fosters a parochial understanding of the issue. In this regard, it must be noted that internationally oriented manuscripts frame their arguments to the English-speaking community. Therefore, we recommend a focus on this knowledge and other approaches for future reviews.

Concerning the search and filtration processes, in July 2019, we searched for the terms “organizational corruption” and “corruption in organizations” in the title, abstract, and keywords of manuscripts in both databases. By using the word “organization,” we studied the individual, group, and structural aspects, and thereby covered most of the approaches to studying corruption (ROBICHAUD; COOREN, 2013). The search yielded 1,374 published articles. After excluding articles outside the areas of business and management and public administration, we got 433 articles; filtering by the English language criterion, yielded 429 articles. The deletion of 123 duplicate articles yielded the final sample of 305 articles.

After building the database, we identified titles, authors, areas, keywords, journals, and the year of publication. We then transferred the manuscripts to the qualitative analysis software Atlas.ti to establish codes and organize data. To read all the 305 articles, we homogenize the labels used for all the papers. We developed code groups—objectives, theories, method, context, and findings—and registered this information for each article. Subsequently, we grouped the articles according to their similarity in the characteristics of methods, objectives and theories. We classified theories by individual, group, or structural phenomena. We divided methods by their qualitative, quantitative, or theoretical nature. We divided the context based on the geographical location of the empirical research and on whether the articles tested hypotheses, made propositions, created or used models and frameworks. Table 2 presents a summary of the coding, revealing the number of different elements for each code. The codes of objectives, research questions, and findings were in vivo codes. We used axial coding to create codes from theories, methods and context and findings, subsequently, grouped these codes according to their characteristics (CHARMAZ, 2000).

Table 2: Summary of the codification process

Code groups	Code	Number of different elements
Objectives	Objectives and research questions	365
Theories	Individual	24

	Group	14
	Structural	28
Methods	Qualitative	75
	Quantitative	142
	Qualitative and quantitative	14
	Theoretical/literature review	74
Contexts	Countries	66
	Others	60
Findings	Hypotheses	302
	Models and frameworks	41
	Propositions	73

Source: Elaborated by the authors

Among the code groups, methods provide an understanding of the research approach toward corruption; contexts, especially countries, present the geographical location of corruption studies; concepts and theory. Before discussing these aspects of the review, it is necessary to discuss the sampled articles.

Summary of the sampled articles

To integrate data from the sampled articles, we explored other characteristics. For instance, we searched the publication date. Subsequently, we searched for their sub-field and journal, based on the metadata of the databases. We do not limit the results to the initial publication date. Our database includes all articles published until July 2019, which also coincides with the date of data collection.

Figure 1 shows the evolution of the number of articles published on corruption. The sample grows from 6 manuscripts in 2007 to 20 manuscripts in 2008 and reaches a peak of 45 in 2017. While other scientific fields have been focusing on corruption for a long time, business and management disciplines turned their attention toward corruption in the past 15 years. The management and business scholars have been adopting more systemic approaches to understand the phenomenon of corruption (CASTRO; PHILLIPS; ANSARI, 2020; WEDEL, 2012).

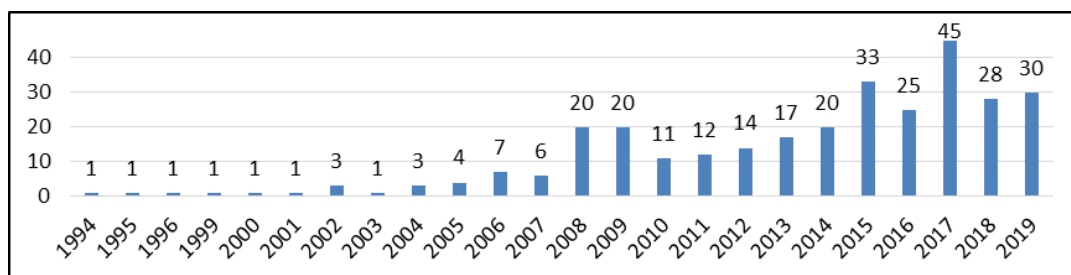


Figure 1: Date of publication of the articles in the sample

Source: Elaborated by the authors

We used the CABS list to classify the articles in their fields. The sub-fields of the journals in the sample vary from accounting to social sciences. With 103 articles, the most representative field is ethics, corporate social responsibility, and management. There are 34 articles in journals on the public sector, management, and administration fields.

This sample reviewed 149 journals with an impact factor (journal citation report - JCR) between 0,208 and 12,289. In our sample, the journals with the most corruption-related articles are the Journal of Business Ethics (56 articles), the Journal of Management Inquiry (11 articles), and the International Journal of Public

Administration (10 articles). The leading position of the Journal of Business Ethics comes from its focus and the number of published editions per year.

Findings and discussion

What has been studied on organizational corruption?

We described the articles' content using a map of the co-occurrence of keywords between the articles. By using the software VOSviewer, we established a network of keywords occurring in more than one article; we divided these keywords into clusters. We tested different thresholds of the number of links in a network; we found that the network considering at least three links of keywords presents the clearest and important information. In other words, the nodes in the networks are keywords linked at least thrice with other keywords. The sampled articles had 990 keywords, with a threshold of three links. Figure 2 presents 68 keywords in 12 clusters.

Corruption occupies a central role in the network; it is part of the cluster joining both the structural and individual aspects of corruption (blue). This blue portion represents the core aspects of corruption theory built over the past few years; this cluster has not witnessed a major addition of other theories. Another notable cluster is the one focusing on the current forms of combating corruption—ethics, transparency, and government (light blue). The other clusters focus on organizational culture and institutionalism (green); the individual experience of corruption, including whistleblowing (red); the contexts of emerging markets or specific countries (yellow); and variables influencing corruption (e.g., gender and avarice) (brown).

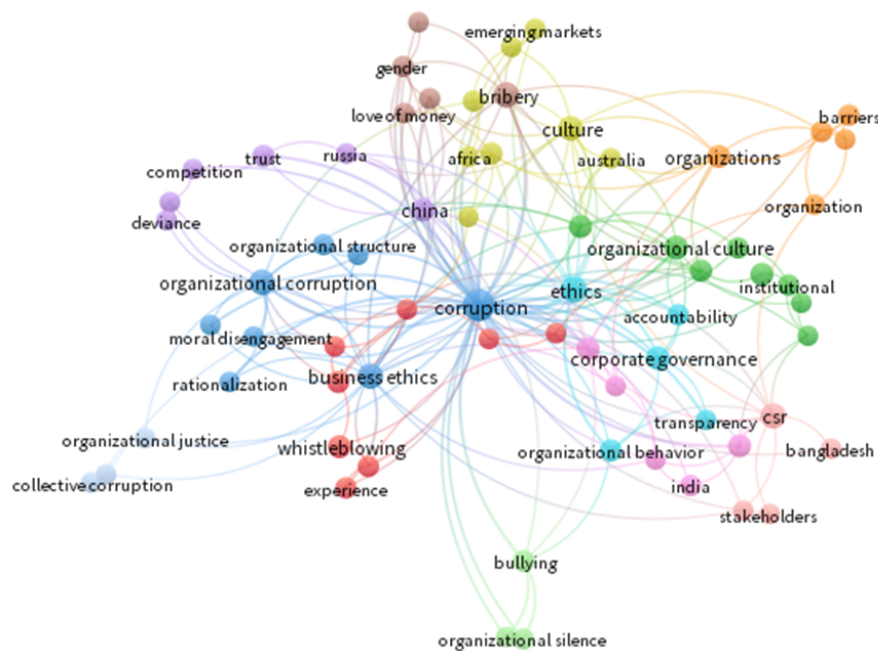


Figure 2: Network of keywords with a threshold of 3 links

Source: Elaborated by the author based on the integrative literature review

This map charts the keywords giving a superficial overview of the main themes of the articles in the literature review. An analysis reveals that these articles used several theories to study the corruption phenomenon. In this context, it must be noted that different disciplines adopt different approaches to studying corruption. Sociology investigates the social structures facilitating corruption; economics investigates the individual cost-benefit rationale to engage in corruption;

anthropology discusses the group relations and meaning given to corruption; political science analyzes the impact emerging from the political and structural aspects of society (CASTRO; PHILLIPS; ANSARI, 2020). In these disciplines, studies use theories that approach corruption from an individual, group, or structural perspective. All these theories contribute to the understanding of this complex phenomenon.

We divided the theories in the reviewed articles into three categories—theories addressing the individual and psychological aspects of corruption, theories investigating the group and organizational behaviors, and structural theories analyzing the impact of context on corruption. These categories are not closed groups, and the theories can fluctuate between levels.

Concerning the category of structural theories, the most prominent stream of theories uses an institutional approach. Research employing this approach seeks to explain corruption in the institutional context. Under this research umbrella, some studies adopt a legalistic view on how laws and rules prevent or allow corruption (TRAN, 2008) and others discuss how the organizational environment and culture promote corruption. These studies focus less on the societal aspect; instead, they observe specific companies or sectors. The major focus area of empirical studies in this stream has been the fallout of corrupt practices from the construction sector's relationship with various governments (AREWA; FARRELL, 2015).

Using the behavioral theory and the theory of planned behavior some scholars have explained this corrupt behavior. Some individual behavioral constructs influencing corruption intention and action are avarice, stress, individual ethics, and values (SARDŽOSKA; TANG, 2015; TANG et al., 2018). In this group, the models explaining corrupt behavior use the institutional aspects and the organizational and individual aspects as background and core constructs, respectively. Despite this conceptualization, this group considers corruption an institutional and context-based decision. In other words, the context of corrupt agents compels them to make the decision (TRAN, 2008).

Concerning such corrupt behavior in organizations, certain scandals serve as generalizable cases in organizational studies. One such case is the Enron scandal; it has contributed to advancements in systematic and networked studies on corruption. Specifically, Enron's e-mail corpus has contributed to the development of corruption theories and methodologies to study similar cases (AVEN, 2015; HARDIN; SARKIS; URC, 2015). Owing to its relevance for analyzing organizational culture and malpractices, the researchers have coined the term Enron effect. It refers to the effect of the avarice on managers as they advance in their careers, and it is strengthened by low corporate ethical values (TANG et al., 2018). Of the reviewed articles, 78 articles have cited the Enron case. Another case that gained much academic attention is the National Health Service of the United Kingdom (NHS). Studies on the NHS focus on whistleblowing and mismanagement in the organization (POPE, 2019).

It must be noted that huge corruption scandals often provide empirical data and contribute to understanding specific aspects of a theory. These specific cases are often treated as singular and not normal in organizational research, they are studied as exceptions without a clear relation to the contemporary forms of organizing. While media information portrays corruption as abnormal, there may be several unreported cases in organizations normalizing corruption. In the latter case, corruption may not be an exception. In this regard, it must be understood that only the reported scandals garner public and academic attention. This may lead to a narrow understanding of the concept. Hence, researchers should also focus on the

unreported or small scandals to truly understand the nature of corruption (CLEMENTE; GABBIONETA, 2017). Corruption studies based on organizational behavior also discuss how organizations can restore legitimacy tarnished by a scandal (EBERL; GEIGER; ASSLÄNDER, 2015). Hulpke (2017) explores mechanisms that can turn around the corruption norm and suggests the use of the corporate death penalty for corrupt organizations that incurred corruption.

Given the focus on ethical leadership in leadership studies, scholars have also been focusing on the role of an unethical leader in the construction of corruption networks. The recent corruption research has presented insightful studies on the relationship between leadership and corruption. The leader serves as a link connecting organizational values and processes with the employees, and thereby allows the structural aspects of corporate culture to influence individual behaviors (JURKIEWICZ; GIACALONE, 2016). In this sense, unethical leadership contributes to corruption theory based on its role in constructing corruption networks and behavior, while ethical leadership provides tools to combat corruption.

The last group of studies is based on the individual aspect. In this group, some corruption theorists have attempted to understand the process of ethical and unethical decision-making, which also leads to theories on morality and ethics. These studies are concerned with the ethical development and value construction of employees. Two streams of research have been developed to study this approach. One stream focuses on moral disengagement theories investigating human psychology to understand how certain individuals normalize and rationalize corruption activities (ANAND; ASHFORTH; JOSHI, 2004). Another stream uses behavioral ethics and rational decision-making to understand how individuals rationally take immoral decisions (GUNIA et al., 2012; MOORE, 2008).

Having classified the research into research streams on the institutional, organizational, and individual aspects of corruption, we focus on the methodological choices of the articles in the literature review.

How have the management and business scholars studied corruption?

In corruption studies, the use of different epistemological, ontological, and methodological approaches adds complexity to the understanding of corruption (HASSARD, 1991; LEWIS; GRIMES, 1999). Despite the use of sophisticated approaches, difficulty in obtaining primary data has been affecting qualitative research on the subject. Hence, scholars mostly use secondary data, document analysis, and newspaper articles to study different aspects of corruption (PHIRI; GUVEN-USLU, 2019).

In our sample, 128 articles use quantitative (based on secondary data), 83 were theoretical essays or literature reviews, 79 were qualitative, and only 12 used mixed-method approaches. Figure 3 presents the percentage of articles using these approaches. The predominance of quantitative articles can be attributed to the difficulty in collecting qualitative data, given the secretive nature of the theme, and to the dominance of quantitative studies in management and organization research.

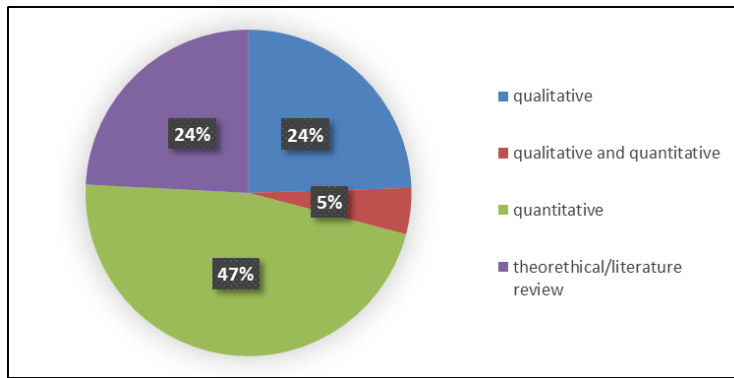


Figure 3: Methodological approach of the articles

Source: Elaborated by the author based on the Integrative literature review

Scholars need more reliable data on corruption to enhance corruption theories. These data can be extracted from public investigation documents (RODRIGUES; BARROS, 2020), ethnographies, and qualitative research (CASTRO; PHILLIPS; ANSARI, 2020). Although studies have theoretically investigated corruption rationalization and the mechanisms driving individuals to become corrupt actors, empirical studies on moral disengagement are still scarce (DE KLERK, 2017; ZYGLIDOPOULOS; FLEMING, 2008). Based on the findings of this review, this scarcity can be attributed to the obstacles to producing primary qualitative datasets on corruption. To overcome this challenge, the review suggests extracting data from newspaper articles, media coverage of scandals (CASTRO; ANSARI, 2017; O'CONNELL; BLIGH, 2009), judicial documents, and plea bargains (SARPONG; SAJDAKOVA; ADAMS, 2019).

In this context, it must be noted that studies on the institutional aspects often use empirical and institutional data. They also use the CPI as the proxy for the quantitative measure. The CPI has been developed by Transparency International (TI), which annually evaluates the perceived corruption level of a given country based on expert opinion and surveys (Transparency International, 2019). Despite TI's clarifications that the CPI is not a measure of corruption, scholars have used the CPI index (Sardžoska & Tang, 2015; Seleim & Bontis, 2009) (Sardžoska & Tang, 2015; Seleim & Bontis, 2009). Some studies have validated the CPI as a proper measure of corruption (WILHELM, 2002). Concerning leadership studies, they have used data from surveys and the global leadership and organizational behavior effectiveness research (GLOBE) (RESICK et al., 2009). The GLOBE research program provides cross-cultural data for other correlated variables on organizational behavior (e.g., performance orientation, individual collectivism and power distance (SELEIM; BONTIS, 2009).

Both the institutional and leadership research conduct case studies and use secondary and primary data on huge scandals to construct a theory on corruption. However, it is necessary to revisit their use of the indexes. Both CPI and GLOBE oversimplify realities (RESICK et al., 2009; SELEIM; BONTIS, 2009). The CPI has been criticized for using parameters established in developed countries to measure the perceived level of corruption in the global south (COUTO, 2020; DE MARIA, 2008). The CPI reinforces colonial hierarchies through its business-centric focus, which holds the developing countries responsible for transnational corruption (COUTO, 2020; DE MARIA, 2008). Although it measures perception, it neither considers the role of transnational agents nor differentiates between active and passive actors in a corrupt transaction (SAMPSON, 2010; WEDEL, 2012).

Considering the roles of public, private, local, and foreign agents, indexes can never fully capture country-level corruption, and hence they should be viewed skeptically. Studies can also use new indexes (e.g., the capacity to combat corruption (CCC)) to measure the institutional capacity of a country to combat corruption (AMERICAS QUARTERLY; CONCIL OF AMERICAS; CONTROL RISKS, 2020). These measurements can also benefit from technological advancements such as big data and machine learning (DE MARIA, 2008; HANSEN; FLYVERBOM, 2015). In this respect, quantitative studies must become more reflexive about the data they use to reach conclusions.

Concerning the stream on the individual aspects, these studies are more complicated than those mentioned above. Most of the researchers have conducted theoretical studies owing to primary data limitations as a result of the unwillingness of individuals to share information on corrupt behavior during surveys and interviews. While researchers have conducted primary surveys and case studies of companies and corrupt organizations (SARDŽOSKA; TANG, 2015), some qualitative studies have suffered because of primary data limitations caused by the unwillingness of respondents to share information (ANANTHRAM; CHAN, 2016). Specifically, these respondents do not consent to interviews, and the statements of those who respond are treated with caution. The analysis of court cases (TRAN, 2008) and law and public documents (MARWAHA, 2017) has been effective in overcoming these primary data limitations. Few studies have echoed the voice of the corrupt agent (MOORE, 2008). Some of the studies get access to primary data because of the willingness of whistleblowers to share information (GRAVLEY; RICHARDSON; ALLISON, 2015). Other studies rely on experiments or questionnaires to understand unethical decision-making in specific groups, not necessarily corrupt (GUNIA et al., 2012; MURPHY; PATVARDHAN; GEHMAN, 2017).

Where have organizational scholars conducted studies on corruption?

Some studies have highlighted that an analysis of national cultures is critical to the understanding of corruption (SELEIM; BONTIS, 2009). It must be noted that a permissive culture can increase corruption and the number of lenient institutions (COLLA-DE-ROBERTIS; NAVARRO CASTAÑEDA, 2017). Seleim and Bontis (2009) have suggested that a country's culture impacts its level of corruption. Gelbrich et al. (2016) have highlighted the role of national wealth in influencing cultural values, practices, and corruption. The cultural values and practices of richer countries less significantly impact their corruption level. Still, several studies have claimed that poorer countries deviate from the rules to compete with wealthier countries (NUR-TEGIN; JAKEE, 2020; NYE, 1967). From the transaction cost perspective, in a globalized world, the developing and poorer countries often witness a high level of corruption owing to their less stringent penalties and regulations (HUSTED, 1994; LI et al., 2012). Hearn (2015) has argued that permissive laws play a greater role than culture and other factors in facilitating systematic and international corruption. This argument is based on the multinational scandals that have revealed the presence of corruption in developed countries and fiscal paradises (KULIK; O'FALLON; SALIMATH, 2008). This debate has led to the development of cross-cultural analyses and variables revealing the determinants of corruption in specific locations. These analyses have overlooked that corruption is a systemic and multidimensional phenomenon (WARBURTON, 2013) dependent on contextual and individual factors (ZYGLIDOPOULOS; FLEMING, 2008). These factors also include the cultural context. It must be understood that corruption can occur at any place. To contribute to the debate on how culture influences corruption, we identified the countries where

the empirical studies in the sample were conducted.

Figure 4 shows all the continents represented in the reviewed corruption studies. The number of empirical studies in the United States (43) and China (22) can be attributed to their high scientific output. In this regard, Wilson and Knutsen (2020) have indicated that variables such as language, income, and population size are correlated with the publication of political science research in different countries. In the context of corruption, the sampled studies cannot be used as a proxy for corruption cases. Although the sample reflects the contextuality of corruption, it also reveals the narrow research on the topic in several locations. Therefore, it will be important for future studies to investigate the cases of organizational corruption in countries with fewer or no studies and to have journals fostering such research. It will also be critical to investigate transnational and international corruption schemes involving different countries and their specific settings (BAHOO; ALON; PALTRINIERI, 2020).

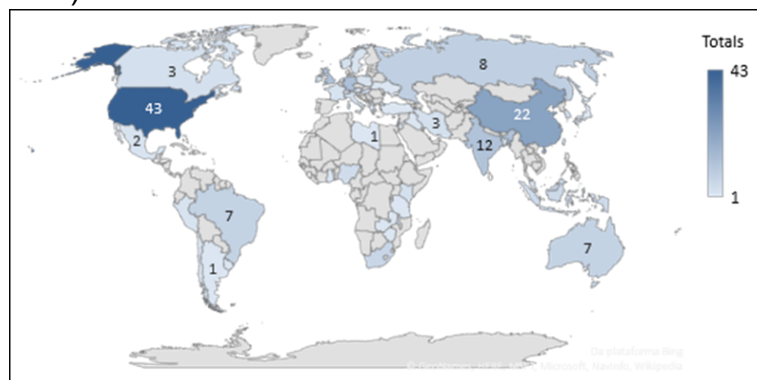


Figure 4: Map of empirical studies on organizational corruption

Source: Elaborated by the author based on the Integrative literature review

Figure 4 contributes to the recent discussions by showing how a country's culture influences corruption. First, the empirical studies show that, in a globalized world, different institutional environments catalyze the perpetration of systemic corruption. Second, they call for cross-cultural analysis and institutional research to determine how different variables (e.g., permissive culture, regulations, and national wealth) increase the opportunities for corruption. Briefly, the lack of detailed studies within countries and cross-regional and cultural analyses makes it difficult to assess the influence of culture on corruption.

To add to this discussion, Sampson (2010) described how the TI, the World Bank, other international institutions, and NGOs positioned corruption in an anti-corruption industry framework. In developing countries, this industry framework allows for the anti-corruption initiatives to co-exist with corruption, without critically analyzing the system surrounding the anti-corruption measures and discourse. Hence, the corruption studies using these measures fail to establish a relationship with culture, without being incidental or conjectural.

Our sample comprises quantitative studies based on data from developed countries. In recent years, these corruption studies have progressed from their focus on bad apples to a more structural and systemic view of corruption (CASTRO; PHILLIPS; ANSARI, 2020; PINTO; LEANA; PIL, 2008). Future studies can use mixed methods to analyze data that broaden perspectives on the topic. They must challenge the idea that corruption studies can relate to all realities. While each research stream will have its idiosyncrasies, empirical research with data from the global south and cross-cultural studies will define the limits of parochial perspectives.

Final Remarks and Avenues for Future Research

By conducting an integrative literature review on organizational corruption, we traced the theories, methodologies, and geographical location of corruption studies. This approach has contributed to future avenues of research. First, future studies should improve how corruption is measured and conduct extensive and quantitative data analysis. Second, future studies should focus on the global south, and thereby diversify the geographical scope of empirical corruption research. These studies should also understand corruption as a global systemic phenomenon. Third, these studies should overcome the qualitative data limitations by using judicial data, ethnographies, and other qualitative methods.

Most organizational corruption studies have focused on theoretical and quantitative methods and have used secondary data owing to primary data limitations. Hence, the scholars must pursue qualitative approaches and build primary data sources to advance the corruption theory in its nuances and its contribution to the causes, consequences, and combat mechanisms of corruption (BAHOO; ALON; PALTRINIERI, 2020).

Quantitative corruption studies can also be enhanced by using new indexes such as the CCC index and by creating scales measuring the degree of corruption in a given country. In this regard, scholars can also use social media and big data. The decision to use these indexes should be based on a careful and critical evaluation. This is important provided, CPI has been criticized as an unreliable measure for corruption owing to its favoritism toward countries in the global north (DE MARIA, 2008; SAMPSON, 2010).

Several countries lacking corruption studies are represented in those indexes. The indexes have failed to facilitate an in-depth scrutinization of the local realities. Cross-national and cultural studies can provide an understanding of how culture influences corruption and makes it a transnational phenomenon (GELBRICH; STEDHAM; GÄTHKE, 2016; KHATRI; TSANG; BEGLEY, 2006).

Concerning the theories, scholars can adopt different paths to study organizational corruption. One of them is to investigate how corruption is discursively constructed and how scenarios with varying degrees of complexity are incorporated into its characterization. The rationalization of corruption can enhance our understanding of how corruption sustains for years. Still, there is only one empirical research on this idea (FREITAS JÚNIOR; MEDEIROS, 2018). Hence, scholars should focus on all the mechanisms of rationalization, how it contributes to the growth and perpetuation of corruption, and how organizations can combat the moral disengagement of their employees.

Despite the comprehensive search and analysis of articles in the integrative literature review, the filtration criteria based on the use of the English language and the quality of the journals have led to the omission of additional contributions (TIETZE; DICK, 2013). The use of different languages and quality parameters can reveal different and interesting results in similar research.

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